## Committee of the Whole Meeting

**Date:** March 6, 2017  
**Time:** 6:00 p.m.  
*Committee of the Whole In Camera, if necessary, will precede or follow the Board Meeting, as appropriate.*  
**Location:** Board Room, Catholic Education Centre, 35 Weber Street, Kitchener

### Attendees:

**Board of Trustees:**  
Joyce Anderson (Chair), Bill Conway, Manuel da Silva, Amy Fee, Jeanne Gravelle, Wendy Price, Greg Reitzel, Brian Schmalz, Melanie Van Alphen

**Student Representatives:**  
Joseph De Sousa, Samantha Lim

**Senior Administration:**  
Loretta Notten, Gerry Clifford, Jason Connolly, Derek Haime, David DeSantis, John Klein, Shesh Maharaj, Laura Shoemaker

**Special Resource:**  
Recording Secretary: Barb Pilsner

### Agenda

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CLOSING PRAYER

O Risen Lord, you have entrusted us with the responsibility to help form a new generation of disciples and apostles through the gift of our Catholic schools.

As disciples of Christ, may we educate and nurture hope in all learners to realize their full potential to transform God’s world.

May our Catholic schools truly be at the heart of the community, fostering success for each by providing a place for all.

May we and all whom we lead be discerning believers formed in the Catholic faith community: effective communicators; reflective and creative thinkers; self-directed, responsible, life-long learners; collaborative contributors; caring family members; and responsible citizens.

Grant us the wisdom of your Spirit so that we might always be faithful to our responsibilities. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Rev. Charlie Fedy, CR and the Board of Trustees, 2010
Committee of the Whole Meeting

A public meeting of the Committee of the Whole was held Monday, February 13, 2017 at Waterloo Region Catholic Education Centre, Kitchener

**Trustees Present:**
Joyce Anderson (Chair), Bill Conway, Manuel da Silva, Amy Fee, Jeanne Gravelle, *Wendy Price, Brian Schmalz,
Melanie Van Alphen
*attended by teleconference

**Student Trustees Present:**
Joseph De Sousa, Samantha Lim

**Administrative Officials Present:**
Loretta Notten, Gerry Clifford, Jason Connolly, David DeSantis, Derek Haime, John Klein, Shesh Maharaj, Laura Shoemaker

**Special Resources For The Meeting:**

**Regrets:**
Greg Reitzel

**Absent:**

**Recorder:**
Barb Pilsner, Executive Administrative Assistant

**NOTE ON VOTING:** Under Board by-law 5.7 all Board decisions made by consensus are deemed the equivalent of a unanimous vote. A consensus decision is therefore deemed to be a vote of 9-0. Under Board by-law 5.11 every Trustee “shall vote on all questions on which the Trustee is entitled to vote” and abstentions are not permitted.

1. **Call to Order:**
The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

1.1 **Opening Prayer & Memorials**
The opening prayer was led by J. Gravelle, Pastoral Team. Intentions were offered for Luca a grade 6 student at St. Kateri and for the co-worker of A. Fee who is ill. Please keep them in your prayers.

1.2 **Approval of Agenda**
Move Item 8.1 Superintendent Appreciation to follow Item 5.4

2017-23 -- It was moved by M. da Silva and seconded by J. Gravelle: THAT the agenda for February 13, 2017 as amended be now approved. --- Carried by consensus.

1.3 **Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**

1.3.1 From the current meeting – NIL
1.3.2 From a previous public or in-camera meeting – NIL

2. **Consent Agenda: Director of Education (e.g. day-to-day operational matters from the Ministry of Education that the board is required to do)**
3. Consent Agenda: Board of Trustees (Minutes of meetings)

3.1 Approval of Minutes of Regular and Special Meetings

3.1 Minutes of January 16, 2017 Committee of the Whole Meeting

3.2 Items for Action from Previous In-camera Meeting of February 13, 2017 regarding Human Resources.

2017-24 -- It was moved by B. Conway and seconded by A. Fee:

THAT the Consent Agenda Board of Trustees and the recommendations contained therein be now approved. ---

Carried by consensus

4. Delegations

5. Advice From the CEO

5.1 OCSOA Presentation to Director of Education

J. Anderson introduced John Kostoff, Executive Director of OCSOA.

J. Kostoff acknowledged Loretta Notten for her role in support of Catholic Education as President and past President of OCSOA. L. Notten advised of the exceptional colleagues from across the province she met and offered thanks to John Kostoff and Theresa Harris for their mentorship.

L. Notten introduced Leah Ann Erickson, Arts Program Head and four students, Oman Akot, Josiah Bossé, Anastasia Flitton and Annalie Schropp from Resurrection CSS. Sara Pantea was not able to be present. The students created artwork to be hung at the Catholic Education Centre in recognition of Loretta Notten's leadership.

L. Notten invited each student to share their inspiration for the artwork they created.

5.2 STSWR Annual Report

B Bourgault advised safety is always our priority. We continue to focus on student safety and offer training to students, parents, school staff and school bus drivers through the following events:

- First Rider program for Kindergarten students
- Bus patrols, standing patrols (student crossing guards) and trailblazers (walking school bus leaders)
- Bus evacuation training for all elementary students
- Bus driver professional development day

Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region is also a member of the Active and Safe Routes to School Committee.

In summary transportation continues to be very safe for students, with no injuries reported. We have met with the Region and vendor of the cameras and will continue to work with the Region to pursue the stop arm cameras.

Trustees spoke of drafting a resolution to OCSTA to lobby the Ministry to include in the new Safe School Zone bill.

5.3 Dominican Experience

D. Haime introduced Larry Scanlon from St. David CSS and two students Kennedy Bourque and Makenna Gomes, to share their experiences. He advised L. Scanlon was the lead of the 2016 trip with Jennifer Ertel, John Schneider, Nancy Arruda DeMarco, Lisa Collins and Luisa Vona and 25 students from the five secondary schools. L. Scanlon said the Dominican experience is most significant for the effect it has on our students.

K. Bourque and M. Gomes shared pictures taken from the trip which allowed them to see the other face of the Dominican aside from the resorts.

They met many wonderful people who shared remarkable stories that changed us and made us question our lives. The people were always welcoming. Our visit to the Batays brought happiness to those who lived there. Those who were fortunate to work for the resorts ensured they could then provide for their families. The students appreciated the opportunity to experience the faith and culture.

J. Ertel said “We plant seeds that one day will grow and water seeds already planted knowing that they will give the future promise”. Going there and meeting the people reminded me of who we are. This is an investment not just in teachers and students to make a change and be transformed.
5.4 MYSP Survey
L. Notten introduced the campaign we are launching to engage responses from all our stakeholder to gather feedback on what awareness and impact the MSYP is having. The intent is to see if adjustments are necessary and gather input as we look to the development of the new MYSP in a year and a half. An invitation will be included in every report card and the survey can be translated to any language using Google Translate.

5.5 Superintendent Appreciation
J. Anderson acknowledged and thanked Derek Haime on behalf of the board for his devotion to social justice and work with the most marginalized. He recently received his PHD which is an example inspiring our students to continue learning. We hope your new position will be a rewarding experience. D. Haime said he has definitely received more than he has given and will in turn pay that forward.

6. Ownership Linkage (Communication with the External Environment)
Trustees, in small groups, discussed items for Linkages and Pastoral Care.

6.1 Linkages Activity
A. Fee reported invitations for the Community Leaders breakfast have been sent. L. Notten spoke with Fr. Toby Collins who will speak to the clergy regarding a gathering for all. He will also speak to the Deanery about the Toonies for Tuition campaign and L. Notten will speak to the administrators at their February meeting. Community Partners will again be invited to attend the Beacons of Hope breakfast. Several appreciation letters have been sent.

6.2 Pastoral Care Activity
B. Schmalz asked Joseph De Sousa to speak to the Adventure Rooms Canada activity for trustees and senior administration. April 3rd was the date suggested for the event. W. Price will work with committee members to reschedule the Governance meeting that was set for that date.

J. Gravelle suggested inviting students who attend the Dominican Experience or the Vimy Ridge trip to lead us in prayer at a board meeting and give us their perspective before and after attending the excursion. L. Notten will investigate the opportunity to invite students.

7. Reports From Board Committees/Task Forces

8. Board Education (at the request of the Board)
8.2 OCSTA Communications
J. Anderson asked trustees if there were any comments on the attached OCSTA communications. J. De Sousa and S. Lim are attending the OSTA-AECC Board Council Conference this week and will report back to the board.

