



## Board of Trustees' Board Meeting

Date: Monday, December 14, 2020

Time: 6:00 p.m.

*\* Committee of the Whole In Camera, if necessary, will precede or follow the Board Meeting, as appropriate.*

Location: Virtual

**Attendees:**

**Board of Trustees:**

Bill Conway, Manuel da Silva, Kevin Dupuis, Jeanne Gravelle, Wendy Price, Greg Reitzel, Brian Schmalz, Melanie Van Alphen (Chair), Tracey Weiler

**Student Representatives:**

Abby Barbosa, Kate Morrison

**Senior Administration:**

Loretta Notten, Jason Connolly, Maria Ivankovic, John Klein, Shesh Maharaj, Judy Merkel, Richard Olson, Laura Shoemaker

**Special Resource:**

**Recording Secretary:**

Alice Figueiredo

ITEM	Who	Agenda Section	Method & Outcome
1. Call to Order	Chair		
1.1 Opening Prayer & Memorials	Board Pastoral Team		
1.2 Territorial Acknowledgement I (we) would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather today is the land traditionally used by the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and Neutral People. I (we) also acknowledge the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge, laws and philosophies of the Indigenous People with whom we share this land today.	Chair		
1.3 Approval of Agenda	Board of Trustees		Approval
1.4 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest 1.4.1 From the current meeting 1.4.2 From a previous public or in-camera meeting	Individual Trustees		
1.5 Items for Action: In-camera meeting of December 14, 2020 regarding Real Estate matters.	Board of Trustees		Approval
<b>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)</b>			

ITEM	Who	Agenda Section	Method & Outcome
<b>3. Consent Agenda: Board (Minutes of meetings, staff report)</b>			
3.1 Approval of Minutes of Regular and Special Meetings 3.1.1 Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes of November 23, 2020 and Board of Trustee Meeting of December 7, 2020 3.2 SEAC Minutes of November 4, 2020 3.3 Updated Trustee Committee Assignments	Board of Trustees Board of Trustees Board of Trustees	pp.4-9 pp.10-18 pp.19	Approval Information Information
<b>4. Delegations/Presentation</b>			
<b>5. Advice from the CEO</b>			
5.1 Director's Update 5.2 FSL Program Update 5.3 Equity Action Plan Report 5.4 Revised Estimates – Impacts on Approved Budget 5.5 Annual Report on Accumulated Surpluses 5.6 Update on WCDSB COVID Education Delivery Plan 5.7 Director's Annual Report	L. Notten J. Klein/J. Kruithof R. Olson S. Maharaj S. Maharaj L. Notten L. Notten	pp.20-22 pp.23-26 pp.27-31 pp.32-35 pp.36-38 pp.39-41 pp.42-43	Information Information Information Approval Approval Information Approval
<b>6. Ownership Linkage (Communication with the External Environment)</b>			
<b>7. Reports from Board Committees/Task Forces</b>			
7.1 Student Trustee Update	A. Barbosa, K. Morrison	pp.44-46	Information
<b>8. Board Education (at the request of the Board)</b>			
8.1 Chair's Update (Verbal) 8.2 OCSTA/CCSTA Communications	Chair Chair	pp.47-120	Information Information
<b>9. Policy Discussion</b>			
<b>10. Assurance of Successful Board Performance</b>			
<b>10.1 Board Policy Review</b>			
10.1.1 Board Policy I 001 Ends - Broad Policy Provision Is there a need to review the Policy?	Board of Trustees	pp.121-122	Approval
10.1.2 Board Policy II 005 Consultation Is there a need to review the Policy?	G. Reitzel	pp.123	Approval
<b>11. Assurance of Successful Director of Education Performance</b>			
11.1 Monitoring Reports & Vote on Compliance			
<b>12. Potential Agenda Items/Trustee Inquiry Report (CEO)</b>			
<b>12.1 Trustee Inquiry Report from the CEO</b>			
<b>12.2 Shared concerns</b>			

ITEM	Who	Agenda Section	Method & Outcome
<b>13. Announcements</b>			
<b>13.1</b> Upcoming Meetings/Events (all scheduled for the Catholic Education Centre unless otherwise indicated): •Dec 17: CEC Virtual Christmas Liturgy & Celebration •Jan 6: SEAC •Jan 11: COW •Jan 12: CPIC •Jan 15: OCSTA Human Rights & Equity Training Session •Jan 16: OCSTA Virtual Seminar •Jan 18: Governance •Jan 19: Audit Committee Meeting •Jan 25: Board of Trustees Meeting	Chair		Information
<b>13.2</b> Pending Items: <b>13.3</b> Pending Items for OCSTA Consideration	<u>Committee/Task Force</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>
<b>14. Items for the Next Meeting Agenda</b>	Trustees		
<b>15. Adjournment</b>	Director of Education		
<b>Confirm decisions made tonight</b>			
15.1 Confirm Decision made tonight	Recording Secretary	--	Information
<b>16. Closing Prayer</b>			
<b>17. Motion to Adjourn</b>	Board of Trustees	Motion	Approval

### ***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



## **Board of Trustees' Board Meeting**

A public meeting of the Board of Trustees was held Virtually via Teams on November 23, 2020.

### **Trustees Present:**

Bill Conway (Chair), Kevin Dupuis, Manuel da Silva, Jeanne Gravelle, Wendy Price, Greg Reitzel, Brian Schmalz, Melanie Van Alphen, Tracey Weiler

### **Student Trustees Present:**

Abby Barbosa & Kate Morrison

### **Administrative Officials Present:**

Loretta Notten, Jason Connolly, Maria Ivankovic, John Klein, Shesh Maharaj, Judy Merkel, Richard Olson, Laura Shoemaker

### **Special Resources For The Meeting:**

### **Regrets:**

### **Recorder:**

Alice Figueiredo, 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.

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## **1. Call to Order:**

The Chair of the Board called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **1.1 Opening Prayer & Memorials**

The meeting opened with prayer by Trustee da Silva.

### **1.2 Territorial Acknowledgment**

The Territorial Acknowledgement was declared by Trustee Conway.

### **1.3 Approval of Agenda**

**2020-240-- It was moved by Trustee Schmalz seconded by Trustee Price**

**THAT the agenda for Monday, November 23, 2020, be now approved. --- Carried by *consensus*.**

### **1.4 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**

1.3.1 From the current meeting – NIL

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



### 1.5 Items for Action:

2020-241-- It was moved by Trustee Weiler seconded by Trustee da Silva:

THAT the Items for Action for:

- In-camera meeting of November 9th, 2020 regarding HRS Matters
- Private, Private, Private meeting of November 9th, 2020 regarding HRS Matters
- Private, Private meeting of November 9th, 2020 regarding HRS matters; and
- In-camera meeting of November 23rd, 2020 regarding HRS matters

be now approved. --- Carried by *consensus*.

## 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)

### Approval of Minutes of Regular and Special Meetings

#### 3.1 Approval of Minutes of Regular and Special Meetings

##### 3.1.1 Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes of October 26, 2020

#### 3.2 SEAC Minutes of October 7, 2020

#### 3.3 Audit Minutes of September 30, 2020

#### 3.4 CPIC Minutes of September 29, 2020

#### 3.5 Financial Statements/Year End Report

#### 3.6 Audit Committee Annual Report approval

2020-242- It was moved by Trustee Price and seconded by Trustee Dupuis:

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

## 3 Delegations

## 4 Advice from the CEO

### 5.1 Director's Update

Director Notten provided the Board of Trustees with an update on the various virtual meetings attended provincially and locally.

### 5.2 ESL and ELD at the WCDSB

Superintendent Klein introduced ESL/ELD Student Achievement Consultants Carrie Mage and Barbara McCourt who provided the Board of Trustees with a presentation on ESL and ELD at the Board. An update on Samuel's Journey to Canada was provided, recent article in The Record was highlighted along data and current classroom practices.

Trustees asked clarifying questions and provided feedback.

### 5.3 Special Education Update

Superintendent Shoemaker introduced the presentation on Special Education Update and her team of presenters including Gerald Foran, Principal of Educational Community Partnership Programs & Student Services and Tee Battistella, Senior Manager of Special Education. Items discussed include return to learn model, highlights of the ABA Discipline Logic Model, Covid-19 Resources, Assistive Technology & Professional Development update, Vision, Hearing & Gifted Itinerant Teachers update and Educational & Community Partnerships Program with the Board.

### 5.4 Mental Health Update

Erin Schreiter, Lead Social Worker provided the Board of Trustees with an extensive report and update on Mental Health within the Board. The Mentally Healthy Return to School Toolkit was introduced along with the video resources created for parents and student and the Board Mental Health focus for 2020-21.

#### **5.4 Update on WCDSB COVID Education Delivery Plan**

Director Notten provided an update on the COVID Education Delivery Plan. Report included updated statics, unpacking of Thoughtexchange survey results, ongoing work with secondary schools on best modality moving forward and budget impact.

Trustees asked clarifying questions and provided feedback.

#### **6. Board Education (at the request of the Board)**

#### **7. Reports From Board Committees/Task Forces**

7.1 Student Trustees provided an update on activities hosted by schools and Student Trustee initiatives.

#### **8. Board Education (at the request of the Board)**

##### **8.1 Chair's Report**

Chair Conway provided report on meetings attended.

##### **8.2 OCSTA/CCSTA Communications**

Chair Conway briefly discussed communications.

#### **9 Policy Discussion**

#### **10 Assurance of Successful Board Performance**

##### **10.1 Board Policy II 004 Advocacy and Advertising**

Trustee Schmalz confirmed review of Board Policy II 004 Advocacy and Advertising and confirmed that the Board is in compliance.

Reviewed it and believe in compliance

2020-243 -- It was moved by Trustee Schmalz and seconded by Trustee Price:

**THAT the Board of Trustees reviewed Board Policy II 004 Advocacy and Advertising and find that the Board is in compliance. --- Carried by consensus**

Is there a need to Review the Policy? No

#### **11 Assurance of Successful Director of Education Performance**

##### **11.1 Monitoring Reports & Vote on Compliance**

#### **12 Potential Agenda Items**

##### **12.1 Trustee Inquiry Report from the CEO**

##### **12.2 Shared Concerns**

#### **13 Announcements**

##### **13.1 Upcoming Meetings/Events (all scheduled for the Catholic Education Centre unless otherwise indicated):**

Discussed upcoming events.

##### **13.2 Pending Items:**

##### **13.3 Pending Items for OCSTA Consideration**

#### **14 Items for the Next Meeting Agenda**

#### **15 Adjournment – Confirm decisions made tonight.**

15.1 The Recording Secretary confirmed the meeting decisions.

## **16 Closing Prayer**

## **17 Motion to Adjourn**

2020-244 -- It was moved by Trustee da Silva and seconded by Trustee Reitzel:

THAT the meeting be now adjourned. The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 8:58 p.m.

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Chair of the Board

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Secretary



## **Board of Trustees' Annual General Meeting**

A public meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on Monday, December 7, 2020 Virtually via Teams.

**Trustees Present:**

Bill Conway, Manuel da Silva, Kevin Dupuis, Jeanne Gravelle, Wendy Price, Greg Reitzel, Brian Schmalz, Melanie Van Alphen, Tracey Weiler

**Student Trustees Present:**

Abby Barbosa & Kate Morrison

**Administrative Officials Present:**

Loretta Notten, Jason Connolly, Maria Ivankovic, John Klein, Shesh Maharaj, Judy Merkel, Richard Olson, Laura Shoemaker

**Special Resources For The Meeting:**

**Regrets:**

**Recorder:**

Alice Figueiredo, 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.

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### **1. Call to Order:**

The Secretary of the Board called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

### **2. Opening Prayer & Memorials**

Father Joseph de Viveiros led in prayer.

### **3. Territorial Acknowledgement**

Territorial Acknowledgement declared by Trustee Conway.

### **4. Roll Call**

All Trustees were present.

### **5. Declaration and Signing of Oath of Allegiance**

Trustees together made their declaration verbally. Once all Trustees return to the Board office in person, a hard copy will be distributed for signature.

## **6. Election of the Chair**

### **6.1 Election of the Chair**

The Secretary asked for nominations for Chair of the Board. Trustee Price put forth Trustee Van Alphen's name. The Secretary asked Trustee Van Alphen if she accepted the nomination and she did. Trustee Schmalz seconded the nomination. The Secretary asked if there were further nominations for Chair of the Board three times. No further nominations were received. Trustee Van Alphen was elected as Chair of the Board.

**2020-01 -- It was moved by Trustee Price and seconded by Schmalz:  
THAT Melanie Van Alphen is nominated to be Chair of the Board of Trustees.**

## **7. Election of the Vice-Chair**

### **7.1 Election of the Vice-Chair**

The Chair asked for nominations for Vice-chair of the Board. Trustee Price put forth Trustee Gravelle's name. The Chair asked if Trustee Gravelle accepted the nomination and she did. Trustee Reitzel seconded the nomination. The Chair asked if there were further nominations for Vice-chair of the Board three times. No further nominations were received. Trustee Gravelle was elected as Vice-chair of the Board.

**2020-02 -- It was moved by Trustee Price and seconded by Trustee Reitzel:  
THAT Jeanne Gravelle is nominated to be Vice-chair of the Board of Trustees.**

## **8. Inaugural Remarks by the Chair of the Board**

Chair Van Alphen gave her inaugural remarks and appreciation for celebrant Fr. Joseph.

## **9. Motion to Adjourn**

**2020-03-- It was moved by Trustee Gravelle and seconded by Trustee da Silva:  
THAT the meeting be now adjourned.**

The Meeting was adjourned by consensus at 7:24 p.m.

