



Waterloo Catholic
District School Board



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News Release

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For immediate release

Catholic Board's Education Director Announces Retirement

Waterloo Region, ON – Roger Lawler, Director of Education for Waterloo Region's Catholic Schools, tonight announced his retirement from the Board.

Lawler is the third-longest serving Education Director among the province's 72 school boards and is the longest-serving Director in the history of Waterloo Region's Catholic Schools.

Prior to serving as Director in Waterloo Region Lawler was a supervisory officer in Elgin County and a Principal and history teacher in Simcoe County. This year he marked his 35th year in education.

In addition to his long service working at the school board level Lawler has also served education more broadly as President of the *Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association (OCSSA)*, the *English Catholic Council of Directors of Education (ECCODE)*, and the *Ontario Council of Directors of Education (CODE)*.

In 2009 he received OCSSA's *Distinguished Leader Award*.

During his tenure in Waterloo Region Lawler has seen four WCDSB senior staff members assume Director of Education roles with other Catholic boards: Bruce Rodrigues (Toronto), Michael Schmitt (Algonquin-Lakeshore), Glenn Sheculski (Northeastern) and Brian Annable (Grand Rapids, Michigan). In addition, former St. Mary's High School Principal Cathy Horgan became a supervisory officer and then Director of Education in Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk.

When Lawler succeeded Dr. Bill Brown as Director in 1997, the board's annual budget was \$110 million. It now tops \$220 million. Seven new elementary schools have opened (with an additional three approved for coming years) and both the new *St. Mary's High School* and *St. Don Bosco Catholic Secondary School* opened their doors.

The Board also opened a new Catholic Education Centre and partnered with the City of Kitchener on the *Downtown Community Centre*, *Stanley Park Community Centre* and *Country Hills Public Library*. The board's charitable contributions have also been substantial -- with students and staff raising more than \$4.5 million to support various causes locally, nationally and internationally.

Since the introduction of provincial testing, WCDSB's learners have consistently made gains to demonstrate provincial benchmarks and the board's graduation rates have increased. The Board's successful *St. Louis Adult & Continuing Education* program is the largest in the Region and among the largest in the province addressing the needs of thousands of adult learners annually.

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“What our school system has accomplished working together as a team since 1997 reflects the dedication and commitment of our staff at all levels – outstanding people who go above and beyond the call daily to spread the ‘Good News’ of Catholic education in Waterloo Region,” said Lawler.

“All we’ve done, all we currently do, and all we plan to do in the future we have done together – and that offers the most eloquent kind of testament to the massive value our Catholic schools add to our Region, our province, our country, and the world”.

Manuel da Silva, Board Chair, thanked Lawler for his tireless leadership and example over the years and congratulated him on his retirement.

“When you look back over the last 14 years you realize just how important Roger’s leadership has been to not just our schools, but to Waterloo Region as a whole,” said da Silva. “It’s difficult to find a harder worker and more passionate educator than Roger Lawler. It has been my pleasure since becoming a trustee in 2003 to work with Roger on behalf of our students, staff and our system. This has been especially true in my role as chair for the past 14 months. I know I speak for the entire Board of Trustees when I sincerely thank Roger for all he’s done and wish him a long and happy retirement.”

The Board of Trustees has appointed Associate Director of Education Rick Boisvert as Acting Director of Education while the board conducts its search for a new Director.

Lawler praised Boisvert as an exemplary leader and person of integrity.

“Retirement becomes a little easier when you know our schools are in such good hands”, said Lawler. “I know Rick will do a great job as we move to a new generation of leadership.”

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board, representing more than 100,000 Catholic school supporters, operates 52 schools and five adult education facilities serving more than 40,000 elementary, secondary and continuing education students in Waterloo Region – continuing a 176-year tradition of quality, inclusive, faith-based education. Follow us on Twitter: [@WCDSBNewsWire](https://twitter.com/WCDSBNewsWire).

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