9. Policy Discussion

10. Assurance of Successful Board Performance

11. Assurance of Successful Director of Education Performance

12. Potential Agenda Items

13. Announcements
13.1 Upcoming Meetings/Events (ass scheduled for the Catholic Education Centre unless otherwise indicated):

14. Items for the Next Meeting Agenda/Pending Items
14.1 Items for the Next Meeting Agenda

14.2 Pending Items
15. Adjournment – Confirm decisions made tonight. Closing Prayer

The Recording Secretary confirmed the meeting decisions.

16. Closing Prayer

17. Motion to Adjourn

2017-25-- It was moved by J. Gravelle and seconded by M. Van Alphen: THAT the meeting be now adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 7:51 p.m.

____________________________________  __________________________________________
Chair of the Board  Secretary
I am a grade 4 student at St. Agatha and have attended this school since JK. This is the third time in my short life that the WCDSB has tried to close my school – in fact the first time this happen is right before I was born. Do you know or even care about how stressful and unfair it is to students to attend a school that they love while the threat of closure continually hangs over it? Let me tell you, its not a fair nor an equitable way to treat students, parents and staff.

I know that, as a child, sometimes to get what I want I have to ask my parents more than once. Sometimes they think its nagging and whining. But if I am persistent, sometimes I wear them down and I get what I want.

In my opinion, it seems to me that this is the same tactic that WCDSB staff are using against us and against you, the elected trustees. It seems to me that even though the public, students, families, our faith community and former trustees clearly demonstrated why the school should stay open 2 other times, that the board staff simply continued to nag and to whine like children do.

Until they get their way.

That's what their behaviour is like. The staff have manipulated or ignored growth numbers in Baden, they have changed boundaries to serve their own agenda and they have not done as they were told to do by the former trustees. They ignored what trustees told them to do.

And you, the current trustees, are letting it happen. Without even asking good questions and making them truly explain themselves.

That's your job. You are supposed to represent your citizens. you are supposed to ask questions and seek information on our behalf.

But you're not. And that's not fair and that's not right.

You should make them clearly explain why they didn't do what the former trustees' decision said. Which was to build a new school in Wilmot Twp. They keep saying that they applied for funding to repair the school and that is NOT the same thing. Staff have never clearly and fully answered our questions. That's not fair and that's not right.

I wish that you as trustees would remember that you are there to help us as citizens. You are not there simply to do what staff recommend – no questions asked.

It makes me sad and angry as a young person to feel that you don't care what we think and that you won't treat us fairly.

Please do the right thing – do what the June 2014 decision said to do: apply for funding to build a new school in Wilmot Twp and keep our school open until the new one is built.

Thank you,
Tessa
Like my younger sister, I have gone to St. Agatha CES since JK and I love it!! Yes, it is a small school but if you would do some research, you would find out that closing schools has a tremendous cost to the students and to the community.

Yes, my parents chose to live in a small town instead of the city. However, that choice should not mean that my sister and I don't have equal access to a quality Catholic education the same as a child in the city. The WCDSB has not treated schools in the rural areas as equally as they have schools in the city. For example, you are trying to close St. Boniface, St. Clements needs approximately $4 million in repairs and this is the third time staff have tried to close my school.

Why does the WCDSB treat students and families that live in the rural and small towns of Waterloo Region as if we aren't as important? We deserve to be treated fairly. Closing our school means that I will have a longer bus ride, which means less time for homework, school teams and other activities.

Closing ST. Agatha school will leave only 1 Catholic school in all of Wilmot Twp. As everyone knows, Wilmot Twp is the fastest growth area in Waterloo Region and one of the fastest in Ontario.

How is it possible that the WCDSB staff and the trustees believe that there are only enough Catholic students in a township with over 25,000 people and GROWING, for one school? That doesn't make any sense.

You should listen to people like Mayor Les Armstrong and the planning staff at Wilmot Twp when they tell you that Wilmot Twp has more than enough residential capacity = and its growing = to support two Catholic schools. In Baden alone, the two public schools are packed and we know that lots of Catholic children are attending those schools.

Build a new Catholic school in Wilmot Twp. End the constant talk of school closure. When you do both of those things, parents will be able to confidently enroll their children in our school.

For a decade, the WCDSB staff have tried to close our school. So of course parents will be nervous about enrolling their children. The actions that the WCDSB staff done have sent the message to parents that they should NOT enroll their children in a Catholic school. Their job is supposed to be working to increase enrollment, to market Catholic education and to support students in receiving a really good education.

What the staff have done makes no sense to me and to many others.

I wish that you as trustees would ask good questions and remember that you are not there simply to do what staff recommend.

You should make staff clearly explain why they didn't do what they were directed to do in June 2014. They have never given us a clear answer. You should demand that for yourselves as trustees and for us as citizens.

Please do the right thing – do what the June 2014 decision said to do: apply for funding to build a new school in Wilmot Twp and keep our school open until the new one is built.

Thank you,
Zoe
my name is Ron McCormick I have 3 children who have graduated from St. Agatha Catholic elementary school. I have 3 that are still being educated in Catholic faith at St. Agatha. I was an ARC committee member on this, our 3rd Arc review. This small but mighty St. Agatha school reminds me of the Biblical account of David & Goliatth.

We the community of St. Agatha have won narrowly the last 2 Arc Reviews yet here we are again. Numbers are down in the school, but after 10 years of talk of closing and no significant monies invested in the school what other outcome could anyone expect. Boundary changes that kept changing, reviews of costs of repair from a school neglected, misleading projection populations, 10 years of talk of closing + an ARC review with no option to keep the questioning school open, no wonder we are here today. It was the hardest thing to sit through all the ARC meetings when the only discussions were to close St. Agatha school, where to change the boundaries, (where to send the children) + how to deal with the fallout of closure.

No talk ever on how to keep St. Agatha open! The board while following the new and ministry guidelines has come up with justification of right sizing of schools to make this closure accountable. and to present a case & for a future school
to be built in approximately 5 years time, by being right sized populated across the board.

Yes I see the justification case against St. Agatha. Yes I see why the St. Agatha elem school, church + community keeps fighting back still after 10 Years of it! Why? we have

A proper faith based school with a rare church next to it, with yet an even rarer connection between the two, hard to find.

Which brings me to this. What about the children? Is this not our main focus? Is not Catholicism
Close the school?
Split up the school + church connection?
Split the children up?
Lose some children to the public school board?
Open a new school in 5 years as projected + move the children, the boundaries yet again. This community has gone through enough inthe last 10 years + with a decision to close, the community will be dealing with it another 10 years as boundaries change yet again when a new school is built.
I ask the trustees to help the board regain the vision that I believe is missing here as your mission statement here states, "Our Catholic Schools: heart of the community, success for each, a place for all."

I believe the board is managing on short term solutions that we need to be looking further into the future. I ask that the trustees work with the board to find a way to present a case scenario to keep St. Agatha open until a new school is built, to present that solution to the ministry for approval, so that the children & families, school & community are not put through any more of these debates, are not put through a closure, move, then another move to the near opening of a new school all over again. Please come up with a way. Do not put the children through another 10 years of turmoil, anxiety & sleepless nights.

It is of my opinion that this is the right thing to do here.

The ministry is aware of the last 2 ARC reviews as well as this one. Explain that this community, church, children & their families have been through
enough. Please present this case to the
ministry as they could help in keeping
this school open until a new school is
built.

Thank you.

- Questions on my speech?
- Discussion on what I presented
Thank you for allowing me to present as the Board considers staff recommendations on the future of St. Agatha Catholic Elementary School and impacts to the surrounding community.

As we saw a couple of years ago, this is a difficult decision, and one I'm sure many of us didn't want to be revisiting so soon after the last decision to ensure St. Agatha could continue to serve our community.

I do want to thank all of the parents, students and community members who have again come out to engage and present in this process once more – your passion and dedication is clear and is to be commended.

I wrote the Minister of Education about the initiation of this most recent Accommodation Review process soon after the Board’s June 14th letter informing parents of a renewed Review for St. Agatha only two years after the last one.

Many in our community wonder why we are even back here talking school closure again when parents were led to believe the issue was resolved back in 2014.

School closure review is an arduous and painful process for all impacted, which begs the question as to why we are going through this struggle all over again.

In fact, the Accommodation Review Guidelines at the time in 2014 called for a five year gap before the Process could be revisited.

And despite the fact that the Board has referenced that the new Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline permits the re-start of a subsequent review in
more rapid fashion the wording and spirit of that new Guideline certainly recommends against such a quick turn-around.