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Chair of the Board


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Secretary



## SEAC Committee Meeting Minutes

<b>Date&amp; Time:</b>	November 4 <sup>th</sup> 2020 at 6:00 p.m.
<b>Location:</b>	Teams Meeting
<b>Next Meeting:</b>	December 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2020
<b>Committee Members:</b> Kim Murphy, John Gilbert, Tracey Weiler, Jeanne Gravelle, Irene Holdbrook, Sue Simpson, Sarah Van Dyke	
<b>Administrative Officials:</b> Laura Shoemaker, Gerald Foran	
<b>Regrets:</b> Sarah Van Dyke	

<b>1. Opening Prayer</b>  <b>Welcome</b>	G. Foran
<b>2. Approval of Agenda</b>  Motion by: Tracey Weiler Seconded: Karen Kovats	
<b>3. Declared Pecuniary Interest</b> N/A	
<b>4. Approval of the October 7<sup>th</sup> Minutes</b>  Motion by: Jeanne Gravelle Seconded: Tracey Weiler	
<b>5. School System Operational Business</b>  <b>5.1. Assistive Technology</b>  	C. Runstedler

## A few Highlights...

Home Training; switch shipped to the home; training done virtually via team meet with the parent, student, SET, Vision Teacher, principal



## Blue2 Bluetooth switch



More Highlights...the power of dictation...  
from 104 words to 538 words

It's so hot doggy Is there any  
near lakes you know I don't know  
any but I know one that's Four.

What's Wonder doggy. It's so hot.  
Okay doggie now we're at the  
Wake what do you want to do  
now that we're at the wake. Do  
you want to jump in doggie says.  
Who is now with cooled off  
where you want to go now  
doggy. Doggie says let's go out  
of this wood so we can not get  
hot and go somewhere very cool.  
Well there's only one place that's  
cool the dog house.

[illegible]

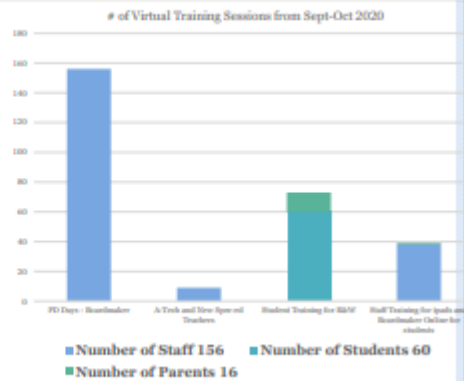
SEA – Special  
Equipment  
Amount

- Ministry of Education Grant; per pupil allotment
- Overall mandate is to provide hardware/software for students to help them access the curriculum
- Our main hardware platforms are chromebooks and ipads
- Our main software platforms are Read and Write for Google, Boardmaker Online, ipad apps and Proloquo2Go (communication app)

## SEA Application Process

SEA Devices currently used by Students	# of Students with SEA Devices
SEA Chromebooks	1035
SEA Laptops/Desktops	315
SEA iPad	321
Livescribe Pens	36
Reading Pens	2
Input with Proloquo2go; SEA; Kids Ability: Jumei	102
Dynavox	3
Low Tech Communication Devices (go talk, switches Big Mac etc...)	117
Laptops, chrome books, iPad for Vision Needs	71
CC-TV's	2
Braille Sense U/W	1
Eye Gate Systems	3
FM and Hearing Systems	190

## Virtual Training – Sept to Oct 2020



How we are supporting Students/staff/parents during Distance Learning

All training is done virtual via Team meets/Google meets

Read and Write Training – Individual Students

Ildi Kloiber – Itinerant LD trainer  
Chris Runstedler

Set up own Google Classroom

How we are supporting Students/staff/parents during Distance Learning

All training is done virtual via Team meets/Google meets

Boardmaker & Ipad Apps

Bridges-Canada conducts training as well as Chris Runstedler

Done via Team meets with Staff

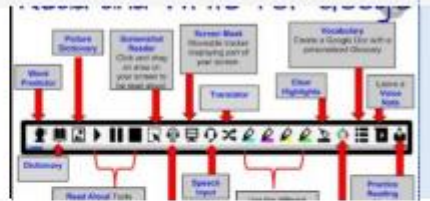


## Software Demo



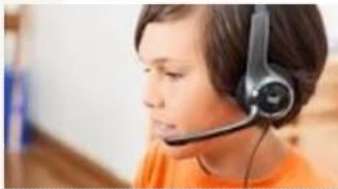
What is Reading Avenue? - Boardmaker

- ✓ 8 Themes (books)
- ✓ 120 books/1200 activities
- ✓ Predictable Daily Lesson Plan
- ✓ Data collection activities
- ✓ Built-in communication support
- ✓ Print and interactive components



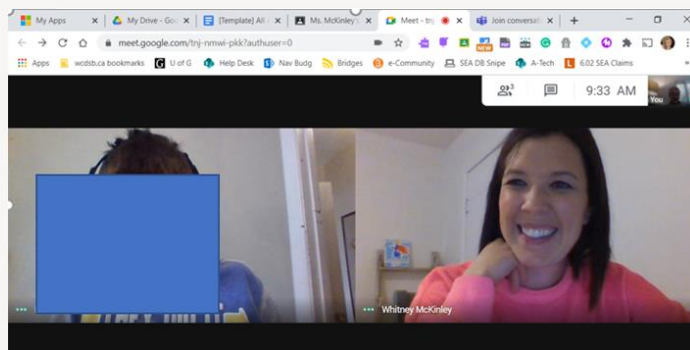
- Read and Write**
  - For Google Docs
  - For Google Slides
  - For lesson page of Google Classroom/TELL
  - For Web support
  - For reading of PDF files
- Boardmaker Online**
  - For Library and summary apps
  - Visual feedback
  - Reading Answer
  - Class Work Words

## Next Steps...following training sessions



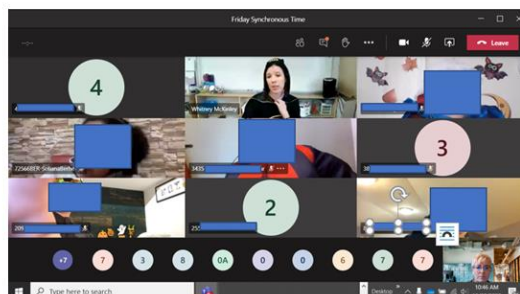
- Student 1** – has IEP; **needs more training**; contact home school and let SET know, put him on training schedule with Ildi Kloiber our Itinerant A-Tech trainer
- Student 2** – has IEP; using an iPad at home; contacted home school; asked for **chromebook to be sent home**; school to contact parent to get device to them

G. Foran



Nov 3, 2020

## Large Class training...Friday Synchronous Time



Q&A

## 5.2. Community Active Living



### Community & Active Living Program Review - WCDSB

Gerald Foran, Student Services - SEAC Nov. 4, 2020

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

- WCDSB MISSION STATEMENT

### Secondary School Special Education Programs

In some cases, students entering secondary school require a differentiated program as they work toward an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, an Ontario Secondary School Certificate or a Certificate of Accomplishment.

WCDSB operates three programs in each secondary school that have been designed for students with an IEP who have not met Level 1 grade 8 expectations:

- Essential Program
- ACTIVE Program
- Community Living Program

## Essential Program

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This program is designed for students whose Individual Education Plan (IEP) indicates the student is working on grade 5-7 expectations from the Ontario Curriculum in Mathematics and Science and/or English.

- In grades 9 and 10, students take special courses for credit in Mathematics, Science and/or English (these are locally developed courses approved by the Ministry)
- Also take a special education learning strategies course for credit
- Study workplace preparation courses in grades 11 and 12
- Students work towards completing the required 30 credits to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma

## ACTIVE Program

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Accomplishing Community/Certificate Training in View of Employment (ACTIVE)

### Who is the Program For?

- Developed for students entering Gr. 9 whose IEP indicates the student is working on Junior/Gr. 4/5 level expectations from the Ontario curriculum.

### What is the Focus of the Program?

- The program is designed to assist students with their transition from school to the workplace and/or community.
- Students may earn either a Certificate of Accomplishment and in some cases an Ontario Secondary School Certificate

## ACTIVE (continued)

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### How is Program Delivered?

- Students will be grouped for a portion of the day each semester. The congregated portion of the program will be designed and taught by Special Education Teachers. The program will focus on literacy, numeracy and personal life skills.
- For the other portion of the day, students will be integrated in a combination of other courses depending on the year, student interest and school offerings.
- A focus in the students' senior years will be community and work experiences.

# Community Living Program

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## Who is the Program For?

- Developed for students entering Gr. 9 whose IEP indicates the student is working on primary level expectations in the Ontario curriculum or on individualized alternate expectations.

## What is the Focus of the Program?

- The program is designed to assist students with their transition to supervised community involvement. Students will develop the personal life skills necessary to achieve their fullest level of independence within the school and wider community.
- Students earn a Certificate of Accomplishment

# Community Living (cont'd)

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## How is Program Delivered?

- Students will be grouped for a portion of the day each semester. The congregated portion of the program will be designed and taught by Special Education Teachers. A focus of functional literacy, functional numeracy and personal management skills
- For the other portion of the day, students will be integrated in a combination of other courses depending on the year, student interest and ability and school offerings
- A focus in the students' senior years will be the development of community links and independent living skills

# Community & Active Living Program Review

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## Next Steps

- Creation of a Logic Model to address: What do we need to do?, How will we do it?, How will we measure outcomes?
- Review proposed models
- Solicit input from a variety of stakeholders (Special Education Department Heads, Program Heads, Program Consultants, Network with school boards, Special Education Visioning Committee, SEAC, parents, students, community partners, ...)
- Currently no ministry assigned curriculum expectations for community or active living courses. Alternate expectations or "K" coded noncredit courses are left to the Special Education Teachers to design. Special Education Liaisons to assist with the development of creating expectations for alternative courses to ensure consistency.
- PD & Training for all secondary schools in Job Path Resource to take place Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> to better prepare students for community and job placements <https://www.facebook.com/767512773378296/videos/1510996585696574>

## Review (cont'd)

- Focus on building independence skills
- Focus on a consistent variety of course selections for students
- Focus on community connections

## Your Voice

Please see the link below to share your voice regarding the following question:

As we review the WCDSB Community & Active Living Programs, in your opinion, what are the KEY student learning needs and/or overall desired student goals/outcomes of this program?

<https://my.thoughtexchange.com/549610542>

<https://my.thoughtexchange.com/549610542>

### Q&A

#### 6. Ministry Updates (10 min)

Ministry made the announcement with the updates to assist school boards during the pandemic, but these updates will not affect special education (keeping special education consistent, stable and structured).

#### 7. SEAC Committee Functions


##### 7.1. Topics for the remainder of the school year

- December – Mental Health Update (Sharon Porty and Erin Schreiter)
- January – Role of Special Education Teacher (Laura Shoemaker)
- February – Working with EA and CYCWs and the behaviour skills model (Tee Battistella)

##### 7.2. Invitation Letter Review:

- Jeanne Gravelle and Tracey Weiler to send suggestions for the updates.

L. Shoemaker

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other suggestions: add eligibility criteria, send SEAC pamphlet with the invitation, invite organizations that do not have local offices to virtual meetings</li> <li>• Email invitations and call the organizations because many representatives are working virtually at this time.</li> <li>• Laura will check membership requirements with the Ministry</li> </ul>	
<b>8. Policy Advice to the Board</b> N/A	
<b>9. Updates</b> <b>(20 minutes)</b>  <b>9.1. Association Updates</b>  <b><u>WRFN</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The WRFN School Issues Support Group will now be offered twice a month.</li> <li>• Added a daytime meeting on the second Tuesday of each month from 10 - 11:30 am and will also continue to offer a monthly evening session on the last Wednesday of each month from 7 - 8:30 pm.</li> <li>• WRFN will be launching fundraising appeal in mid-November. Stay tuned for more details.</li> </ul>  <p>WRFN School Issues Support Group 2020.r</p> <b><u>WWDSS</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• November 1 to 7 is Canadian Down Syndrome Week</li> <li>• The WWDSS changed its name to Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society (WWDSS) now supporting Wellington County.</li> <li>• Hilary Gauld Camilleri from One for The Wall photography is sharing her campaign "Who We Are" in association with the WWDSS annual Calendar Campaign</li> <li>• WWDSS continues to offer Music Therapy, Teen Hangouts and Meetings for Adults for adults, via zoom.</li> </ul> <b>9.2. Trustee Updates</b>  <a href="#">WCDSB Board Meeting Bulletin - October, 2020</a>  Q&A	
<b>10. Pending Items</b> N/A	
<b>11. Adjournment</b>  Motion by Jeanne Gravelle Seconded: Kim Murphy	
<b>12. Action Items Place Holder</b>	

2020 Committee Assignments												
Committee	Needs	Bill	Brian	Greg	Jeanne	Kevin	Manuel	Melanie	Tracey	Wendy	Abby	Kate
Audit	3 trustees											
Awards	Vice Chair											
Budget Advisory	2 trustees											
Catholic Parent Involvement	2 trustees + 1 alt		Alt									
Director Performance	Chair/Vice + 2											
FACE	Chair											
Governance	Chair/Vice + 2											
Linkages	4 Trustees + 1 Student											
Pastoral Care	5 Trustees + 1 Student											
SAL*	3 trustees											
SEAC	2 trustees + 1 alt	Alt										
Board School Year Calendar	1 trustees											
Suspension/Expulsion	3 trustees + 2 alt						Alt		Alt			
Student Trustee Mentor			Kate	Abby								
Trustee Mentor												
# of assignments (including alt)		4	5	4	5	3	4	5	4	7	1	1
* NOTE for SAL	Wendy for Cambridge SAL	Any of the 3 assigned can serve as an alternate for the other 2 but any trustee could be called.										
	Brian for Kitchener SAL											



**Date:** December 14, 2020  
**To:** Board of Trustees  
**From:** Director of Education  
**Subject:** December Director's Report

**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 **IV 012**
- ☒ Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

**Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)**

Executive Limitation IV 012 Communication to Board

**Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:**

Policy 1 001 Ends  
Policy IV 013 Leadership

**Alignment to the MYSP:**

**Strategic Priority:** Nurturing Our Catholic Community

**Strategic Priority:** Student Engagement, Achievement and Innovation

**Strategic Priority:** Building Capacity to Lead, Learn and Live Authentically

**Background/Comments:**

The Month of December is characterized as a time of anticipation and in years past, schools are a hub of activity and of celebration. This year definitely looks a little different, as the typical advent and Christmas festivities are modified to meet our new COVID reality. That said – the resilience of staff and students to endeavour to make the best of current circumstances and challenges is more than admirable. Everyone is centered on the core purpose of meeting the needs of our students, and if focused on ensuring that the best learning conditions are brought to fulfilment in our schools.