- “The Ministry of Education recommends that, wherever possible, schools should only be subject to a pupil accommodation review once in a five-year period, unless there are circumstances determined by the school board, such as a significant change in enrolment.”

- While we do know that enrollment dropped by 15 students year-over-year, many question why that small drop would override the guideline’s “once in a five year period,” recommendation.

- I am no fan of the province’s Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines that have driven this process forward.

- I think it’s unfair for the Ministry to expect parents and communities to fight on an almost annual basis to keep their school doors open.

- There are rural schools in nearly every area of our province that the new guidelines have allowed to be targeted for closure.

- There’s no doubt that, province-wide, we need a discussion about the future of rural education and small schools.

- Just as I am here tonight, my Caucus colleagues have been fighting to save schools from closure in their areas.

- We’ve called for a moratorium on rural school closures and action on funding through a motion in the Legislature.
31. Mr. McDonell — That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should place a moratorium on rural school closures and suspend Pupil Accommodation Reviews until it has developed a long term plan for rural education by consulting with all local rural school boards, school communities, students, and municipalities and that it considers the value of local education, ensures students receive a quality education that includes access to important extra-curricular activities and after school employment, and that it establishes a stable, sustainable funding formula for rural areas. Filed November 1, 2016.

We understand that the Wynne government’s elimination of top-up funding, put in place because the per-pupil formula was insufficient to support rural schools, has put Boards across the province in a difficult position.

For that reason that the Ontario PC Caucus has called on Minister Hunter to reinstate this funding.

At the same time we’ve asked the Minister to immediately engage all Ontario school boards, school communities and local municipalities in a review of the current challenges presented by declining enrolment.

To that end, I respectfully ask the Board to support that request to Minister Hunter through a resolution.

It’s essential that we work together to save our rural schools so that families, communities and boards alike aren’t forced to consider further unnecessary school closures.

To do otherwise ignores the vital importance that our rural schools bring to our rural communities, and brings us back to the closure debate again and again.
• Today we’re talking about St. Agatha, and tomorrow it could just as well be St. Clements if we don’t work towards a province-wide solution to this province-wide problem.

• For generations, this school has been the foundation of St. Agatha – bringing together family and friends around learning, faith and community traditions.

• Schools like St. Agatha are so much more than just the bricks and mortar, they are often the living, beating heart of the community – and the lynchpin to economic development and growth.

• And today, after celebrating 145 years of Catholic education at St. Agatha, that heart continues to beat and the community around it continues to thrive and grow.

• That’s a fact, and actually underlines another key concern that parents have with some of the closure recommendations underpinning arguments related to growth.

• The June 14th letter to parents referenced a, “lack of residential development growth in Wilmot Township,” as another cause for a review.

• The concern here is that projection stands in stark contrast to Statistics Canada and the Region of Waterloo predictions.

• In fact, Waterloo Region's Official Plan, indicates robust growth, predicting 28,500 residents by 2031, building from 22,300 today, 19,613 in 2011 and 17,700 residents in 2006.
• I’ve had many since this process began ask me, “why is the Board ignoring the Region and the Township’s growth projections?”

• They’re also asking how we got to where we are today when the 2014 review resulted in a clear direction toward construction of a new St. Agatha.

• *Motion 2014-120* that resulted from the last Accommodation Review Process saw trustees approve a recommendation that read, "*That the board applies for funding from the Minister of Education to construct a new St. Agatha Catholic Elementary School in Wilmot Township*

• There was clear direction for the Board to apply for funding for a new St. Agatha school, and yet for some reason that direction was never followed up.

• The letter to parents stated explicitly that, “in November, 2015, the Ministry of Education declined the board’s request for funding to *repair, renovate and make an addition* to the existing school while excess capacity exists in other nearby Catholic elementary schools.”

• the letter talks about a request for *repair* funding, but makes no mention whatsoever of the actual recommendation to apply for funding of a new school.

• This only leads to further questions and confusion as to why this community may be about to lose its school altogether.

• In 2014 after the last ARC process I congratulated trustees for, “listening to local parents backing away from consideration of closing down St. Agatha school.”

• And I indicated that, “The victory parents achieved shows that we can make a difference in our community by working together.”
• Tonight, much as the Board has renewed the Accommodation Review, I would like to renew that spirit of working together to make a difference.

• And so I ask that you again “listen” to local parents, Suspend this Accommodation Review and work together to call on the provincial government to find real solutions – solutions that go far beyond the quick fix of closing schools.

• And solutions that will keep St. Agatha open!

Thank you again for your time and I look forward to your questions.
Date: March 6th, 2017
To: Board of Trustees
From: Director of Education
Subject: Renewing the Promise

Type of Report:  
- Decision-Making
- Monitoring
- Incidental Information concerning day-to-day operations

Type of Information:  
- Information for Board of Trustees Decision-Making
- Monitoring Information of Board Policy
- Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)
ACBO Pastoral Letter *This Moment of Promise*
ACBO Pastoral Letter *Fulfilling the Promise*

Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:
Policy IV 011 “Emergency CEO Replacement”

Alignment to the MYSP:
Strategic Priority: Nurturing Our Catholic Community
Strategic Direction: Faith is lived and witnessed in community
Goal: To strengthen and cultivate school, parish and home relationships

Background/Comments:
The report and appendices that follow introduce an important initiative that is being undertaken by the Catholic Education community in Ontario. Specifically, it introduces a provincial symposium that will focus on the theme *Renewing the Promise: Exploring the Critical Role of Catholic Education in Contemporary Society*. The symposium will be held in partnership with the French Catholic education community in Toronto on November 14 and 15, 2017.

For an earlier generation of Catholic educators, documents developed by the Bishops of Ontario, *This Moment of Promise* and *Fulfilling the Promise* established a clear and compelling mission and vision for Catholic schools. Today, our mission and vision for Catholic education have not changed, but our context has changed profoundly. It is time for the stakeholders of Catholic Education to renew the conversation and to build consensus about the opportunities that lie ahead for Catholic Education in Ontario in these rapidly evolving times.

The attached overview offers an outline of the process that will be undertaken, the role of the local board in ensuring a fulsome opportunity for consultation and for all voices to be heard, the methodology that will be used and the anticipated end results — namely, the provincial symposium in November and ultimately a new letter by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario.
We look forward to facilitating local conversations in Waterloo Catholic, focused on the three critical questions offered for our consideration. In this way, we remain confident that we can contribute in a meaningful way to this extremely important conversation about the mission and vision of Catholic Education in the Province of Ontario at this time and for the foreseeable future.

**Recommendation:**

This report is prepared for the information of the Board.

**Prepared/Reviewed By:**  
Loretta Notten  
Director of Education

*Bylaw 5.2 “where the Board of Trustees receives from the Director of Education a monitoring report that flows from a responsibility delegated to the Director under Board Policy – except where approval is required by the Board of Trustees on a matter delegated by policy to the Board – the minutes of the Meeting at which the Report is received shall expressly provide that the Board has received and approved of the Report as an action consistent with the authority delegated to the Director, subject in all instances to what otherwise actually occurred.”*
Catholic Education Symposium 2017:

Exploring the Critical Role of Catholic Education
In Contemporary Society
Dear Colleagues

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE), I am pleased to invite you to attend the upcoming province-wide symposium on Catholic Education. Focusing on the theme “Renewing the Promise: Exploring the Critical Role of Catholic Education in Contemporary Society”, the symposium will be held in partnership with the French Catholic education community in Toronto on November 14 and 15, 2017.

Following the Province’s decision to extend full funding in support of Catholic schools, and their commitment to publically fund four school systems (French and English, Public and Catholic) the Bishops of Ontario recognized the need to gather the Catholic education community in conversation to understand both the challenges and opportunities that were present at that time. The Bishops also established the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) and Office provincial de ‘education de la foi catholique en Ontario (OPECO) with a mandate to animate and encourage cooperation between the Catholic educational partners. From time to time, at the request of the Bishops, and with the encouragement and support of the partners, ICE and OPECO have arranged provincial symposia bringing together representatives from every sector of the Catholic education community to explore contemporary issues in Catholic education. The last provincial symposium was held in 2011.

For an earlier generation of Catholic educators, documents developed by the Bishops of Ontario, “This Moment of Promise” and “Fulfilling the Promise” established a clear and compelling mission and vision for Catholic schools. Today, our mission and vision for Catholic education have not changed, but our context has changed profoundly. At this time it is important that we come together in conversation, gathering as a community to name and understand the challenges presented by an increasingly complex and secular society today, and to identify and build consensus around the opportunities that will shape our future. This symposium, exploring the theme, “Renewing the Promise”, will help us better understand the ways in which Catholic schools serve and support the mission of the church, while bringing the gifts of justice, peace and joy to our students and our province alike.
To ensure the success of this symposium, your assistance and support is requested.

1) **Designate one person at your Board to communicate with the ICE office.** This person will be responsible for the registration of your board’s local team, circulation of symposium materials and communications, and will be the point of contact between ICE and your Board. Please advise ICE by email renewingthepromise@iceont.ca of your Board’s contact person by March 10, 2017.

2) **Begin to assemble your local Board team,** in collaboration with the diocese and your local education partners. Guidelines for team composition are included within this information package (pg. 7).

3) **Undertake the local process of consultation and engagement** outlined within this information package (pg. 7-11). This important step, in preparation for the symposium, will ensure that the voice and the experiences of your community are reflected as part of this provincial conversation. The local engagement process, involving both face to face meetings, and opportunities for on-line participation, can commence at your earliest opportunity, to be completed by May 19, 2017.

On behalf of the ICE Board of Directors, I thank you for your willingness to support this important conversation, the necessary preparation, and your subsequent participation on November 14 and 15, 2017.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Pautler  
Executive Director  
Institute for Catholic Education

cc  Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario  
Catholic Principals’ Council of Ontario  
Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education  
Ontario Catholic School Business Officials’ Association  
Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association  
Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers’ Association  
Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association
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Background Information

Established by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario in 1987, the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) and Office provincial de l’education de la foi catholique en Ontario (OPECO) play an important role in animating and orchestrating the necessary cooperation between the Catholic educational partners, and provide support to 37 Catholic school boards (29 English, 8 French), to enhance the Catholicity of the system. Together, the two organizations work to ‘promote and maintain publicly-funded Catholic schools animated by the Gospel and reflecting the tenets of the Catholic faith.’

One of the core objectives for ICE and OPECO established by the partners is a mandate “to arrange periodic gatherings of representatives from every sector of the Catholic education community for the purpose of exploring together contemporary issues in Catholic education.” The last ICE/OPECO symposium was held in May 2011.

Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario

From time to time, the Bishops of Ontario, speaking through the collective voice of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, offer pastoral letters to provide encouragement, support and advice for those who work in the service of Catholic education. In 1988, the Bishops authored This Moment of Promise, describing the cultural and societal conditions that characterized that era, highlighting the provincial legislation that completed funding for the Catholic separate school system, and anticipating the implications that might follow that historical decision. The letter encouraged all involved in Catholic education to respond proactively to the promises and challenges of the legislation and choose directions that would preserve and promote Catholic education as well as contribute to the life of the province and Canada as a whole. The letter states:

_We have staked our hope as a nation on the possibility of strengthening our common social fabric by safeguarding the distinctive voice of each thread within it. Our ongoing commitment to the development of Catholic education represents one such contribution to the common fabric. By reinforcing this distinctive thread of what is best in our Church community, we want to enhance the unique qualities of other communities and the ties, which bind us all together. Our commitment to cultivating the special characteristics of Catholic education, and thus enhancing the fabric of society, impels us to address first our brothers and sisters of the Catholic community and, then, our fellow citizens of Ontario._

In the 1990’s the Bishops again issued a pastoral letter, Fulfilling the Promise, which offered further encouragement, and specifically focused on the critical role of leadership in supporting and sustaining the Catholicity of the school system.

In the intervening 25 years Ontario’s Catholic schools have continued to thrive, and publicly funded Catholic school systems, both French and English, have flourished and expanded. Over the span of time, the population of Ontario has grown significantly, both in terms of numbers, but also in terms of diversity. Contemporary Ontario society honours diversity, celebrates multiculturalism, champions human rights, and provides protections for freedom of religious expression. This contemporary, complex and increasingly secular society is the context for the work of Catholic schools today, and offers both challenges and opportunities.
Symposium 2017 – Renewing the Promise: Exploring the Critical Role of Catholic Education in Contemporary Society

The Catholic education community will gather for a two-day symposium on November 14 and 15, 2017, at the International Plaza Hotel & Conference Center, Toronto Airport, 655 Dixon Road, Toronto, ON. M9W 1J3. Detailed registration information will be available in March, 2017.

The theme of the symposium is, *Renewing the Promise: Exploring the Critical Role of Catholic Education in Contemporary Society*. The symposium will be a joint venture, organized by ICE and OPECO, and the program will be offered in both official languages.

The two-day provincial symposium will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, November 14, 2017 with opening prayer, and it is anticipated that 700 representatives of the French and English Catholic Education community will be in attendance. We will gather to engage in prayer, discernment, and dialogue as we explore the challenges and opportunities for Catholic education within the context of our historical time. The first full day of discussion and exploration will conclude with a banquet on Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m., where we will recognize, celebrate and honour religious communities for their historical contribution to Catholic Education. On Wednesday November 15, 2017 we will continue with dialogue, a plenary session, and the day will culminate with a celebration of the Eucharist with our Celebrant, Thomas Cardinal Collins. A commissioning and final blessing will conclude the symposium by 12:00 noon. (A tentative schedule for the two-day event is included in Appendix A).

Participants

The Symposium will bring together representatives of the key stakeholder groups who together share the responsibility for Catholic education. The richness of the conversation grows from the broad representation from across the province. *We encourage Boards to embrace this opportunity to participate in this important dialogue. We rely upon you to facilitate the process by assembling and supporting the participation of a Board team. In the spirit of collaboration, Directors are encouraged to consult with local OECTA and CPCO representatives in order to ensure coordination, and to avoid overlapping.*

Board Teams

**Suggested Local Board Team Composition (14):**
1. Chair of the Board
2. Director of Education
3. Elementary School Council Parents (2)
4. Secondary School Council Parents (2)
5. System Chaplaincy Leader/Faith Animator
6. Diocesan Representative (to be determined in consultation with Local Bishop)
7. Elementary Teacher
8. Secondary Teacher
9. Elementary Principal
10. Secondary Principal
11. Senior Secondary Students (2)
Additional Participants

Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO) – All Ontario Catholic Bishops are invited to attend. In some cases, your local bishop may be considered as part of a Board team. In other instances, the bishop will appoint a diocesan representative to each of the School Board teams within the diocese, and choose to attend independently.

ICE Partners – In addition to the local Board teams, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees (OCSTA), Teachers (OECTA), Principals (CPCO), Supervisory Officers – Academic and Business (OCSOA/OCSBOA), and Parents (OAPCE), are invited to arrange teams of up to six (6) members of their executive members. Chaplains,CRECO, Curriculum Cooperatives, Catholic Women’s League, Knights of Columbus, representatives of Catholic universities, Catholic representatives from Ontario faculties of education will be invited to attend, as space permits.

Registration Process

Please designate one person at your Board (e.g. your executive assistant) to communicate with the ICE office in terms of registrants. This person will be responsible for the registration of your Board’s local team, circulation of conference materials, etc. Kindly advise ICE via email renewingthepromise@iceont.ca no later than March 10, 2017 of the name of your contact person.

Further information regarding registration for conference participants will be distributed by March 21, 2017. Registration will also open at that time.

Registration fee is $365.00 per participant. In most instances, costs will be the responsibility of respective School Boards. The richness of the conversation is enhanced with broad representation from across the province, and we rely on School Boards to facilitate the process and to support the endeavour financially through the registration costs for symposium participants. We recognize that the costs associated with registration, and in addition travel and accommodation, are significant for School Boards, however we believe that it is critical to bring the Catholic education community together from time to time for these important conversations. Active participation and support of School Boards to ensure the voices of your community are included in this provincial conversation is pivotal for the outcome of the symposium. School Boards may make local decisions to adjust the size of their local team to make participation possible.

Partner organizations and associations are similarly responsible for registration, travel and accommodation costs for their team members. The ACBO will cover registration costs for Bishops attending the Symposium. Local dioceses are responsible for travel and accommodation costs for Bishops.

Consultation and Engagement

The symposium will provide opportunities for honest dialogue and discussion. We will identify the ways in which Catholic education contributes to the province of Ontario and to the common good, build a shared understanding of our collective challenges, and collaboratively and creatively explore the opportunities that allow us to bring the truth and wisdom of our faith tradition into the context of this particular time and place. Within the faith tradition of the Catholic church, our holistic view of the human person, and our understanding of what
constitutes the ‘common good’, may sometimes be at variance with some of the assumptions and perspectives held by contemporary culture in a secular society. Catholic schools have the opportunity to introduce the wisdom of our faith tradition into this ongoing and dynamic societal conversation. In every age, Catholics are challenged to be a leaven in society as a service to others and we are needed as a full partner in the human quest for greater justice and truer community.