As mentioned previously, this year is also evolving in a manner that is different for the Director and Senior team as well. Visits to schools and special events are fewer as we endeavour to minimize contacts in various schools, compounded by the fact that there are a myriad of new and different meetings that have evolved as additions to the calendar and draws on staff time. Nonetheless, I am happy to provide a number of highlights from the past month.

Some of the meetings that were common-place into December included:





- Lengthy senior team meetings – Monday and Thursday; Mondays as Executive Council and Thursdays as an Academic Council meeting.
- Meetings with Public Health – various times
- CODE mtg with DM – Thursday Mornings
- CODE Continuity of Learning sub-group – once a week (Tuesday mornings)
- CODE Continuity of Learning mtg with DM (sub-group) – Thursday afternoons
- Chairs and Directors of Ed with Minister of Education – Monday afternoons
- Administrator meetings, where myself and senior staff take admin through operational, public health and educational updates – bi-weekly on Wednesdays
- Invited in a variety of provincial dialogues as Chair of CODE
- Continue to chair weekly ECCODE meetings – Bi-Weekly on Monday mornings.
- Currently sit as ECCODE's rep on a committee being convened by the Ministry of Health, in partnership with Ministry of Education —The table will include reps from local public health units, Public Health Ontario, the childcare sector and the education sector (4 Directors from each of the affiliates).
- Arising out of the aforementioned committee – now sitting on 2 sub-committees, looking at the role of PH nurses in schools and how provincial guidance can be provided as to their role and how their support might be optimized – Document in penultimate form and soon ready for distribution

A few other quick highlights from the past few weeks include:

- Attended Region 6 OCSOA meeting
- Visited St Benedict's and St Anne's Kitchener to speak with administrators and tour/visit buildings and staff.
- Attended Provincial CPIC forum (virtual)
- Attended WCDSB CPIC CSAC Onboarding session (virtual)
- Participated in CODE advisory group to School Mental Health Assist
- Participated in meeting of Board of Trustees and Spectrum
- Chaired a meeting with the K-12 Administrators Association Representatives
- Participated in a breakfast meeting with Chair and vice Chair
- Attended a virtual celebration for Principal Paul Cox – receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award from CESBA
- Attended 2 Strategic Planning Sessions of the Catholic Community Foundation of Waterloo Region
- Invited to participate on a 1 on 1 interview for the podcast "Whole Hearted Teaching" – posted Tuesday Dec 8th
- Chaired a meeting of STSWR Board of Directors
- Attended meetings of the 7-12 Program Review Committee
- Attended Dr Thomas Groome Virtual Keynote sponsored by OCSOA
- Assisted in preparing the RFP for an evaluation of our SRO Program
- Assisted in the preparation of a job fact sheet for a new Equity officer

- Chaired provincial CODE Executive Meeting
- Chaired provincial CODE Executive Meeting with Deputy Minister and ADMs
- Participated in inaugural meeting of 20-21 school year for the IT Governance Steering Committee
- Participated in a ThoughtExchange Leadership Council by personal invitation with 28 members from across North America. Focus on Equity
- Attended a BLG Virtual Session on Duty to Accommodate students and staff in the COVID Era
- Discussion with Vicar for Catholic Education Fr Con O'Mahoney
- Meeting with new Chair and Vice Chair
- Meeting with Senior Manager of International Education regarding planning and next strategic steps
- Attended CODE sponsored legal session with Miller Thomson on the current legal landscape
- Addressed this fall's CPCO PQP course about Catholic Leadership

**Recommendation:**

This report is 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."





**Date:** December 14, 2020  
**To:** Board of Trustees  
**From:** Director of Education  
**Subject:** FSL Program Update

**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 **XX XXX**
- ☒ Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

**Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)**

- *A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013*, available at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/amenagement/frameworkFLS.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/amenagement/frameworkFLS.pdf)
- *The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language – Core, Grades 4–8; Extended, Grades 4–8; Immersion, Grades 1–8, 2013*, available at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/fsl18-2013curr.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/fsl18-2013curr.pdf)
- *The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language – Core, Extended, and Immersion French, Grades 9 to 12, 2014*, available at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/fsl912curr2014.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/fsl912curr2014.pdf)
- APA001 Admissions to Elementary Catholic Schools – [https://www.wcdsb.ca/ap\\_memos/PDF/APA001.pdf](https://www.wcdsb.ca/ap_memos/PDF/APA001.pdf)
- APO012 Transportation [https://www.wcdsb.ca/AP\\_Memos/PDF/APO012.pdf](https://www.wcdsb.ca/AP_Memos/PDF/APO012.pdf)

**Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:**

- *School Effectiveness Framework (2013)*

**Alignment to the MYSP:**

(Indicate Priority area/strategic direction and goal(s))

**Priority Area:**

*Student Engagement, Achievement, & Innovation*

**Strategic Direction:** Nurture a Culture of Innovation

**Goals:** *Ensure classroom pedagogy and pathway opportunities are relevant and provide transferable skills for student success*

**Priority Area:**

*Student Engagement, Achievement, & Innovation*



**Strategic Direction:** *Foster maximum opportunity for success for all*

**Goal:** Improve Graduation Rate

### **Background/Comments:**

English-language school Board in Ontario are required to provide students with a minimum of 600 hours of French instructional hours by the end of elementary school. In Secondary, one FSL credit (110 hours) is compulsory for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). A second FSL course can be counted towards the compulsory credits required for the OSSD.

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board currently offers four program options for French as a Second Language:

- Core French
- Intensive French
- Advanced Placement (AP) French
- French Immersion

### **CORE FRENCH**

The WCDSB offers Core French for 40 minutes per day, 5 days per week from grades 4-8 at all elementary schools. In secondary, the FSF credit is offered in every secondary school from grades 9-12.

#### **CHALLENGES:**

- The WCDSB has continued to be impacted by the province wide FSL Labour Market shortage
- Many anticipated student events had to be cancelled or reimaged in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions

#### **GREAT MOMENTS IN CORE FRENCH:**

- At Resurrection, students participated in their first bilingual mass on Ash Wednesday. Père Lourdy officiated and gave his homily in both English and French. Students participated by reading in both official languages.
- Secondary students from Resurrection, Monsignor Doyle and St David enhanced their language proficiency, increased awareness of other cultures, and fostered global awareness through exchange programs with France (4) and Italy (1). (In March 2020 the student in Italy was repatriated to Canada. Initially parents wanted their children to stay in France for the full duration of the exchange, however, it became apparent that all students would need to be repatriated to Canada and placed in quarantine. The remaining students returned home safely at the end of April.)
- At St Teresa of Avila, students read a recipe and followed directions in a French experiential learning opportunity. Under the direction of Chef Suzanne, they baked a traditional Québécois pastry.
- At St Nicholas students hosted a live virtual concert with Greg LeRock at their school
- 6533 students have been benefiting from the Smash Education license we purchased to maintain and deepen their French language skills. 5101 elementary students have been using the Smash program in class to enhance whole-group instruction, 454 secondary students have been using Smash in their asynchronous block to continue refining listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, and 978 elementary students at St Isidore have been using Smash to maintain and deepen their knowledge of French language and culture.

#### **LOOKING AHEAD:**

- We will aim to offer the DELF exam to Grade 12 students in May 2022



## **INTENSIVE FRENCH**

Intensive French, also known as the Neurolinguistic Approach, is currently offered in grade 5 at St Dominic Savio. French is taught for 240 minutes per day in the Intensive semester, and 200 minutes per week in the non-Intensive semester. After the Intensive French year, students re-enter the Core French stream with a higher degree of fluency.

### **CHALLENGES:**

- Parent information and registration moved online in March and April due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- There were insufficient student registrations to run the program at St Luke in 2020-21.
- This left only one site currently offering the program.

### **GREAT MOMENTS IN INTENSIVE FRENCH:**

- There was an abundance of interest in the St Dominic Savio community.

### **LOOKING AHEAD:**

- 2020-21 is the final year we will offer the program. No further registration blocks will take place.
- In 2023-24 St Benedict will run its final grade 9 Intensive French course with the last cohort from Our Lady of Fatima.
- Dom and LUK Directed to AP French

## **ADVANCED PLACEMENT FRENCH**

French AP courses are offered at St Mary's, Resurrection, and Monsignor Doyle. French AP is an accelerated program that caters to motivated students that have a passion for learning. AP courses offer college-level curricula and examinations to high school students. American and Canadian colleges and universities may grant placement and course credit to students who obtain high scores on the AP examination taken in Grade 12.

### **CHALLENGES:**

- French Departments tend to be small, so it is important for at least 2 teachers to take the AP training so that the program isn't in jeopardy if a teacher suddenly goes on leave.
- The AP curriculum does not perfectly align with the expectations of the Ontario FSL Curriculum.

### **GREAT MOMENTS IN AP FRENCH:**

- 10 students wrote the AP exam in 2020.
- The average mark was 3.9
- 100% of students received level 3 or higher
- 20% of students received a level 5

### **LOOKING AHEAD:**

- We may no longer use the course name pre-AP moving forward. We will use "AP preparatory course" instead.



## **FRENCH IMMERSION**

French Immersion is an optional and regionally-based program. In addition to learning to speak French, students in the French Immersion program learn subject content in French. In the WCDSB, the French Immersion Program offers an average of 158 minutes of French Instruction daily. The program runs at the following sites:

- St Peter (1)
- St Luke (1-2)
- Holy Rosary (1-2)
- Our Lady of Fatima (1-5)
- St Anne K (1-6)
- Sir Edgar Bauer (1-6)

### **CHALLENGES:**

- To reduce the number of contact surfaces for students, the French and English teachers have been changing rooms this year, and the students stay in the same room all day. As a result, some items have had to be purchased in duplicate so that each class has access.

### **GREAT MOMENTS IN FRENCH IMMERSION:**

- We opened a new Immersion site in Cambridge this Fall: St Peter
- Our FI Review Committee has begun to meet.  
The following factors are to be re-confirmed or addressed in this review:
  - Elementary school organization (i.e. grade structure, single track, dual track)
  - Grade 1 entry point
  - Approach to Grade 1 application for FI
  - Attendance of siblings in FI schools
  - Impact of transportation, as it relates to school organization
  - Establish strategy for delivery of FI courses for grades 9 to 12 to meet secondary FI certificate requirements
  - Review and confirm criteria for selecting new elementary FI location(s)
  - Identify areas of future consideration for new elementary FI location(s)
  - Establish criteria for selecting new secondary FI location(s)
- At St Anne K students hosted a virtual concert with Greg LeRock

### **LOOKING AHEAD:**

- In June 2021, the French Immersion Review Committee will present recommendations to the Board
- In 2023 the first French Immersion cohort will arrive in secondary

### **Recommendation:**

This report is presented to the Board as information.

**Prepared/Reviewed By:** Loretta Notten, Director of Education  
John Klein, Superintendent of Learning  
Jennifer Kruithof, FSL Consultant

\*Bylaw 4.2 "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."





**Date:** December 14, 2020  
**To:** Board of Trustees  
**From:** Director of Education  
**Subject:** Equity Action Plan Report

**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 **XX XXX**  
☒ Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

**Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)**

Board Governance Policy I:001 Ends  
Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGE, 2011): [Institute for Catholic Education]

**Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:**

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009)  
APC037: Equity and Inclusive Education Policy  
Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, K-12 (2013)  
Ontario's Well-Being Strategy for Education: Discussion Document (2016)  
Ontario's Equity Action Plan (2017)  
APO028: Fair and Equitable Hiring and Promotions Policy

**Alignment to the MYSP:**

Nurturing Our Catholic Community

- Promote a culture of belonging and respect, that supports success for all:
  - Successful implementation of the WCDSB equity action plan to facilitate organizational change
  - Equitable access to learning opportunities

**Background/Comments:**

As a Catholic learning community, we are inspired and guided by the Gospel in our pursuit of equity and justice as a value rooted in our faith. In our Catholic/Christian tradition, we have a moral imperative to act intentionally to ensure those we serve – staff, students and communities – are treated with respect and dignity as brothers and sisters in Christ.





The Ministry of Education made a commitment to every student in the province of Ontario that regardless of 'ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or other factors' (Equity Action Plan, p. 8), all students should be able to access the curriculum, feel safe at school, and also have a sense of belonging.

Accordingly, the Waterloo Catholic District School Board's (WCDSB) vision commits us to being the "heart of the community", offering "success for each and a place for all." In support of our vision, the current theme of our three-year pastoral plan is "Gathered to Become: All of one in Christ Jesus." At WCDSB, our Equity Committee works to build educator capacity to serve all students and assist in removing identified barriers to success. We employ a lens of liberation theology with a strong emphasis on the social teaching of preferential option for the poor. This involves empowering students and their families to advocate for change so that they may not just survive but thrive in our school communities.

Our work is guided by the four priority areas of the Ontario Education Equity Action Plan. Some highlights in each of the areas include:

- School and classroom practices:

- Our WCDSB Culturally Relevant and Responsive subcommittee is engaged in a Practitioner Inquiry with the Ministry of Education and several other school districts. We are exploring the inquiry question, "What happens to a student's sense of belonging and overall wellbeing if educators learn about and implement practices that are culturally relevant, responsive and reflective of our community?"

**Get to know your students ...**

"Get to know your students. How do they self-identify and what community do they originate from? What types of print, video, audio and other experiences motivate them?"

(Toulouse, 2013)

The inquiry takes place over the course of this school year and will be focused in two elementary schools, one secondary school, and the Grade 2 cohort at St. Isidore. Equity audits will be completed at each school and resources will be provided to support the work. Art supplies for an Indigenous led virtual art session have been purchased to support the ongoing work of Indigenizing the curriculum.

Culturally Responsive Resources Team (CRRT) will re-convene to support the process and procedure for choosing learning resources that are culturally responsive. This work is supported by Library Services through the Virtual Learning Commons provides resources to classroom teachers that acknowledge and celebrate diversity (E.g. Black History Month, National Indigenous Day)



- #DreamBig, the third annual Build A Dream: Young Women's Career Exploration Event was hosted virtually to encourage young women to pursue careers in the trades. Locally, we had 500 families participating.
- Safe Spaces groups are operative at our secondary schools with staff advisors to support students who identify as LGBTQ or are allies. System supportive Safe Spaces retreats have been paused through the school closure period and more recently to adhere to covid physical distancing protocols.
- Restorative Schools Project with the support of Community Justice Initiatives (CJI) is operating in 13 schools to build capacity in resolving conflict and solidifying a school culture of respectful dialogue that breaks down barriers. In response to the Black Lives Matter Movement CJI staff have been meeting with racialized students to understand their experience in our schools and support with restorative practices.
- Indigenous Chef David Wolfman will offer remote lectures and/or cooking demonstrations with high school hospitality classes and in partnership with the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)
- Our summer school reach ahead credit course offered as a Student Success initiative to incoming Grade 9 students to support overall achievement and well-being continues to grow. From 63 students in 2019 at 3 secondary schools, the program has grown to 197 students earning the credit in a remote learning modality in summer 2020, offered virtually at all 5 secondary schools.





- In response to student requirements for devices for remote learning, 5600 Chromebooks have been distributed to families. Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) is in place in all schools to leverage use of technology in learning tasks.
- Leadership, governance, and human resource practices:
  - Hiring of an Equity Officer is underway. This new position will help animate the board Equity Action Plan, especially in consulting and communicating with community groups and various stakeholders regarding the upcoming Student Data Census (Spring 2021). Additionally, this new position will advise across central departments and in schools on issues related to equitable outcomes and opportunities for all students. Equity training for central staff and school staff will also be made available as needed.
  - An Equity subcommittee has been formed to address human resource initiatives related to equity. First among these is an audit of our hiring policies with a view to remove barriers to equitable access to employment or opportunity. The subcommittee is giving consideration to exploring pathway initiatives that would attract candidates from equity-seeking groups to education careers as a proactive strategy to diversify our staff.
  - Catholic Leadership Series through an Equity lens will offer four sessions from January to May for new leadership candidates.
  - Indigenous self-identification policy allows staff to acknowledge and celebrate First Nations, Métis, and Inuit identity.
- Data collection, integration, and reporting:
  - Our “Called to Belong” Workforce Census was launched on Spiritual Development Day in November 2019, but due to labour action and then the lengthy school closure period our completion rate was less than anticipated and the social/emotional context had changed so significantly that the data could not be used reliably. We intend to re-launch our workforce census when our current situation stabilizes.
  - We have secured Ministry funding to complete our first *Gathered to Become* Student Census in Spring 2021
    - The census for students in Grade 4-12 (to be confirmed) is voluntary, and confidential.
    - The purpose of the census is to ensure we understand the demographic reality of our students over three divisions.
    - This information will assist in developing plans to support student groups who may not be achieving academic success at their same rate as their peers, or who are suspended more frequently than students from other demographic groups.
    - Ultimately, with data gathered from our workforce and student censuses, our goal is for all students to have equitable access to academic opportunity and to see themselves and their classmates reflected in their school experience. That is, in their curriculum, but also in the teacher, administrative and support staff who serve in our schools.
    - A high-level report will be provided to trustees at board following the data collection and analysis. Further reports will be used to inform programming for student achievement and wellbeing.



- Organizational culture change:

- The Well-being Strategy Steering Committee has developed a plan that is mapped to our multi-year strategic plan, and aligned with our three-year Pastoral Plan, the goal of which is to demonstrate coherence across the system with regards to the intersection between equity and our Catholic values of inclusion and respect for the dignity of all. Subsequently, School Well Being Plans were developed and are available on school websites.
- Spiritual Development Day explored the theme of *Gathered to Become*, a prayerful reflection on how God challenges us to change to conform to God's will for the world. Our afternoon was dedicated to professional development for all staff to develop an equity lens to challenge systemic barriers to success for students from oppressed groups, especially those who are racialized.
- WCDSB continues its partnership with Anishnabeg Outreach Centre (AO).
  - Trustees and staff were invited to participate in the construction of a two-row wampum as a demonstration of reconciliation as called for by the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC)
  - A WCDSB representative participated in a healing lodge with other community leaders at the invitation of Anishnabeg Outreach.
  - Partnership established with Anishnabeg Outreach to create more wrap around supports for self-identified families (food, clothing, supplies etc.) and incorporating schools into the fund raising/donations needed by AO.
    - Professional development is available for teachers who enroll in a subsidized Additional Qualification Course at Wilfrid Laurier University: First Nations, Metis and Inuit Peoples – Understanding Traditional Teachings, Histories, Current Issues and Cultures, Part 1.
    - Book Clubs as well as other opportunities to support ongoing professional development for staff on issues of equity are planned for January 2021. Proposed titles include White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo, Decolonizing Education by Marie Battiste, and Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer.



The alignment of our system goals seeks to eliminate barriers, including those that emerge with complex intersectionality's such as when physical and/or intellectual ability are combined with race, or socio-economic status. At WCDSB we are committed to continuing the work of making sure that all students are served, especially those who have traditionally had difficulty accessing the curriculum and achieving academic success. Five examples of support include:

1. Two Student Success Consultants (SSC) support Grade 7/8 students in negotiating a successful transition from elementary to secondary school, especially those students who are achieving below provincial standards of achievement and who may be immersed in in-risk situations. SSCs also have been trained in restorative justice practices and employ these skills in healing damaged relationships that become barriers to well-being and student achievement.
2. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Universal Support strategies are being supported and promoted through the Student Support Services department. UDL supports our goal of providing equity of learning opportunities for all students as '*what is good for one learner is good for all learners*'.
3. The WCDSB continues to strive to meet the varied and increased needs of its English Language Learners. Staff engage in an ongoing manner with partners and stakeholders throughout the region to ensure that newcomers to Canada experience a transition to school that is as safe and smooth as possible.
4. Through the work of our WCDSB Re-Engagement Committee, disengaged or early-leaver students are contacted, supported, and encouraged in a variety of ways and with a variety of strategies so that they can



successfully complete their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) within four or five years.

5. Finally, the St. Louis Learning Centre continues to serve diverse learners of varied ages and life experiences. Year 4 or 5 secondary students who require an alternate setting with a flexible schedule, different than our regular day schools, continue to be well-served both to achieving the OSSD. Additionally, adult learners are able to receive certifications that create for them opportunities to secure employment.

### In Summary:

*"Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a better space for everyone."*  
– (Dei et al, 2000)

With the harmonization of several working committees and planning tables – equity, well-being, pastoral – we continue to work together to achieve our goal of removing barriers to student success and well-being in Waterloo Catholic.

As stated in Ontario's Well-Being Strategy for Education: "Supporting equity and inclusive education helps the education community identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers in order to support student achievement and well-being. Research confirms that students who feel welcome and accepted in their schools are more likely to succeed academically. In fact, everyone in our publicly funded education system – regardless of background or personal circumstances – should feel engaged and included." (page 6)

At WCDSB, our core Catholic values are strongly congruent with the key priorities of the Ontario Equity Action Plan. We value the dignity of all learners and work to ensure that everyone feels welcomed, included and has opportunity to experience academic and personal success.

### Recommendation:

The report is for the information of the Board.

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

Richard Olson  
Superintendent of Learning

\*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."





**Date:** December 14, 2020  
**To:** Board of Trustees  
**From:** Director of Education  
**Subject:** Revised Estimates – Impacts on Approved Budget

**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)**

This report provides Trustees with information on changes made to the approved budget as a result of enrolment changes, funding changes, updated operational needs.

**Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:**

[2020: SB24 2020-21 Revised Estimates](#)

**Alignment to the MYSP:**

Priority: Student Achievement and Innovation

Strategic Direction: Foster maximum opportunity and success for all

**Background/Comments:**

Revised estimates of revenue and expenditures have been prepared using actual enrolment as at October 31, 2020 and a revised projection for March 31, 2021.

Overall enrolment has decreased by 385 students as compared to the estimate of enrolment used to calculate revenues in July 2020. The decrease in enrolment is attributed to families choosing to keep JK/K students out of school for the year, families choosing to home-school, and the closure of the border to immigrants. These decreases are a result of COVID-19.

Revenue impacts from the reduction in enrolment have been offset by a new grant intended to provide stability to school boards. The new grant was announced by the Ministry of Education November 26, 2020 (B22: 2020-21 Grants for Student Needs Funding Stabilization) with confirmation of grant amounts provided on December 3, 2020.

Revenue also includes additional COVID-related funding that the Ministry provided in the summer, after the Board Estimates were filed. Additionally, the revised budget includes a grant to support the delivery of educational services and programming given the recent Regional transition to a COVID19 red zone (B23: COVID-19 Funding: Additional High Priority Areas).



Adjustments to staffing levels and budgets have been made where necessary to meet operational needs, collective agreement requirements, and legislative provisions. Significant changes to staffing have been reflected to account for smaller class sizes, Support for Student Funding received and, our new virtual school, St. Isidore. These costs were not considered in the development of the Estimates Budget as one of the key assumptions was that schools would reopen with traditional program delivery.

All departmental budgets were reviewed individually with budget holders to ensure budgets reflected the current operating environment. Changes were made throughout the budget from program delivery to professional development offerings.

As a result of COVID19, many families have elected not to participate in our extended day programs for the current school year. This has created a revenue pressure on the budget, even after receipt of Regional funding supports. The Revised Estimate budget supports the continued operation of extended day programming at all sites so as not to cause further disruption to families.

A balanced Revised Estimates budget will be filed with the Ministry of Education on or before December 15, 2020 based on the changes outlined below.

#### Enrolment changes:

	2020-2021 Estimates	2020-2021 Revised Estimates	Change
Elementary	17,107	16,725	(382)
Secondary	7,026	7,023	(3)
<b>Difference</b>	<b>24,133</b>	<b>23,748</b>	<b>(385)</b>

#### Changes to budget:

##### Revenue Adjustments

GSN reduction	(4,868,408)
Enrolment Stabilization funding	8,537,513
COVID PPFs received (August 2020)	3,271,464
COVID Additional High Priority Area Funding (November 2020)	855,697
Reduced Extended Day Program revenues	(557,623)
Other revenue adjustments	187,612
<b>Total revenue adjustments</b>	<b>7,426,255</b>

##### Expense Adjustments

Additional teaching staff	6,221,325
New administrative staff (Equity Officer, IT staff, Jr. Researcher)	418,656
Additional support staff (CYCWs, EAs, LHS, Social Worker)	347,366
Other staffing and benefit adjustments (vacation, ELHT, sick leave)	311,517
Additional administrative staff (St. Isidore VP & Admin Asst)	308,105
Facility Operations increases (Optimizing Air Quality, contracts)	181,780
Increased transportation costs	273,638
Program changes due to COVID (School budgets, contracts, PD, supplies)	(636,132)
<b>Total expense adjustments</b>	<b>7,426,255</b>

**2020-2021 Revised Estimates submission - December 2020**

-



The budget will be monitored throughout the year. Consistent with the requirements of Board Policy IV 008 “Financial Conditions and Activities”, interim financial reports will be prepared and presented to Trustees on a quarterly basis.

**Recommendation:**

That the Board of Trustees receive this report as information.

**Prepared/Reviewed By:**

Loretta Notten  
Director of Education

Shesh Maharaj  
Executive Superintendent of Corporate Services

Laura Isaac  
Senior Manager of Financial Services

Renée King  
Manager of Budget

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\*Bylaw 4.2 “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.”





**Date:** December 14, 2020  
**To:** Board of Trustees  
**From:** Director of Education  
**Subject:** Annual Report on Accumulated Surpluses

**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-Board Policy IV 008 "Financial Conditions and Activities"
- ☐ Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

**Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)**

Board Policy IV 008 allows the CEO to use only those amounts from accumulated surpluses that have been approved in advance by the Board of Trustees. This report is being presented to Trustees to request the use of certain reserves for operational and capital requirements.

**Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:**

Board Policy IV 008 "Financial Conditions and Activities"

*"...the CEO shall not:...*

*2. Use any reserves"*

**Alignment to the MYSP:**

Priority: Student Achievement and Innovation

Strategic Direction: Foster maximum opportunity and success for all

**Background/Comments:**

Accumulated surpluses are amounts held by the school board that have resulted from surpluses in prior years where no external restrictions have been imposed on their use. Some amounts have been apportioned internally for specific uses, while others are general in nature.

For purposes of policy monitoring, the terms accumulated surplus and reserve are used interchangeably.

Generally, surpluses up to 1% of operating revenues can be used at the discretion of the Board of Trustees without requiring ministerial consent. The Ministry has now communicated that Boards may use up to 2% of operating revenues without ministerial consent during these uncertain times.





## **Accumulated Surplus Balances**

### **1. WSIB: \$168,555**

This reserve is used by an outside agency to settle WSIB obligations on our behalf. The balance fluctuates depending on needs and level of replenishment. A budget of \$602,274 has been approved in contributions to the account for the year. The actuarially determined obligation for our WSIB claims at August 31, 2020 is \$3,338,235. Liabilities associated with this obligation are spread over a number of years depending on the nature and severity of the injury. Consistent with previous years, management would like full access to the WSIB reserve for the 2020-21 school year.

### **2. Operating/Working Funds: \$2,940,650**

This is a general surplus without internal or external restrictions. At this time, there is no request for use of these funds.

### **3. Technology Renewal: \$1,624,516**

This amount was set aside to replace the Board's HRIS and Payroll system in the future (\$924,516) and to support infrastructure upgrades as required (\$700,000) by the ITS department. Because of the scare supply of devices available in the market today (due to COVID-19), ITS has not planned purchases to be funded from this reserve. The HRIS replacement has been deferred to a future year.

### **4. Insurance: \$150,000**

The insurance surplus was set aside to manage deductibles related to multiple incidences of property damage where available operating budget dollars are insufficient. If access to this reserve is required, it will be requested in a separate report. As at the time of writing, there is no need to access this amount.

### **5. Early Learning Resources: \$961,688**

This surplus was set up to provision for future resource and staffing needs related to the Extended Day Program. Given the significant changes that this program is experiencing this year, there are no plans to access these funds at this time.

### **6. Administrative Capital: \$715,385**

This reserve was set up in order to provision for future administrative capital needs. The Ministry of Education does not provide dedicated funding for renewal or replacement of administrative buildings. Administrative GSN revenues in excess of expenses can be used to support administrative capital requirements. As our administrative facilities have been recently renovated, a draw from this surplus is not required.

### **7. Student Support Funds (SSF), formerly Local Priority Funds (LPF): \$213,117**

This amount represents unspent LPF grants. Management will work with the employee groups eligible for these funds and will develop a plan for use. Access to this reserve is therefore requested.



**Recommendation:**

1. That the CEO be given permission to use up to \$168,555 from the WSIB surplus to service WSIB related costs.
2. That the CEO be given permission to use up to \$213,117 from the Supports for Student Fund surplus to offset related costs.

**Prepared/Reviewed By:**

Loretta Notten  
Director of Education

Shesh Maharaj  
Executive Superintendent of Corporate Services

Laura Isaac  
Senior Manager, Financial Services

\*Bylaw 4.2 “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.”





**Date:** November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020  
**To:** Board of Trustees  
**From:** Director of Education  
**Subject:** Update on WCDSB Education Models

**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 IV 012**
- ☒ Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

**Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)**

Executive Limitation IV 012 Communication to Board

**Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:**

Policy 1 001 Ends  
Policy IV 013 Leadership

**Alignment to the MYSP:**

**Strategic Priority:** Nurturing Our Catholic Community

**Strategic Priority:** Student Engagement, Achievement and Innovation

**Strategic Priority:** Building Capacity to Lead, Learn and Live Authentically

**Background/Comments:**

At the current time the schools of Waterloo Catholic are engaged in learning in our new pandemic reality. Our staff, students and parents have been introduced to a new way of experiencing learning and their schools, be that in our face to face learning environment or in the virtual environment of St Isidore. COVID-19 has changed the landscape of a traditional school experience and the staff of our board have planned, prepared and now implemented this new reality.

As reported in November, our numbers remain relatively stable with approximately 4,187 students learning virtually and 19,900 students learning face to face. Thus, at this point approximately 17% of our total student population has opted for the virtual learning environment. We do have some families requesting the move back to face to face and where that can be accommodated without being overly disruptive to the local school organization, we are endeavoring to honour those requests.



We are averaging 5-10 positive cases a week in our schools, but in virtually all cases, the reality continues to be that the positive case runs its course, with very few instances of any transmission. We have had since re-opening 5 limited outbreaks which again were fairly quickly resolved. We have one outbreak currently in the system – involving 2 linked positive cases. This is a strong indication that all our protocols are working. Outbreaks are followed by an IPAC Assessment by Waterloo Region Public Health and the results have been quite strong in all cases. All positive COVID cases begin with an origin in community and we are seeing WCDSB as a reflection of the broader community. Waterloo Region is currently in the red zone, which is a reflection of the growth of cases in the region.

To reiterate – in elementary the transition of additional students at the Thanksgiving benchmark resulted in an additional 29 teachers transitioning to St Isidore, resulting in a total of 119 virtual classes, K-8. The prospect of change, as well as the actual process of re-organizing the elementary system, caused parent, teacher, student and administrator upset. It was perceived as disruptive to both learning continuity and relationships by our parents and students, and it was challenging for teachers to be asked to pivot to a new class, be it a different composition of students or a completely different assignment. Thus, we made a decision to collapse the November transition window and will allow one further opportunity for change in January. This will be significant as we are signaling to parents that this decision will carry them through to the end of the school year. Thus, when the nicer weather comes, or cases are perhaps lower, the students who have committed to St Isidore will not be able to easily transition back to bricks and mortar.

We have approximately 14% of secondary students who are accessing their learning virtually. We committed to consulting with teachers regarding the path forward in terms of how to best navigate the challenges of providing program in both bricks and mortar, as well as St Isidore, particularly as we consider hard to staff courses and the general shortage of available teachers. There were a number of conversations with secondary Administrators, Program Heads and ultimately a survey of secondary teachers to help guide our path forward. 85% of teachers indicated that they did not want to teach face to face *and* virtual/synchronous lessons *at the same time, (the hybrid model)*. They also understood this might mean more teachers moving to St Isidore, if student choice is to move to St Isidore. That said -there was also an acknowledgement that some hard-to-staff courses may require an individual teacher who is carrying 2 courses to teach one course in bricks and mortar, and one course at St Isidore.

St Isidore will continue to operate as a consortium – which is to say – students from all 5 secondary schools will be pooled into classes, so that they are not classes specific to the students' bricks and mortar home school. There was debate on two other significant points:

- There was consideration to administering the survey in the last week of school in December so as to being scheduling immediately upon return in January, versus administering the survey in the first week in January as advertised.
- The second point of decision was whether this should also be the last point of transition in secondary – so that there is not another opportunity to switch modalities for Quad 4. This was requested so as to facilitate scheduling and understanding the full breadth of student needs proactively, so as to assist in scheduling the remainder of the school year.

Ultimately we have decided to honour what was previously published in terms of the survey days, as with the Christmas Break, it was really only a difference of a few days and we have clearly published these dates to parents. We will however honour the request to make this the last transition window, so as to assist in scheduling and reduce the amount of disruption. Not unlike in elementary, it will force parents and students to think carefully as the opportunity to switch back to bricks and mortar may not be possible any longer once a decision toward St Isidore is made.

We have continued our follow up on the feedback we received through the ThoughtExchange exercise. I have shared communications reflecting what we heard and how we are addressing what we heard. We want stakeholders to know that we appreciate their sharing their voice – the praise and their concern. We explained to staff why the move to Aspen had when and how it did, we have been sharing well being strategies through a variety of formats ranging from staff weekly bulletins to the Director's Friday messages. Further, we hope that wellbeing and mental health will be nourished on the solid foundation of our Spiritual Development Day. In terms of staff development, our web resources are robust and growing. We are finding teachers accessing more of our professional development and online resources and we continue to promote their availability.



The Ministry of Education has identified a number of burden reduction strategies. There is an acknowledgement across the system that it is not “business as usual” and that everyone across the organization is helping to carry a very heavy load. We can confirm that TPAs and PPAs can be paused except for NTIP candidates, and we now know that it is a full pause so that this year comes right out of the 5-year cycle.

We have also been provided with stabilization funding by the government, which allows us to be funding based on our GSN projections versus our actual 20-21 student enrollment, which has been impacted by COVID.

International Education has been a focus of much activity. On November 13<sup>th</sup>, the province of Ontario was given permission by the federal government to welcome international students. At that time each board had to get individual approval from the Ministry, based on a comprehensive submission and an attestation of readiness. On November 24<sup>th</sup> we were informed that WCDSB is now on the list of boards approved to welcome international education students.

During the Christmas Break Waterloo Region Public Health will continue to contact us regarding positive staff and student cases and we will assist in the process of contact tracing. Our usual protocols will be in place, although it is our fervent hope that administrators will not have to be too disturbed over the Christmas break. The senior team has developed a duty roster so that all days of the holiday are covered.

We have arrived in Advent and sit on the cusp of Christmas Break. Few might have predicted our schools would still be open but it is fair to say – due to the collective efforts of all – our schools are open and safe. The number of positive cases in our schools are relatively low and we have had only a handful of possible cases of school or workplace transmission. The fact that our schools are open and actually thriving remains a huge accomplishment. Again – it is fair to say that it is a reflection of our exemplary staff. The desire for choice has been presented to parents and we realize people are in different places with their comfort level with COVID. We have parents share success stories of their children’s joy in being back in a face to face learning environment, and we hear success stories of the work happening by our St Isidore team. Health and safety has to remain our primary concern and motivator. Things do continue to evolve despite the best of planning and that is what tonight’s report highlights. What continues to remain constant is the dedication and resilience of our staff, students and WCDSB community.

### **Recommendation:**

This report is for the information of the Board.

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

\*Bylaw 4.2 “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.”





**Date:** December 14, 2020  
**To:** Board of Trustees  
**From:** Director of Education  
**Subject:** Director's Annual Report

**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 **IV 012**
- ☒ Information only of day-to-day operational matters delegated to the CEO

**Origin: (cite Education Act and/or Board Policy or other legislation)**

Executive Limitation IV 012 Communication to Board  
Multi-Year Strategic Plan

**Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:**

Education Act Section 283(3)  
Multi-Year Strategic Planning A Guide for School Board Trustees  
Policy 1 001 Ends  
Policy IV 013 Leadership

**Alignment to the MYSP:**

**Strategic Priority:** Nurturing Our Catholic Community

**Strategic Priority:** Student Engagement, Achievement and Innovation

**Strategic Priority:** Building Capacity to Lead, Learn and Live Authentically

**Background/Comments:**

The Multi-Year Strategic Plan provides the roadmap for the staff of Waterloo Catholic District School Board and proclaims to the broader community our goals and aspirations.

Per Section 283(3) of The Education Act, the Director of Education will submit an Annual Report at the first Board meeting of December of each year reporting on the progress of the Board against the stated goals.

As was reflected when the June 2020 Report Card was brought to board on the Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2018-2021, there has been progress against each of our six strategic directions, within our three priority areas, however the 2019-20 school year was earmarked by significant challenge. Initially there were the impacts of labour action, followed by the significant challenges associated with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic.



There are many points of celebration and we continue to be committed, despite the obvious hurdles, to evolving, to remaining relevant and to being responsive to our students and stakeholders. We can be most proud that our Vision and Mission which is firmly rooted in our faith and gospel values, is perhaps recognized as our strongest or most clearly affirmed indicator. There can be no doubt that this past year, Waterloo Catholic exemplified “Heart of the Community, Success for each and a Place for All.” Rather than identify individual points of celebration and accomplishment here, the Annual Report will provide those highlights.

The report takes a primarily electronic format this year – which is to say – while there will be a limited number of hard copy versions of the report, (and distributed at or close to the Dec 14<sup>th</sup> Board meeting given that it is virtual), the primary design was intended for web presentation, and the hope is that the points of celebration will be seen equally strongly in word and picture. The Annual Report will be available at: <https://annual.wcdsb.ca>

We are tremendously proud of the accomplishments of our staff and students, and the vibrant connection that exists between home, parish and school. The report will be presented at the Board meeting and posted to our corporate website shortly thereafter. At Waterloo Catholic we are Heart of the Community, providing Success for Each and a Place for All.

### **Recommendation:**

That the Board accept this report indicating compliance with our obligations under Section 282(3) of The Education Act.

**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.”





**Waterloo Catholic  
District School Board**  
Quality, Inclusive, Faith Based Education

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**Date:** December 14, 2020  
**To:** Board of Trustees  
**From:** Student Trustees  
**Subject:** Student Trustee Report for December 2020

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**Type of Report:** Incidental Information

**Type of Information:** Information only of the activities of the Board Chair

**Policy Statement and/or Education Act/other Legislation citation:**

Policy II 011 Student Representation on the Board  
Policy II 012 Student Trustee Role Description

**Background/Comments:**

December is one of the most fun-filled and faith-focused months in the school year. Normally, various events such as Christmas assemblies, games, and challenges are run to encourage student involvement and create a festive atmosphere. Luckily, even with the impact of COVID, our schools are doing everything we can to still have a fun, yet safe, holiday season.