Through the independent facilitation of Thoughtexchange, a third-party software solution, ICE and OPECO will meaningfully engage all the partners in Catholic education and within the School Board communities using an open process. This process will provide information to guide the provincial conversation at the Symposium, support the work of the partners, provide context and inform the initiative of the Bishops. The effective engagement provided by the Thoughtexchange process will provide important input into the planning for the symposium and help build consensus around emerging directions, opportunities and initiatives.

While the symposium will bring together more than 700 participants from across the province, the local engagement process in advance of the symposium is an opportunity to expand the conversation and bring many more voices and perspectives into the room to inform and enrich the dialogue.

A monthly Renewing the Promise Update Newsletter will be forwarded to Boards throughout the process of engagement, both pre - and post - Symposium.

Timeline for Engagement

March to May 2017: School Boards are asked to facilitate a local process of consultation and engagement in preparation for the symposium.

Pre-Symposium Engagement March – May 2017

Boards are asked to conduct a 45-60 minute face-to-face engagement session with a number of groups. This session would typically be included as part of previously scheduled meetings sometime between March 1, 2017 and May 19, 2017.
Suggested groups may include:

- Board of Trustees
- Senior Staff
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- Catholic Parent Involvement Council (CPIC)/Council of Chairs
- Principals and Vice Principals
- Student Senate
- Deanery/Deaneries
- Public town hall meeting (1-2)
- Other groups, as locally determined.

Following each face-to-face engagement session, participants should be asked to enter a response to 3 open-ended questions in an online discussion thread via Thoughtexchange.

Boards are encouraged to consider ways to extend the invitation to participate in the pre-Symposium consultation in order to maximize the opportunities for broad engagement of all employee groups, and community stakeholders within the timelines available. Boards will have the option of distributing a link to the on-line discussion thread to all employees and all parents. In this way, the opportunity for participation can reach far beyond the groups that may be invited to participate in face-to-face consultations. Thoughtexchange provides for participants to offer their comments and insights in the Share step. At a later date, participants are again invited into the process to prioritize the suggestions of other respondents in the Star step. The simple on-line process, which is done at the participants’ convenience, can result in unprecedented numbers of participants. It also allows the “silent majority” to contribute ideas and priorities and be a part of this process.

Sample Communications (email correspondence, newsletter or parish bulletin inserts) found in Appendix B are provided for your convenience, and may be adapted as appropriate to meet local needs.

**Face-to-Face Meetings Agenda (60 minutes)**

**PLEASE NOTE:** A Facilitator’s Guide, and PowerPoint Presentation to support these engagement sessions is provided in Appendix C

1. Prayer/Welcome/Introductions - 5 minutes
2. Overview of process – 5 minutes
3. Background information – 5 minutes
4. Table Discussion – 30 minutes
5. Large Group Consolidation of ideas – 15 minutes

**Questions for Face-to-Face Meetings**

You are invited to share your thoughts about 3 open-ended questions. It is suggested that 10-15 minutes be dedicated to discuss your responses to each question.

**QUESTION ONE**

From the Ontario Bishops’ Pastoral Letter “Fulfilling the Promise”
"The heart and soul of Catholic education is Jesus Christ, and our school system finds its very reason for existence in its communication of the Christian message. The goal of Catholic education is nothing less than a truly holistic formation of persons who will be living witnesses to the faith. ...We are needed as a full partner in the human quest for greater justice and truer community."

What are some ways that Catholic education in Ontario supports students to be living witnesses to their faith in Jesus Christ?

Discuss (10-15 minutes)

QUESTION TWO

What are some current challenges facing Catholic education in Ontario?

Discuss (10-15 minutes)

QUESTION THREE

What are some opportunities for Catholic education in Ontario that will help shape a positive future?

Discuss (10-15 minutes)

On-Line Participation - Share, Star, Discover

Participation begins with the face-to-face meeting and the discussion around three open-ended questions. Following the face-to-face session, participants are encouraged to share their responses to each question online. The online process is outlined below.

SHARE (Step 1) – Answer Questions

After today’s meeting, participants will receive an email link to the online Thoughtexchange process. You will be asked to self-register by providing your email address. This link is an invitation to respond to the same questions discussed at the face-to-face meeting. Each participant will enter their response to the questions online. Participating in the first SHARE step will take only ten to fifteen minutes. Participants may provide more than one thought in response to each question and can return to the process at any time during the Share phase to add additional thoughts. Across Catholic Ontario, this ‘sharing’ will generate thousands of thoughts and dozens of themes. This unique email-based participation is easy to access and complete.

Please note: We will uphold the principles of our Catholic faith as we share, ensuring that responses are polite and respectful. Please do not identify any person or student while sharing your thoughts. All responses that are disrespectful to a person or a group of people will be removed. Thoughts that name or identify a person or student will also be removed. Your email will not be directly linked to your thoughts however your thoughts may be shared out exactly as you have submitted them. Your privacy is important to us.
**STAR (Step 2) – Prioritize Ideas from Respondents in Board**

This second step takes place after all participants in your Board have completed the SHARE step described above. In this STAR (Step 2) each participant who engaged in the SHARE step will receive an invitation to assign stars to thoughts. Participants will see a subset of their own thoughts as well as the thoughts of others in their own school board. Participants will be asked to assign stars to the thoughts that they value most. Engaging in this online sharing step only takes about ten to fifteen minutes. By considering the perspectives of a diverse range of respondents, participants learn from each other and potentially shift priorities while allowing the most valuable thoughts, and not the most common thoughts, to surface. In this STAR (Step 2) the participant learns from the group responses within their own School Board. This step allows for group learning.

**STAR ½ (Step 2 continued) Prioritize Ideas from Respondents in the Province**

Comments and suggestions generated by the 37 School Boards (29 English and 8 French), in response to the same open-ended questions will be combined to provide an accurate scan of the provincial landscape. Participants will be invited back to engage in STAR ½. This round of facilitated, moderated on-line commentary will be opened to all respondents who participated in the SHARE and STAR steps and also for those who may not have participated.

The data will be collated, categorized and analyzed by Thoughtexchange and provided to ICE and OPECO by June 2017. This comprehensive snapshot, reflecting the lived experience of those involved in Catholic education today, as well as their perceptions of particular challenges and opportunities, will serve as the basis for the specific conversation that will unfold when Board teams gather to participate in the Symposium in November.

**DISCOVER (Step 3) – Province-Wide Learning**

In the Discover step, everyone learns what was important to the group as a whole. In this final stage, participants and Board teams will be invited to view an interactive report on the province-wide learning that resulted from the process. Participants will see the themes that emerged and even drill down to the individual thoughts submitted to see which thoughts were most valued by participants as a whole. This Discovery step builds confidence through the transparent sharing of results and contains information for leadership teams. This report will surface concerns and priorities and enable participants to speak to the needs of their individual Board and may inform planning and decision-making going forward.
At the Symposium

The broad-based engagement process supports the development of a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of our Catholic school communities that is contemporary and authentic. This data will be provided, in an accessible format, to Symposium participants, either in preparation for, and/or as part of the first session of the Symposium. It will be used to develop structured provincial questions that will be explored during the Symposium, ensuring that the dialogue develops from an accurate understanding of our current landscape of Catholic education in Ontario.

Renewing the Promise – A Pastoral Letter

Subsequently, the Bishops of Ontario will undertake to develop a pastoral letter, Renewing the Promise, which will reflect on the challenges and opportunities that accompany this moment in time in Catholic education in Ontario. This renewed vision of Catholic education in the province of Ontario will speak directly to those who share responsibility for Catholic education today, offering encouragement, guidance and support for our work in the coming years.
APPENDIX A
Tentative Schedule of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, November 14, 2017</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 AM – 9:00 AM</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9:00 AM – 10:15 AM | Plenary Session
|                    | English and French groups with participants assembled in Board teams. Translation available if required. |
| 10:15 AM – 10:30 AM| Break                                                                 |
| 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM| Dialogue #1 – Parallel Dialogues
|                    | English (Salon A) French (Salon B) Board team members distributed.    |
| 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM | Lunch                                                                  |
| 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM  | Dialogue #2 – Parallel Dialogues
|                    | English (Salon A) French (Salon B) Board team members distributed.    |
| 2:30 PM – 2:45 PM  | Break                                                                 |
| 2:45 PM – 4:15 PM  | Dialogue #3 – Parallel Dialogues
|                    | English (Salon A) French (Salon B) Participants in Board teams.       |
| 6:30 PM – 10:00 PM | Gala Dinner
|                    | *Celebrating the Living Legacy of our Religious Communities*           |
| **Wednesday, November 15, 2017** |                                                                         |
| 7:00 AM            | Registration                                                          |
| 7:30 AM – 9:00 AM  | Breakfast                                                              |
| 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM | Plenary Session
|                    | English and French groups with participants assembled in Board teams. Translation available if required. |
| 10:30 AM – 10:45 AM| Break                                                                 |
| 10:45 AM – 12:00 PM| Closing Eucharistic Celebration and Commissioning                      |
APPENDIX B

Across the province, School Boards use a variety of communication formats (e.g. website, school newsletters, board newsletters, social media, parish bulletins, etc.) to consult and share information with their respective stakeholders. Recognizing that this varies from board to board, you are encouraged to adapt the sample below and use to support your local efforts to build awareness and invite participation.