*Common Activities Hosted by The Schools:*

- **Bennie's vs. Mary's Toy Drive:** This month, St. Mary's and St. Benedict's are hosting their first ever toy drive competition. The co-presidents from these two schools (Dante Duval, Dylan Schnurr, Karina Guglielmi, and Colin Vrugteman) have collaborated to create an event that is competitive and engaging, for a good cause! Toys donated are going towards CTV's Toy Mountain, to help those less fortunate this holiday season. The schools are also accepting donations via school cash online to support those who would rather donate money.
- **Christmas Activities:** Each school has a range of engaging activities for students to participate in all month long. These activities range from candy-guessing games, Christmas scavenger hunts, trivia to decorating and ugly sweater days.
- **SAC Unity:** Arguably the biggest event run by the student trustees, SAC Unity is typically an in-person conference at St. Jerome's University with all student council members board-wide.



However, this year, Kate and Abby worked to create a fun, safe online event so student council students still have the leadership conference experience. Videos were created by co-president pairings on topics such as “What it takes to be a leader”, “How to create inclusive events”, and “How to stay connected and motivated during COVID” to help the board’s student leaders have an opportunity to learn and interact with other students in the same positions as them. Guest speakers sent in videos on their topic of choice, and all of these videos were available to each SAC starting on Monday, December 7. On December 11, the student trustees hosted a two hour long conference call with all student council members, where games and icebreakers were played and participated in so the social aspect of SAC unity could be carried out as it normally is. The Unity week agenda and slideshow has been sent out prior to the meeting for your convenience.

#### *Student Trustee Role Update:*

- **Grade 7/8 Initiative Update:** As usual the monthly package for the grade 7/8 initiative was sent out the second week of the month - approx. December 9th, 2020. Over the past month and a half the Student Trustees have met with two of the boards Student Success Consultants- Mr. Stere, and Ms. Ertel. Over the course of three meetings a plan to further promote the D.O.R initiative to the students and teachers has been formed, and will begin to be executed ASAP. Additionally, with the aid of Kelly Roberts, a survey is being formed to gauge feedback, and interest on the initiative thus far. The opportunity of having the Student Trustees host a virtual Q and A session with the students, or alternatively film a video is in progress.
- **Upcoming Student Trustee Election:** As some Trustees may be aware, the Student Trustee election for the 2021-2022 candidates has been scheduled for February 2021. This is a change for WCDSB as the elections typically take place in April. This new process will allow for collaboration and mentorship to occur between the incomings, and outgoings. During a typical school year, the incomings would be able to shadow the outgoings during the planning process for ESLC. Additionally, in efforts of promotion, a video has been filmed and has been included in the SAC unity contents. SAC students are also encouraged to reach out to the current Trustees, or their SAC advisors for more information.
- **Student Senate Update:** The main focus of the Student Senate for the previous two months has of course been planning SAC unity. Because of Unity occurring, there is no formal Senate meeting in December. However, outside of official meeting times the Senate has arranged to do a Secret Santa gift exchange - occurring Dec. 18th. Abby and Kate have recently launched a program entitled “Senate Superheroes”. Each month two co-presidents will be selected, and rewarded with a small gift card prize. This initiative was launched in efforts of boosting morale, and increasing motivation during this difficult time.
- **OSTA AECO:** For the organization, Trustee Barbosa continues to meet bi-weekly with the Well-Being working group. Over Christmas break, the ST’s will have the opportunity to attend a virtual holiday event, a PBC vs. CBC game night- date TBD. In collaboration with PFE, one of the group’s major stakeholders, Trustee Barbosa will be attending feedback sessions.
- **Mental Health Resource Awareness:** A meeting with Sharon Porty, the Board’s Mental Health Lead has been scheduled for the 3rd week of December. As focusing on mental health is a passion, and goal for both of the Student Trustees, this collaboration is especially important. It is their hope that alongside Sharon, and the school guidance counsellors we are able to spread awareness to students about our board’s fantastic resources.

- **Upcoming Projects/Events:** In preparation for after the break brainstorming for the Elementary Student Leadership Conference (ESLC) has begun, as well as for the weeklong D.O.R initiative.
- **Miscellaneous Tasks:** In addition to the typical monthly tasks, the ST's have gotten involved in the board through writing prayers, and the virtual Christmas painting party.

### **Recommendation:**

This report is for the information of the Board.

**Prepared/Reviewed By: Kate Morrison and Abby Barbosa, Student Trustees**

\*Bylaw 4.2 "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."

Submission to

**Child Care and Early Years Consultation**

November 16, 2020



Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association



## **Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association**

### **Mission Statement**

Inspired by the Gospel, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association provides the provincial voice, leadership and service for elected Catholic school trustees to promote and protect publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario.

### **Vision Statement**

Ontario is enriched by a publicly funded Catholic education system, governed by locally elected Catholic school trustees who serve with faith, commitment and compassion.

## **Introduction**

On behalf of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, we want to thank the Ministry of Education for inviting comments on the proposed changes to regulations under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* ("the Act"). OCSTA understands the importance of high quality, sustainable, affordable and flexible child care and early years programs and thus welcomes this review in an effort to make improvements to the system.

OCSTA represents all 29 Catholic school boards in Ontario with over 550,000 students. Our boards offer early years and child care programs and services in many of our schools and so we have an important interest in this regulatory review. The purpose of this submission is to identify the concerns and issues our boards have raised with the proposed changes to the regulations under the Act as outlined in the consultation document released on October 2 to guide the review.

## **Background to the Regulatory Review**

This regulatory consultation represents the second phase of the review of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* that is required every five years. The first phase was a survey of issues to identify areas to strengthen the legislative and regulatory framework of child care in Ontario. The results of these surveys identified six areas of concern that informed the development of the proposed changes to regulations under the Act. These are:

1. Flexibility and responsiveness
2. Qualification requirements
3. Administrative/regulatory burden
4. Health and safety
5. Regulations requiring clarification of intent
6. Technical matters.

OCSTA will organize its comments under the first four areas since they are of central concern for Catholic boards. We conclude the submission with some considerations under the Discussion Questions raised in the consultation document.

## **Flexibility and Responsiveness: Requirements for Age Groupings, Ratios, Maximum Group Size, and Proportion of Qualified Staff**

OCSTA supports the goal of increasing the flexibility of child care which provides to meet the needs of their local communities and increase the number of child care spaces available for families. However, we are concerned about changes to the ratio of children to staff at 1:20 from 1:15 as outlined in the new Schedule 2 of Ontario Regulation 137/15. This reduces close supervision of these young children thus potentially placing their safety at risk. Grouping of infants and toddlers together present safety risks to infants given the mobility differences between these age groups.

In addition, many children within our boards receive one on one support during their regular school day due to their special needs. However, in their after-school program managed by a child care provider, this changes to a 1:15 ratio of children to staff. The proposed changes to move from 1:15 staff/children ratio to 1:20 staff/children may further make the after-school experience for special needs children increasingly challenging. This change may also compromise the health and safety of children generally with having only one educator responsible for 20 children. In terms of programming, meeting the diverse needs of children at various stages of development (ages 5.5 to 13yrs of age) may make it difficult to provide opportunities for age specific programming.

This raises the issue of the adequacy of the funding model for child care programs to ensure a more consistent staff to child ratio to meet the needs of our students, including those with special needs and disabilities. In addition, the proposed regulation changes do not include any operating funding for new programs that may be required by the changing ratios of staff to children. Many child care operators may have difficulties structuring arrangements with boards without additional operating funding to support their programs.

The proposed amendments could also put an additional strain on an already underserved system. For example, infant and toddler child care spaces are difficult to secure for working families. Due to the costs of child care for infants, many centres do not offer infant programs, limiting the number of spaces available for those children. Reducing the group size for toddlers from a current maximum group size of 15 to 12, reduces the ability for programs to be financially viable as well as takes three child care spaces out of the system.

Part of the proposed amendments include addressing critical shortages of before- and after-school programs including allowing specified authorized recreational and related skill building programs to operate for more than three consecutive hours. As recreation and skill building programs are not licensed, they are not subject to the same strict ministry, regulatory requirements that are required for licensed child care programs. There is minimal accountability for recreational programs in terms of their health and safety practices, programming or staff requirements. As a result, this time extension does little to ensure the safety and well-being of children and their families.

### **Qualification Requirements**

The Ministry proposes to make an amendment to the regulations with respect to a kindergarten age group, licensed junior school age group or a licensed primary/junior school age group, that the following are **also** considered qualified employees:

1. An employee who has a diploma or degree in child and youth care;
2. An employee who has a diploma or degree in recreation and leisure services;
3. A member in good standing with the Ontario College of Teachers.

OCSTA, however, believes that registered early childhood educators (ECE's) working with kindergarten children have a unique skill set in child development specific to that age group. The training and experience of ECEs also facilitates a more seamless integration into kindergarten programs as outlined in the Ministry's Kindergarten Program (2016) and the "How Does

Learning Happen?” framework. Other professionals do not necessarily have the knowledge and experience to support these young children as they transition into the school setting.

Further, OCSTA has concerns with the proposal to change the short-term supply staff qualification requirements. Allowing non-qualified staff to be deemed qualified for up to two weeks to replace regular qualified staff may place children at risk and undermine their programming needs. We understand the challenges in recruiting qualified staff but using non-qualified individuals, even on a short-term basis, is not an option that reflects the needs and interests of children. This proposed change may also impact the collective agreements that boards have with their staff.

### **Administrative/Regulatory Burden**

OCSTA supports the general goal of reducing administrative and regulatory burdens on child care operators that do not pose risks to the health and safety of children or result in diminished learning and programming opportunities. We thus do not support the proposed changes regarding First Aid Certification for new staff that would allow operators three months to obtain the necessary first aid training and certification. We believe that all staff should have the necessary qualifications prior to the commencement of their employment.

With respect to the creation of a new regulatory requirement for digital records for child care centres, OCSTA supports this change. Maintaining a digital record for each policy, individualized plan, parent handbook, program statement, child registration, copy of agreement, or other document regulation would provide for greater certainty and transparency in the record keeping of these agencies.

The proposed amendments also consider removing the current requirement for direct physical checks on children that regularly sleep at the child care centre to only those children under the age of 24 months. It is not clear to us what the benefit of this change is and how it streamlines regulation. The change may pose challenges to the health and safety of children over 24 months (for example, children with developmental delays) and so we would not support removing this regulatory requirement.

### **Health and Safety**

There are currently no requirements under the Act to manage the safe arrival and dismissal of children. This has been an issue for our boards and OCSTA welcomes the proposed amendment to regulations that will require licensees to develop and implement safe arrival and dismissal policies and procedures. This would assist in aligning the child care sector with our Catholic boards, which has been subject to Policy/Program Memorandum No.123 - Safe Arrivals since 1999. OCSTA also welcomes support from the Ministry to assist with the development of licensees’ policies and procedures addressing safe arrival and dismissal of children through the creation of sample policies and procedures.

In terms of changes to children’s records, the Ministry proposes to amend regulations to require child care operators to include the names of parents who are believed **not** to have a legal right of

access to a child. The intention here is to promote compliance with a similar provision in the Act. OCSTA believes this is a positive development to ensure the safety of the child and the school and child care community more generally.

### **Discussion Questions**

#### ***Forest/Outdoor Programs***

The benefits of outdoor programming for children and educators are well known. Research supports that time spent in organized outdoor programs is good for students' mental-health and well-being, focus and concentration, self-regulation, and social, physical and emotional development.

Programs in the outdoors should, however, be regulated through a licensing regime with health and safety being the key considerations. This may require amendments to regulations under the Act, given the unique style of programming outdoor education would require.

Beginning with the targeted age group of children ages 4 and older would be a good starting point, allowing program advisors to become familiar with the non-traditional learning environment. Ratios would need to be higher, 1 adult to every 6 children. Ontario has several leading outdoor programs that can be visited to gain new perspectives. The TimberNook programs in the Peterborough area and in Elgin, Ontario are perfect reference points to witness the benefits of this type of learning environments for children and educators.

#### ***Registry of Unlicensed Child Care Providers***

OCSTA would support the development of a Registry of unlicensed child care providers. As noted in the consultation document, a Registry would assist the Ministry in communicating best practices related to education, health and safety and child development. A public registry would also assist parents in accessing child care options in their local community. Such a registry should be developed and maintained by the Ministry of Education with input from related government Ministries of Health and Community and Children's Services.

### **Summary**

On behalf of our 29 Catholic boards, we want to thank the Ministry for consulting with us on the development of amended regulations under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*. Improving the quality and affordability of child care in Ontario will contribute significantly to the spiritual, emotional and mental well-being of children which in turn will lead to higher levels of student achievement.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2020-2021

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Patrick J. Daly, President	Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Michael Bellmore, Vice President	Sudbury Catholic District School Board
Beverley Eckensweiler, Past President	Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board
Linda Ainsworth	Peterborough Victoria Northumberland & Clarington Catholic District School Board
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Leslie Cassidy-Amadio	Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board
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Luz del Rosario	Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
Marino Gazzola	Wellington Catholic District School Board
Sharon Hobin	Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
Vince Iantomasi	Halton Catholic District School Board
Todd Lalonde	CDSB of Eastern Ontario
Colleen Landers	Northeastern Catholic District School Board
Mark Mullan	Ottawa Catholic School Board
Garry Tanuan	Toronto Catholic District School Board
Linda Ward	St. Clair Catholic District School Board
Bishop John Boissonneau	ACBO Liaison to OCSTA
Fr. Patrick Fitzpatrick	Chaplain
Nick Milanetti	Executive Director



Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association

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Box 2064, Suite 1804, 20 Eglinton Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M4R 1K8  
Tel: 416-932-9460 Fax: 416-932-9459 Email: [ocsta@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:ocsta@ocsta.on.ca) Website: [www.ocsta.on.ca](http://www.ocsta.on.ca)

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 24, 2020 3:02 PM

**To:** OCSTA - Connie DeMelo <[CDeMelo@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:CDeMelo@ocsta.on.ca)>

**Subject:** OCSTA: "Journey through Advent" Online Weekly Video Series

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Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association

November 24, 2020

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Trustees and Directors of Education  
- All Catholic District School Boards

**CC:** OCSTA Directors and Staff  
Board Secretaries and Administrative Assistants

**FROM:** Patrick J. Daly, President

**SUBJECT:** *"Journey through Advent"* – Online Weekly Video Series

I thought that the following resource might be of interest to you.