Sample Communication

Renewing the Promise:
Exploring the Critical Role of Catholic Education in Contemporary Society

We want to hear from you about Catholic education in Ontario! “Renewing the Promise” is a dialogue.

Your input about Catholic education in Ontario – the way it fulfills its mandate as well as the challenges and opportunities of the present moment - will help to guide us for the future.

You can offer your ideas and input on-line through Thought Exchange. Log in to: http://signup.thotex.com/iceont/Pyv to participate.

Thoughtexchange will provide background information and three open-ended questions that you answer anonymously. When the survey closes, responses will be sorted into themes. You will then be invited to look at emerging themes and prioritize them, locally and provincially.

Your ideas will provide important input for a gathering of the Catholic community later in the year on the theme of Renewing the Promise.

When the process is completed, results and analysis will be available on a designated public website. Catholic Education Week 2018 will be the occasion to celebrate all that we learned.

Join the dialogue!

Renewing the Promise Dialogue in Three Phases

1. SHARE - March 1 – May 19 Online dialogue begins with YOUR comments entered electronically into Thoughtexchange.
2. STAR - Late May, Thoughtexchange invites you back online to see YOUR comments and others’. You add virtual “stars” to the ideas generated locally that resonate most with you. Early June you add virtual stars to the ideas generated provincially that resonate most with you.
3. DISCOVER - September and October The results will be shared publicly.
APPENDIX C
Facilitator’s Guide and PowerPoint Presentation

Slide #1
In November there will be a provincial Symposium on Catholic Education entitled *RENEWING THE PROMISE: Exploring the Critical Role of Catholic Education in Contemporary Society.*

Slide #2
Here is some background information about the Symposium. In 1987, the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) and Office provincial de l’éducation de la foi catholique en Ontario (OPECO) were established by the Ontario Catholic Bishops to play an important role in animating and orchestrating the necessary cooperation between the various Catholic educational partners, and to provide support to 37 Catholic school boards (29 English and 8 French). Together, the two organizations work to promote and maintain publicly-funded Catholic schools animated by the Gospel and reflecting the tenets of the Catholic faith. One of the core objectives for ICE and OPECO established by the partners is a mandate “to arrange periodic gatherings of representatives from every sector of the Catholic education community for the purpose of exploring together contemporary issues in Catholic education.” The Symposium will be a gathering of representatives from every school board and stakeholder group from across the province.

Slide #3
The Symposium will take place on November 14th and 15th 2017, in Toronto.

This gathering brings together members of the Catholic Education Community, French and English, and provides opportunities for honest dialogue and discussion. The purpose is to elicit the insights and wisdom of the community on the theme of *Renewing the Promise: Exploring the Critical Role of Catholic Education in Contemporary Society.*
Slide #4
The symposium will provide opportunities for honest dialogue and discussion. We will identify the ways in which Catholic education contributes to the province of Ontario and to the common good, build a shared understanding of our collective challenges, and collaboratively and creatively explore the opportunities that allow us to bring the truth and wisdom of our faith tradition into the context of this particular time and place. Within the faith tradition of the Catholic church, our holistic view of the human person, and our understanding of what constitutes the ‘common good’ may sometimes be at variance with some of the assumptions and perspectives held by contemporary culture in a secular society. Catholic schools have the opportunity to introduce the wisdom of our faith tradition into this ongoing and dynamic societal conversation. In every age, Catholics are challenged to be a leaven in society as a service to others and we are needed as a full partner in the human quest for greater justice and truer community.

Slide #5
Following the symposium, the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario plans to develop a pastoral letter reflecting on the challenges and opportunities that accompany this moment in time. The letter will speak directly to those who share responsibility in Catholic education, renewing the vision of Catholic education in the province of Ontario and offering encouragement, guidance and support for this work in the coming years.

Slide #6
The symposium will bring together more than 700 participants from across the province. We will have a team representing the board who will attend the Symposium. The local engagement process in advance of the symposium is an opportunity to expand the conversation and bring many more voices, and perspectives into the room to inform and enrich the dialogue. They want to hear from us, and it is important that our voices are heard!
Slide #7
How will they do that?
The process used to engage the Catholic community is called Thoughtexchange. It enables many participants to provide important input and facilitates building consensus around emerging directions, opportunities and initiatives. You are invited to participate in the Thoughtexchange process beginning here at this meeting and continuing in a simple online process in the days to come. Today, we will explore together some open-ended questions and solicit your ideas and opinions about them. You will then be provided with an online link to self-register and access the Thoughtexchange process. This link enables participants in all boards to provide input about the same set of questions. The simple online process results in contributions from an unprecedented number of participants who may provide ideas and priorities at a time that is convenient for them.

Slide #8
Your participation begins with our meeting today where our conversation will focus around three open-ended questions. You are encouraged to share your thoughts on each question.

NOTE TO FACILITATOR:
You will now have an opportunity to discuss the three questions, and solicit input from the group. Depending on the size of your meeting, you will want to form small groups at this point. Ensure participants have a pen or pencil and copies of the Participant’s Notes Pages for Face-to-face Meetings (Appendix D). It is suggested that you provide each question one at a time, as it is discussed so that participants can stay present to the task and not think ahead. Participants can take their own notes on that sheet, and can use those notes to inform the online input that follows this meeting.

Slide #9
And so we begin with prayer.

NOTE TO FACILITATOR:
This process is intended to encourage discernment
You are invited to share your thoughts on three questions. We will take 10-15 minutes on each question to discuss your responses. After our time together, you will have the opportunity to contribute your own thinking about these questions through the Thoughtexchange process.

Here is Question One. It begins with a quote from the Ontario Bishops’ Pastoral Letter “Fulfilling the Promise.” “The heart and soul of Catholic education is Jesus Christ, and our school system finds its very reason for existence in its communication of the Christian message. The goal of Catholic education is nothing less than a truly holistic formation of persons who will be living witnesses to the faith. … We are needed as a full partner in the human quest for greater justice and truer community.”

What are some ways that Catholic education in Ontario supports students to be living witnesses to their faith in Jesus Christ?

Discuss (10-15 minutes)

Invite participants to make notes about the points they wish to remember so they can share through Thoughtexchange.

Here is Question Two.

What are some current challenges facing Catholic education in Ontario?

Discuss (10-15 minutes)

Invite participants to make notes about the points they wish to remember so they can share through Thoughtexchange.

Here is the final QUESTION

In your view, what are some current opportunities presented to Catholic education in Ontario that will help shape a positive future?

Discuss (10-15 minutes)

Invite participants to make notes about the points they wish to remember so they can share through Thoughtexchange.
Slide #13

The next slides provide an overview of the process that will follow.

Slide #14

SHARE (step 1) – Answer Questions

You will soon receive an email with a link to the online Thoughtexchange process. You will be asked to self-register by providing your email address. This link is an invitation to respond to the same questions we’ve discussed at our face-to-face meeting. Each of you is asked to enter the answers to the questions online. Participating in the first SHARE step will take only ten to fifteen minutes. You may provide more than one thought in response to each question and can return to the process at any time during the Share phase to add additional thoughts. Across Catholic Ontario, this ‘sharing’ will generate thousands of thoughts and dozens of themes.

Your email will not be directly linked to your thoughts however your thoughts may be shared out exactly as you have submitted them. Your privacy is important to us.

Slide #15

Please remember: We will uphold the principles of our Catholic faith as we share, ensuring that responses are polite and respectful. Please do not identify any person or student while sharing your thoughts.

Naturally, all responses that are rude or hurtful to a person or a group of people will be removed. Thoughts that name or identify a person or student will also be removed.