**Colleagues in Catholic Education,**

**On Monday, November 23 2020** the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) announced a new online weekly video series created to help Canadian Catholic faithful to prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Entitled *Journey through Advent*, the series is a joint project involving the CCCC's *Office national de liturgie*, the National Liturgy Office, and the Office for Evangelization and Catechesis. The initiative

was developed as a way, through the modern method of video messaging, to offer a resource that enriches faith formation during a time of joyful anticipation for the coming of the Lord and Saviour into the world.

The videos serve as an introduction to the liturgical Season and present reflections on the Gospel readings for each Sunday in Advent. The Most Reverend Douglas Crosby, O.M.I., Bishop of Hamilton and the Most Reverend Pierre Goudreault, Bishop of Saint-Anne-de-la-Pocatière, provide spiritual and pastoral guidance on the readings that illustrate the true meaning of Christmas.

This video series is especially relevant given the COVID-19 pandemic that places limitations on in-person gatherings for faith communities. It is hoped that *Journey through Advent* will be a source of deep spiritual solace and insightful preparation for all. **In Catholic school settings, these videos may be a source of inspiration for trustees, supervisory officers, chaplaincy leaders, school principals, staff gatherings (Covid-19 style) and in senior religious education classes. Please feel free to share this information and add the links to your own websites.**

The videos will be available on the CCCB website each Monday in advance of the upcoming Sunday celebration (23 November, 30 November 7 December and 14 December). To follow the series:

[Click here to access the video series in English.](#)

[Click here to access the video series in French.](#)

Blessings for an Advent filled with hope and great anticipation!

Marg

*Marg Shea-Lawrence*  
*Director*  
*Office of Evangelization and Catechesis*  
*Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops*  
*2500 Don Reid Dr.*  
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**CONNIE ARAUJO-DE MELO** | Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association | 1804-20 Eglinton Avenue West, Box 2064, Toronto, ON M4R 1K8 | t 416-932-9460 ext. 226

**From:** [Loretta Notten](#)  
**To:** [Alice Figueiredo](#)  
**Subject:** FW: OCSTA: 2021 Catholic Education Week - Advance Kit  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 25, 2020 4:18:38 PM  
**Attachments:** [Advance Kit-WORD.docx](#)  
[image002.jpg](#)

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**From:** OCSTA - Ashlee Cabral <[ACabral@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:ACabral@ocsta.on.ca)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 25, 2020 3:20 PM  
**To:** OCSTA - Ashlee Cabral <[ACabral@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:ACabral@ocsta.on.ca)>  
**Subject:** OCSTA: 2021 Catholic Education Week - Advance Kit

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November 25, 2020

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Chairpersons & Directors of Education  
• All Catholic District School Boards

**FROM:** Anne O'Brien, Director of Catholic Education

**SUBJECT:** Catholic Education Week – May 2 – 7, 2021  
“Catholic Education: *Nurturing Hope*”

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*“Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.” Isaiah 40:31*

As we approach the Advent season, we are reminded that publicly funded Catholic education is a call to service. Regardless of our position or our responsibilities within Catholic education, our role is a call, birthed in our Baptism to bring the saving message of Jesus Christ into the lives of those students whom it is our privilege to serve. This reality elevates our duties and

responsibilities to another plane. Left to our own strengths and abilities, the task seems and is very challenging, but we are not alone in this task. Jesus promised us the abiding strength of the Holy Spirit to be with us always – not just for a century or two at the church’s beginning, but always. But the promise is predicated on our faithful and faith-filled response to that call to service following the example of Jesus who said, “I am in the midst of you as one who serves.” (Luke 22:27)

Catholic Education Week begins on Sunday, May 2, 2021. This year’s Catholic Education Week theme is “*Nurturing Hope*.” The theme for CEW 2021 was inspired by the following considerations:

- Recognition of the special Year of Laudato Si’ which will run through May 24, 2021, announced by Pope Francis on May 24, 2020, the fifth anniversary of his papal encyclical, “On Caring for Our Common Home.”
- In the face of the ongoing reality of the COVID-19 pandemic, a strong desire by the planning committee, along with those consulted, and supported by feedback from the survey, for continuity with the theme for Catholic Education Week 2020, *Igniting Hope*, which has served so well during the spring recess from in-school instruction.
- The challenges to personal and spiritual well-being posed by the uncertainty and physical isolation of the current global crisis makes the timing and the concerns of Mental Health Week, which takes place during the same week as Catholic Education Week, all the more relevant.
- Ongoing recognition of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission and the relevance of Indigenous culture and spirituality to the spirit of Laudato Si.

Attached, please find the Advance Kit for Catholic Education Week. I would like to thank our team of educators from our English and French Catholic boards for their work involved in preparing this resource.

***We ask that you please forward this resource to your school and board staff who are responsible for overseeing materials related to CEW 2021.***

### *Attachments*

ASHLEE CABRAL | Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association | 1804-20 Eglinton Avenue West, Box 2064, Toronto, ON, M4R 1K8 | 416-932-9460 Ext. 230 | Website: [www.ocsta.on.ca](http://www.ocsta.on.ca)

### **CATHOLIC EDUCATION: *Nurturing Hope***

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**Catholic Education Week 2021**  
*Prayer Services and Reflection Activities for 2020-2021*

**ADVANCE KIT**



*“Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.” Isaiah 40:31*

*<<Ceux qui mettent leur espérance dans le Seigneur trouvent des forces nouvelles.>> Isaïe 40,31*



**Catholic Education Week**  
**May 2 – May 7, 2021**  
[www.goodnewsforall.ca](http://www.goodnewsforall.ca)



# Catholic Education Week 2021

**Catholic Education: *Nurturing Hope***

**L'éducation catholique: *Cultiver l'espérance***

**May 2 – May 7, 2021**

## Guidelines for Using the Advance Kit

*What is Catholic Education Week?*

Each year the Catholic community of Ontario engages in a week-long celebration of the unique identity and distinctive contributions of Catholic education during Catholic Education Week.

*What is the theme of Catholic Education Week?*

This year's celebration entitled, "**Catholic Education: *Nurturing Hope***" is scheduled for the week of May 2 – May 7, 2021. The scriptural passage that guides our theme is, "*Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.*" Isaiah 40:31

*What is the Catholic Education Week Resource Kit?*

For a number of years, OCSTA has developed and distributed a school-based Resource Kit of activities, prayer services and suggested resources based on the theme of the particular year. The Resource Kit is sent to Catholic school communities early in the new year to assist them in their Catholic Education Week activities.

*What is the Catholic Education Week Advance Kit?*

In order to help all Catholic educational partners engage in prayer and dialogue in preparation for Catholic Education Week 2021, OCSTA has prepared an Advance Kit of prayer services and reflection activities. Unlike the Resource Kit that is designed for students, the Advance Kit, sent early in the school year, is designed to help adult groups (trustees, school board staff, school staff groups, parent groups, parish groups, associations, etc.) reflect on the theme of Catholic Education Week with prayer services and reflection activities beginning in Advent and concluding in the month before Catholic Education Week.

*What are the sub-themes of Catholic Education Week?*

The Advance Kit has five prayer and reflection activities for the five months preceding Catholic Education Week, each activity reflecting one of the five sub-themes of Catholic Education Week:

<b>Advent:</b>	<b><i>Preparing the Earth ... Préparer la terre</i></b>
<b>January:</b>	<b><i>Sowing Seeds of Gratitude ... Semer la gratitude</i></b>
<b>February:</b>	<b><i>Cultivating Relationships ... Cultiver nos relations</i></b>
<b>March:</b>	<b><i>Harvesting New Fruit ... Récolter de nouveaux fruits</i></b>
<b>April:</b>	<b><i>Marvelling in Wonder ... S'émerveiller</i></b>



*How can the Advance Kit be used in a local Catholic educational community?*

Each service may be used to begin a meeting or gathering, or to provide an opportunity for the adult partners in a local Catholic education community to discuss the themes. The prayer services include:

- Prayers that reflect the theme
- A scripture reading that connects with the theme\*
- A personal reflection related to the scripture reading
- A theme-related reading taken from the contemporary Catholic spiritual writings
- Questions for discussion or reflection based on that reading

*Does the format of these prayer services always have to be followed?*

The Advance Kit is a gift to be adapted and utilized in whatever way suits the needs of your local community. Feel free to use all, or any part of the kit, in the five months prior to Catholic Education Week 2021, beginning in Advent 2020.

*What approach should be taken to the discussion?*

The Advance Kit is designed in Catholic education to help adult groups to sit down together to pray and reflect. In discussing the reflection questions found in this Advance Kit, it is important to allow for the divergent views and experiences that may emerge. Reflection sharing or discussions should be conducted in a gospel atmosphere of respect. Conflicting points of view should be heard and accepted without feeling the need for them to be resolved.

*How can we help prepare for future Catholic Education Week activities?*

OCSTA encourages all its partners to let us know about your group's use of this Advance Kit by sending an email to OCSTA at the following email address: [ocsta@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:ocsta@ocsta.on.ca).

The Catholic Education Week Committee would also be pleased to receive your feedback on this Advance Kit as well as suggestions to improve its value to our partners in Catholic education. These and all other Catholic Education Week materials are available on the OCSTA website at: [www.goodnewsforall.ca](http://www.goodnewsforall.ca).

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\*Note that the scriptural reading has been provided for your convenience, however, scripture should normally be read from a Bible or Lectionary.



## **Advent 2020**

### **“Preparing the Earth”**

#### **SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS**

- O Come, Divine Messiah ~ (has French verses)
- Prepare the Way of the Lord ~ Taize Round
- I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light
- Blessed and Holy
- Patience, People ~ J. Foley
- Hope

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

God of our longing,

Inspire us to prepare the earth of our lives, for the return of your Son, Jesus. Protect our hearts from frosty emotions and prune the dark thoughts that come in shortening days. Guide us to work for justice and peace with those who are vulnerable, and give us the gift of patience that comes with waiting for the fullness of your kingdom here on earth.

Amen. +

#### **READING: A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah**

“Come, let’s climb God’s mountain, go to the house of the God of Jacob. He’ll show us the way he works so we can live the way we’re made.” Zion’s the source of the revelation. God’s message comes from Jerusalem. God will settle things fairly between nations. He’ll make things rights between many peoples. They’ll turn their swords into shovels, their spears into hoes. No more will nation fight nation; they won’t play war anymore. Come, family of Jacob, let’s live in the light of God.

The Word of the Lord. **R. Thanks be to God.**

#### **QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION**

- *Which line from Isaiah nurtures hope within you?*
- *This Advent, how do you feel called to live the way you were made?*

### **A Reading from the 2020 Report of the CCCB President**

“I was delighted to take note of the message for the 2020 National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples prepared by the CCCB Indigenous Council. Entitled, Healing of the Earth, it highlights the different types of relationships from which we benefit and that are a constant reminder to us of the need to continue nurturing them ... One particular type of relationship which caught my attention was that of healing: “...We are always healing. God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to lead us in the way of healing and restore relationship with God, other peoples, and all creation. Jesus used mud from the Earth to heal the blind. He went into the wilderness and to the mountains to fast. He used bread and a few fish to feed thousands of people. He worked with the wind and water. Jesus was in full relationship with all things of creation. We learn from Him about the way of the healer, friend, prophet, and teacher.”

### **QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION**

- *Is there a relationship in your life in need of healing?*
- *Are you in full relationship with all things of creation?*

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Jesus, Saviour and Friend,

During this season of Advent, bless us with insight, humility and presence. Help us keep our focus on preparing our hearts and minds for your return. During this season of winter, may we keep our relationship with all creation, full and healthy.

Amen. +



## January 2021

### “Sowing Seeds of Gratitude”

#### SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS

- The Summons
- The Light of Christ
- Christ be Our Light
- Thanks be to You ~ Marty Haugen, Gather
- We are Marching ~ Siyahamba

#### OPENING PRAYER

Creator God,

Here in this moment of winter’s darkness, we pause to reflect on your light. With grateful hearts, we give thanks for your creation. Beneath the snow, you bless us with the seeds of promise that will break open again in spring. Open our hearts to a spirit of gratitude that we may bring your light to others and the hope that springs from your never ending love. May our gratitude be sown to illuminate your goodness.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord and light.

Amen. +

#### READING: A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians (4:4-8)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

The Word of the Lord. **R. Thanks be to God.**

#### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Where do you see the light of God’s love in the world today?*
- *In this winter season, what makes you want to rejoice and give thanks?*

**Chief Dan George (1899-1981)**

Chief Dan George was chief of the Tsleil-Wantuth Nation, a Coast Salish band located on Burrard Inlet in British Columbia. He was an actor, poet and author. He was an Officer of the Order of Canada and was an activist for the environment and for better understanding between non-indigenous and indigenous people.

The beauty of the trees,  
The softness of the air,  
The fragrance of the grass,  
Speaks to me.