Please note: We will uphold the principles of our Catholic faith as we share, ensuring that responses are polite and respectful. Please do not identify any person or student while sharing your thoughts. All responses that are disrespectful to a person or a group of people will be removed. Thoughts that name or identify a person or student will also be removed.
Slide #16
Star (step 2) – Prioritize Ideas from Respondents in our Board
This second step takes place after all participants in the 29 Catholic and 8 French Catholic boards have completed the SHARE step described above.

In this STAR step each participant who engaged in the SHARE step will be shown their own thoughts surrounded by the thoughts of others in our own school board. You will be asked to assign stars to each thought that you value as well as indicating how much value you place on each thought.

Engaging in this online sharing step only takes another ten to fifteen minutes. By considering the perspectives of a diverse range of respondents, we all will learn from each other and potentially shift priorities while allowing the most valuable thoughts, and not the most common thoughts to surface. In this step we will learn from the group and individual responses within our own school board.

Slide #17
STAR ½ (Step 2 Continued) – Prioritize Ideas From Respondents in the Province
Comments and suggestions generated by the 37 school boards (29 English Catholic boards and 8 French Catholic boards), in response to the same open-ended questions will be combined to provide an accurate scan of the provincial landscape. Participants will be invited back to engage in STAR ½. This round of facilitated, moderated on-line commentary will be opened to all respondents who participated in the SHARE and STAR steps and also for those who may not have participated.

The data will be collated, and categorized by Thoughtexchange and provided to ICE and OPECO by June 2017 for analysis. This comprehensive snapshot, reflecting the lived experience of those involved in Catholic education today, as well as their perceptions of particular challenge and opportunity, will serve as the basis for the specific conversation that will unfold when board teams gather to participate in the symposium in November.

Slide #18
DISCOVER (Step 3) – Province Wide Learning
In the Discover step, everyone learns what was important to the group as a whole. In this final stage, participants and board teams will be invited to view an interactive report on the province-wide learning that resulted from the process. Participants will see the themes that emerged and even drill down to the individual thoughts submitted to see which thoughts were most valued by participants as a whole. This
Discovery step builds confidence through the transparent sharing of results and contains useful information for school board teams.

**Slide #19**

Material from the Discovery phase, reflective of the wisdom and perspectives of community members from across the province, will be used to design the Agenda and discussions to be explored at the Symposium. Our board will be represented by a team at the Symposium. This process of engagement and discussion will enable those attending to speak to the hopes, ideas and concerns of our individual school board and will inform the participation of our school Board team. We will report back about the discussions.

**Slide #20**

Subsequently, the Bishops of Ontario will undertake to develop a pastoral letter, *Renewing the Promise*, which will reflect on the challenges and opportunities that accompany this moment in time in Catholic education in Ontario. This renewed vision of Catholic education in the province of Ontario will speak directly to those who share responsibility for Catholic education today, offering encouragement, guidance and support for our work in the coming years.

**Slide #21**

Thank you for participating in this important initiative.

**NOTE TO FACILITATOR**

*Be sure to build in a few minutes to respond to questions*
APPENDIX D
Participant’s Notes for Face-to-Face Meetings

Participants Notes

QUESTION #1
What are some ways that Catholic education in Ontario supports students to be living witnesses to their faith in Jesus Christ?

QUESTION #2
What are some current challenges facing Catholic education in Ontario?

QUESTION #3
What are some opportunities for Catholic education in Ontario that will help to shape a positive future?
APPENDIX E
Renewing the Promise – Board Checklist

☐ Designate a Board contact person to communicate with ICE Office and advise renewingthepromise@iceont.ca by March 10, 2017.

☐ Assemble Board Team

☐ Register Board Team (Registration will open March 21, 2017)

☐ Schedule local consultation and engagement meeting dates. Invite participants (Mar. 1 – May 19, 2017)

☐ Communicate as determined locally:  
  - Board and school websites  
  - Board and school newsletters  
  - Parish Bulletins  
  - Social Media

☐ Complete face-to-face meetings and online participation

☐ Review monthly Renewing the Promise Newsletter Updates
APPENDIX F
Technical Requirements – Information and Board Checklist

Participation rates improve when participants recognize the “sender” of an email. So, while the Thoughtexchange system sends out every communication, each Board is requested to create an email address that we can use as this “sender”.

☐ Please create an email address using the following format:

RenewingThePromise@XXXXX (replacing XXXXX with your board domain email)

e.g. RenewingThePromise@wellingtoncdsb.ca

☐ Send the new email address, together with the full name of your school board, to renewingthepromise@iceont.ca. This will ensure invitations to participate are sent via this customized email address unique to your school board. The email inbox created should be monitored in case someone within your community replies with questions or concerns.

☐ Identify a contact person within your IT department who can be contacted should technical issues arise and advise renewingthepromise@iceont.ca.

Any questions or concerns that you are unable to address can be forwarded to renewingthepromise@iceont.ca.

Any type of technical or Thoughtexchange related questions can also be forwarded either to renewingthepromise@iceont.ca or to our Thoughtexchange facilitator, Christine Duguay at christine.duguay@thoughtexchange.com.
Exploring the Critical Role of Catholic Education in Contemporary Society
Symposium:
November 14 – 15, 2017
ASSEMBLY OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE DES ÉVÊQUES CATHOLIQUES DE L’ONTARIO
Let us all pray …

God of wisdom,

inspire us as we reflect together about Catholic Education in Ontario.

Support us to share our best thinking about the gift of Catholic schools.

Help us to recognize both the opportunities and the challenges presented to us by this moment in our history.

Enable us to listen deeply and respectfully to one another,

and to all members of our Catholic community,

as we seek the way forward together in faith.

We make this prayer in Jesus’ name.

Amen.
Question One

From the Ontario Bishops’ Pastoral Letter “Fulfilling the Promise”. “The heart and soul of Catholic education is Jesus Christ, and our school system finds its very reason for existence in its communication of the Christian message. The goal of Catholic education is nothing less than a truly holistic formation of persons who will be living witnesses to the faith. …We are needed as a full partner in the human quest for greater justice and truer community.”

What are some ways that Catholic education in Ontario supports students to be living witnesses to their faith in Jesus Christ?

Discuss (10-15 minutes)
Question Two

What are some current challenges facing Catholic education in Ontario?

Discuss (10-15 minutes)
Question Three

What are some current opportunities presented for Catholic education in Ontario that will help shape a positive future?

Discuss (10-15 minutes)
Next Steps
Remember!
2

STAR
February 8, 2017

Ms. Deb Crawford
President
Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officer’s Association
730 Courtneypark Dr. W.
Mississauga ON L5W 1L9

Mr. Patrick J. Daly
President
Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association (OCSTA)
Box 2064, Suite 1804
20 Eglinton Avenue West
Toronto ON M4R 1K8

Dear Ms. Crawford and Mr. Daly,

Thank you for your letter and submission on behalf of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association and the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers’ Association regarding Ontario’s Well-Being Strategy for Education Discussion Document. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

Let me begin by stating how much our government appreciates the commitment and dedication of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association and the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers’ Association to the students of Ontario. Ontario’s publicly funded Catholic schools and its system leaders continue to be models of excellence in education that are emulated around the world. We value and will continue to rely on your expertise and leadership as we collectively and collaboratively move forward on promoting and supporting the well-being of students and staff within our publicly funded education system.

Thank you for your response and specific recommendations on the discussion document. As you know, since we released our engagement paper on well-being, Well-Being in Our Schools, Strength in our Society, we have been engaging with partners all across the province to discuss student well-being in our schools. We are looking for critical insights on three themes: understanding well-being, promoting and supporting well-being, and knowing our impact. This is intended to further our progress and better understand the opportunities and challenges in ensuring students’ needs are being met. We would welcome any additional feedback from your organizations on the specific discussion questions within the paper.

.../2
I assure you that the voices of those within our Catholic community will continue to be vital as we further explore and understand well-being in Ontario’s education system. We value your participation and the insight you offer as part of the Well-Being Advisory Committee. We look forward to working with you, fellow members of the Committee and our many other partners to discuss feedback from the engagement process and our next steps.

We will continue to build on the discussions and work already happening to promote well-being in our schools. We will use this input to help move to the next level, and improve our publicly funded education system.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to achieving our shared vision for education and for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

Mitzie Hunter, MBA
Minister
Response to

Ontario's Well-Being Strategy for Education

Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association

Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association

December 2016
Response to Ontario’s Well-Being Strategy for Education

The Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association and the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers’ Association jointly submit this review of the Ontario Well-Being Document on behalf of trustees, Directors of Education and Superintendents of Ontario’s Catholic School Boards. We applaud the Ministry of Education’s interest in this area, an area that Catholic Education has addressed for many years both in a curriculum fashion and in support of our students and staff. As representatives in the Catholic community we have some strong concerns with the current Well-Being Strategy and anticipate that our commentary will be incorporated into the final documents.

Ontario’s Well-Being Strategy for Education acknowledges that there are four publicly funded school systems in the province. As well, the document recognizes the public and Francophone school districts along with references to Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. It also states the importance of the engagement process recognizing the unique needs and realities of these groups (page 2). However, the Well-Being Strategy document fails to reference the unique mission and vision of the Catholic school system.

Reference is made to “spirit” as part of well-being but is not identified in the Four Domains of Well-Being. The concept of spirituality is one of the important concepts of well-being for people of faith. This is true not only in the Catholic community, but also for those who view their life through a spiritual lens, guided by their religious beliefs, many of whom are in Catholic schools but many also are in the other publicly funded systems of education in Ontario.

We also would ask that the document specifically include the Well-Being of all students and staff who work within our school system.

Based on the above rationale, we have reviewed the document and respectfully submit the following recommendations on behalf of our two associations:

Recommendation #1

- The term “Spirituality” should be added to the Four Domains of Well-Being. Specifically, when “cognitive, emotional, social, and physical needs” are referenced, e.g. pages 1, 6, 7 and 10.
- Importantly, under the Four Domains of Well-Being which is found on page 3, “Spirituality” must be included in the graphic.
- The Handbook of Catholic Theology defines Spirituality as “the personal relationship of a human being with God or the transcendent along with all the attitudes and values this relationship includes.” It is from this fundamental relationship that all other relationships within the community are affected.

Recommendation #2

- In defining community partners “churches, parishes, and religious groups” should be explicitly referenced, e.g. pages 1 and 3.
Recommendation #3

- Catholic education addresses the search for meaning, this desire of the person to understand human life as an integration of body, mind, and spirit. Rooted in this vision, Catholic education fosters the search for meaning as a lifelong spiritual and academic quest. The expectations guiding the journey of learning for all students in Catholic schools, therefore, are described not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but necessarily in terms of values, attitudes and actions informed by reason and faith (Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations). Therefore, “values” should be added to the phrase “knowledge and skills,” e.g. pages 1 and 2.

Recommendation #4

- The education system strives to ensure that students become confident, capable, and caring citizens (page 2). A specific goal of the Catholic school system is to ensure a just and inclusive society. Therefore, specific references should be made to the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations.

Recommendation #5

- While the Health and Physical Education Curriculum does provide opportunities for students to learn about well-being, in Catholic schools this is best taught through the Religious Education and Family Life Education programs.

Recommendation #6

- Because Chaplains/Chaplaincy Leaders, Pastoral Workers, and Faith Animators play a significant role in supporting student well-being they should be acknowledged along with the School Mental Health Lead. (School Mental Health ASSIST, page 5)

Recommendation #7

Whenever mention is made of education partners (parents, educators, staff, leaders, and students), add religious leaders, clergy, and pastoral workers, e.g. pages 2 and 8.

Recommendation #8

The Catholic Church has always embraced a holistic view of the human person. Therefore, add “Catholic” to the following phrase on page 2, “First Nation, Métis, Inuit cultures and Catholic perspectives which adopt a holistic view of well-being are also a critical element that will shape the conversation.”

Recommendation #9

Other aspects of the “Well-Being Strategy” should address supports for anxiety disorders, suicide awareness and suicide prevention as well as eating disorders.
While reviewing the document we noted some possible editorial changes.

They include:

1. Under the section *What is Ontario’s Well-Being Strategy for Education*, we suggest that the boxed reference to the Early Years Strategy should be removed and the section should begin with the four key components on page 5 and the chart which would include “Spiritual”.

2. Following the above point there seems to be a need for consistency throughout the document in acknowledging the intended audience. Early Years? K-12? Staff? Whenever “staff” is mentioned, we suggest using “all staff.”

3. The graphic on page 3 should be revised to be more inclusive.

4. There should be specific examples from all four publicly funded school systems and explicit reference should be made to the *Four Domains of Well-Being*. The Notre Dame High School example fits these criteria and might be referenced at the beginning of the document.

5. If research is mentioned, then there is a need for citations and/or a bibliography (page 6).

6. On page 6 – rather than “starting in the fall of 2016” begin with “As we go forward…”

7. On page 7, paragraph 4 - does “them” refer to the “key factors”?

8. The two page questionnaire which concludes the document needs clarification. It is from the Institute of Education Leadership which has not been referenced in the document. Who would be the recipient of the response to this two-page document? The first question refers to the working definition without defining it. There needs to be clarity around who might be completing the questionnaire and to whom to address the response.

9. The questionnaire should be a Word document.

10. Questions could be numbered.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Daly, President OCSTA

Deb Crawford, President OCSOA
February 27, 2017

TO: Chairs and Directors of Education
   - Catholic District School Boards

CC: Senior Human Resource Officials and Senior Business Officials

FROM: Patrick Daly, President

RE: Update on Provincial Benefits Trusts

Over the last few months staff of the trustee associations, the government, teacher federations, unions and the principal/viceincipal associations have been proceeding with the plans to transition employee life, health and dental benefits to one of the provincial Employee Life and Health Trusts (ELHT). In addition, there have been discussions with representatives of the various other non-union groups, including the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE), Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers Association (OCSOA), Ontario Public Supervisory Officers Associations (OPSOA), Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO), Ontario Catholic School Business Officials Association (OCSBOA) and l’Association des gestionnaires de l’éducation franco-ontarienne (AGÉFO) and Conseil des associations en education pour les avantages sociaux - Education Council of Associations for Benefits (CAEAS-ECAB). CAEAS-ECAB was formed to represent the interests of all non-union employees not represented by one of the other provincial associations. The goal has been to transfer benefits for all 200,000 education sector employees in Ontario to an ELHT by August 31, 2017, however, extensions have been granted to some of the employee groups as noted below.

The ELHTs for the four teacher affiliates have been established and the boards of trustees have been meeting. The first “wave” of teachers from OECTA, OSSTF and ETFO were transferred on November 1, 2016. Wave 2 transitioned on February 1, 2017 and further waves are scheduled for April 1 and June 1, 2017.

The Ontario Teachers’ Insurance Plan (OTIP) is the administrator for the four teacher affiliated ELHTs although benefits are provided through Manulife Financial. The transfer of the wave 1 boards was successful for the majority of employees, however, there were some gaps in the information and some unexpected omissions which are being corrected. Wave 2 was more successful with only a few issues to resolve. OTIP is working with the unions, trustee associations and school boards to resolve these issues and prepare for the next wave of participating school boards.
As well as teachers, some education workers represented by OSSTF and ETFO have also been transferred to either the OSSTF or ETFO ELHT and others will be transferred to the trust in subsequent waves. Employees represented by CUPE, EWAO (Education Workers of Ontario) or OCEW (Ontario Council of Education Works) are not scheduled to transfer to an ELHT as yet. As you are aware, the recent tentative extension agreement with CUPE provides that the CUPE ELHT will be established by May 1, 2017 and all CUPE employees will be transferred to the trust by February 1, 2018. Discussions will begin soon regarding a trust agreement. We continue to meet with EWAO and OCEW to review options for their members. In accordance with the central terms of the applicable collective agreements EWAO and OCEW will join one of the teacher affiliate ELHTs or the CUPE ELHT.

The trustee associations have been meeting regularly with representatives of the principals and vice-principals’ associations and representatives of CAEAS-ECAB, representing the non-union school board employees as noted above. They have appointed their trustees and we will be working with their representatives to establish a trust agreement. This group will be issuing a “Request for Proposal” to various insurance companies to provide administrative and adjudication services.

The Letters of Agreement regarding benefits in the collective agreements provide for benefits for occasional teachers, casual education workers and retirees where those provisions exist in local collective agreements. We continue to work with the various unions and the Crown to develop benefit plans for these groups who are eligible for benefits. School boards must maintain benefits locally until provincial benefits plans are developed and these employees or retired employees transfer to the appropriate provincial plan. Benefits for these groups are only applicable where provisions exist in local collective agreements.

We expect the staff who are members of the teacher affiliates will transition to an ELHT by August 31, 2017. Some other employee groups, in addition to CUPE, may require additional time. OCSTA will keep school boards informed about the transition to provincial benefits plans. If your staff have questions about any of the provincial benefits plans please do not hesitate to contact Wally Easton, Policy Advisor – Finance and Labour at weaston@ocsta.on.ca.