The summit of the mountain,  
The thunder of the sky,  
The rhythm of the sea,  
Speaks to me.

The faintness of the stars,  
The freshness of the morning,  
The dewdrop on the flower,  
Speaks to me.

The strength of fire,  
The taste of salmon,  
The trail of the sun,  
And the life that never goes away,  
They speak to me.

And my heart soars.

~ Chief Dan George

**CLOSING PRAYER**

O God,

We thank you for this earth, our home; for the wide sky and the blessed sun, for the salt sea and the running water, for the everlasting hills and the never-resting winds, for trees and the common grass underfoot. We thank you for our senses by which we hear the songs and see the splendour of the summer fields, and taste of the autumn fruits, and rejoice in the feel of the snow, and smell of the breath of spring. Grant us a heart wide open to all this beauty; and save our souls from being so blind that we pass unseeing when even the common thorn bush is aflame with your glory, O God our Creator, who lives and reigns forever and ever.

Amen. +



## February 2021 “Cultivating Relationships”

### SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS

- All are Welcome ~ Marty Haugen, Gather Hymnal #753
- They’ll Know We are Christians ~ Peter Scholtes, Gather Hymnal #735
- Christians, Let Us Love One Another ~ Sr. Claudia Foltz and Armand Nigro, SJ, Catholic Book of Worship III #595

### OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, Master Teacher and Saviour,  
Please enable us to deeply reflect upon the impact and the importance of the Golden Rule, “In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you.” (Matthew, 7:12 NRSV) Help us to accept, include and serve one another with love; to celebrate our diversity; to give us the courage to speak out and speak up against injustice, inequity and hatred in all forms; to open our hearts and minds to cultivate new relationships, and to do our part to repair those that are fractured. Lord Jesus, guide us to lead like you through your scripture and your teachings, and nurture us to remain hopeful, now and always.  
For this, we ask your blessings.  
Amen. +

### READING: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (5:1-2, 7:12)

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying ... “In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the law and the prophets.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Reflect upon the Golden Rule. How do you embody the Golden Rule in your relationships with family members, friends and colleagues, and towards yourself?*
- *Reconciliation is at the heart of cultivating relationships. When trying to reconcile a fractured relationship in the past or to be at peace with yourself that the relationship is fractured, whom did you turn to for support? Were you able to turn to prayer? Why or why not?*

- *Have you had an opportunity to speak out or speak up against injustice or hatred? Reflect upon what you did or did not do. What would you do differently for subsequent occurrences? How does your Faith call you to respond to injustice?*
- *In your leadership capacity, what systemic change(s) are you working towards to ensure that the connection between Faith and equity are prevalent in your work?*

**Excerpts from a Homily by Most Reverend José H. Gomez  
Archbishop of Los Angeles, May 2020**

When God looks at us, he sees beyond the color of our skin, or the countries where we come from, or the language that we speak. God sees only his children — beloved sons, beloved daughters ... The mission that Jesus gave to his Church is the beautiful mission of gathering all the peoples of the earth into one family of God. And the Church's mission, my brothers and sisters, is our mission. Your mission and mine ...

I think we can see that we have an important responsibility to share the truth that we are all children of God, and that God loves every person ... Jesus is sending each of us out to spread this message of peace, person to person, heart to heart ... The peace that Jesus gives us is not the false peace of those who accept injustice out of fear or in order to avoid trouble or confrontation. The peace that Jesus gives is something we have to build, something we have to “make.” It means always working to build trust, to promote understanding, and to encourage forgiveness and friendship. It is hard work, challenging work. And we know that we cannot do it without God's help ...

When we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, then we see all the goodness and beauty in the world, we see the image of God in others. And we also have a new compassion, a new sense of people's needs and their sufferings — and we also feel our responsibility to love others for God's sake.

~ <https://lacatholics.org/2020/05/31/pentecost-homily/>

**From Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti***

“Love, then, is more than just a series of benevolent actions. Those actions have their source in a union increasingly directed towards others, considering them of value, worthy, pleasing and beautiful apart from their physical or moral appearances. Our love for others, for who they are, moves us to seek the best for their lives. Only by cultivating this way of relating to one another will we make possible a social friendship that excludes no one and a fraternity that is open to all.”

~ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, On Fraternity and Social Friendship, 2020, Number 94.

### **QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION**

- *What implications can these readings have for you and your relationships at school/work? At home? In your parish?*
- *Archbishop Gomez states that “Jesus is sending each one of us out to spread the message of peace, person to person, heart to heart” but acknowledges that it can be hard and challenging work. We can sometimes become discouraged and overwhelmed. How do you nurture your own hope in order to bring hope and peace to others?*
- *Pope Francis describes the need to cultivate a love that seeks to include and reflect the best interests of everyone. How can you help to nurture hope in your school community to ensure that it is a place of acceptance, love and belonging?*

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

A Prayer to the Creator

Lord, Father of our human family,

You created all human beings equal in dignity: pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter, dialogue, justice and peace. Move us to create healthier societies and a more dignified world, a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.

Amen. +

### **SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS**

- City of God ~ Dan Schutte, Catholic Book of Worship III #345
- Love One Another ~ Tommy Walker
- We are Many Parts ~ Marty Haugen, Gather Hymnal #512





## **March 2021**

### **“Harvesting New Fruit”**

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

God of the Harvest,

The earth is full of your goodness, and every year gifts us with the fruit of your love and our labour. Your bounty is so rich and constant that we have to come to bank on it, and even take undue advantage of it. Our exploitation of the earth is on display all around us: in pollution, overconsumption, the destruction of green space, and the extinction of thousands of species of plant and animal life. This past year was a solemn reminder to us of our vulnerability as creatures, our dependence on one another, and the need for change in how we live together. Lead us into an ecological conversion; a change of heart, that will help us hold your creation and our common home, in proper reverence, and bring forth new fruit of sustainability and just economic structures so that all life can prosper.

We make this prayer in the name of your Spirit, that renews the face of the earth.

Amen. +

#### **READING: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke**

Then Jesus told this parable: ‘A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, “See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?” He replied, “Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, then you can cut it down.”’

The Gospel of the Lord. **R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.**

#### **QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION**

- *Who is the landowner in this parable? Who is the gardener?*
- *What is the fruit that the owner of the vineyard has been waiting for?*
- *What do we need to do to make possible a harvest of new fruit?*

### **Reading from “Praying With, In and for Creation”**

Crucifixion Nails

Forgive us, for we have sinned.

Forgive our collection of nails for the crucifixion.

Forgive our inventory:

A nail taken from a door to a residential school.

A nail taken from a sign telling us not to drink the water on this reserve.

A nail taken from the oak door to a “gentlemen’s” club.

A nail from a frame to a glass ceiling.

A nail forged by Sydney’s tar ponds.

A nail spiked into a BC railway sleeper by an indentured worker.

A nail where the cod fishers used to hang their caps.

A nail used to jam a window shut in a derelict rural church.

A nail that fixed anti-semitic slogans to a placard.

A nail that spiked tires of a Muslim family’s car.

A nail embedded in a snowball thrown at an autistic boy.

A nail fashioned from a bed that once held a long-term care resident.

And 666 nails used to build walls and manufacture spite.

Forgive us our sins.

Forgive us and give us courage to melt these nails and turn them into ploughshares.

~ Les Miller, Northern Light, 2020

### **QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION**

- *Which of these nails did you find to be the most hurtful?*
- *What can we do, together, to turn them into tools for the garden?*

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Loving God,

Creator of Heaven, earth, and all therein contained,

Open our minds and touch our hearts, so that we can be part of creation, your gift. Be present to those in need in these difficult times, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. Help us to show creative solidarity as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic. Make us courageous in embracing the changes required to seek the common good. Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and interdependent. Enable us to succeed in listening and responding to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable world.

We pray through Christ our Lord, under the loving gaze of Mary, Help of Christians.

Amen. +



## **April 2021**

### **“Mavelling in Wonder”**

#### **SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS**

- Canticle of the Sun (The Heavens are Telling the Glory of God) ~ Marty Haugen, Gather Comprehensive #495
- All You Words of God ~ Marty Haugen, Gather Comprehensive #498)
- All Creatures of Our God and King ~ Based on St. Francis of Assisi’s “Canticle of the Sun”
- God of Wonders ~ Third Day
- Indescribable ~ Chris Tomlin
- All Things New ~ Steven Curtis Chapman

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

God of the mountains, God of the sparrow,  
we come before you today in awe at the beauty and diversity of all you have created. As people of faith, may our eyes always be open to the wonder and majesty of this world, and may we appreciate and honour the myriad of creatures who, together with us, make up this amazing cosmos. May our marvelling lead us to be wise stewards of your creation, careful in our use of its resources, so that future generations may enjoy the abundance and splendor with which you have surrounded us.

All praise to you, our Creator, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. +

#### **READING: A Reading from the Book of Job (Job 12:7-10,13)**

Ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these, does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? In his hand, is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being ... With God are wisdom and strength; he has counsel and understanding.

The Word of the Lord. **R. Thanks be to God.**

## **Reading Reflection**

### **From Pope Francis' 2015 Encyclical Letter "Laudato Si'," on care for our common home**

Just as happens when we fall in love with someone, whenever [St. Francis of Assisi] would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest of animals, he burst into song, drawing all other creatures into his praise. He communed with all creation, even preaching to the flowers, inviting them "to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed with reason" ... To him, each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection. That is why he felt called to care for all that exists. If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then ... care will well up spontaneously.

## **QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION**

- *What does marveling in wonder mean to you? What words or phrases in the readings resonate with you the most in terms of your role as a Catholic educator?*
- *How is the environment part of your spirituality - personal prayer and action?*
- *What implications do these readings have for nurturing hope? What are some ways that our students marvel in wonder? How does your work as a Catholic educator reflect the messages shared in the above readings?*

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Blessed are you, Source of every gift, for the rich blessings of creation. The awesomeness of your world—its tiny one-celled creatures and its vast oceans and deserts—inspires us to praise and thank you daily. Teach us to hear the song of creation, and to know that we are a vital part of the complex web of life, called to wisdom, humility and care. As we respect the integrity of creation, so may we work for genuine justice for our sisters and brothers, as part of that "integral ecology" to which the Church has called us. May we respect, preserve and celebrate creation, and may it always lead us to you, its Creator.

We ask all of this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. +

## **SUGGESTED CLOSINGS SONGS**

- Sing Out, Earth and Skies ~ Marty Haugen, Gather Comprehensive #497
- For the Beauty of the Earth ~ John Rutter
- All Things Bright and Beautiful ~ John Rutter
- We Cannot Own the Starlit Sky ~ Ruth Duck



## Quotes Related to Nurturing Hope

### **Nurturing Hope**

Our souls cannot be forced to grow, but like flowers, our spiritual selves can be nurtured until they blossom and flourish. James Van Praagh

Nurturing is not complex. It's simply been tuned in to the thing or person before you and offering small gestures toward what it needs at that time. Mary Anne Radmacher

Gardeners are good nurturing, and they have a great quality of patience, they are tender. They have to be persistent. Ralph Fiennes

The glory of gardening: hands in the earth, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just on the body, but the soul. Alfred Austin

Let us be protectors of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment. Pope Francis

Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime. Martin Luther

Our hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts.

Romans 5:5

Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal.

Philippians 3:13b-14a

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope. Romans 15:13

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1

Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus. Hebrews 12:1b-2a

With the eyes of your heart enlightened, may you know ... the hope to which he has called you.

Ephesians 1:18

### **Preparing the Earth**

Pray for a good harvest but keep on hoeing. Anonymous

The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it. James 5:7b

Anyone who tills the land will have plenty of bread. Proverbs 28:19

The Lord God sent the man forth from the Garden of Eden, to the ground from which he was taken. Genesis 3:23

See now, I am for you [says the Lord]; I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown.

Ezekiel 36:9

Those who cultivate the soil heap up their harvest. Ecclesiasticus 20:28

Those who act faithfully are the Lord's delight. Proverbs 12:22b

Open wide your hearts. 2Corinthians 6:13b

Some seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Matthew 13:8

The ones sown on the good soil ... hear [God's] word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold. Mark 4:20

The good soil ... are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance. Luke 8:15

Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and [fertilize] it. Luke 13:8

Welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. James 1:21

### **Sowing Seeds of Gratitude**

You have given so much to me, give me thing more – a grateful heart. George Herbert

Seeds of great discussions are constantly floating around us, but they only take root in minds well prepared to receive them. Joseph Henry

One who can give thanks for little will always find s/he has enough. Anonymous

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

Ps. 9:1

Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving. Ps. 95:2

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Ps. 136:1

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts ... and be thankful. Colossians 3:15

With gratitude in your hearts, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. Colossians 3:16  
[Whatever you do ...] do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:16

### **Cultivating Relationships**

Grant me to recognize in other, Lord God, the radiance of your own face.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

You must give some time to others. Even if it's a little thing, do something for others – something for which you get no pay but the privilege of doing it. Albert Schweitzer

We all have seeds of love in us. We can develop this wonderful source of energy, nurturing the unconditional love that does not expect anything in return. Thich Nhat Hanh

Consider seven generations in the future when making decisions that affect people.

Wilma Mankiller

Treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.

Native American traditional belief

Let love be genuine ... love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Romans 12:9a-10

Live in harmony with one another ... so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Romans 12:16a, 18

Do to others as you would have them do to you. Luke 6:31

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. Romans 13:8

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.  
Colossians 3:14

I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:1-3

### **Harvesting New Fruit**

Pay attention and you'll find many perfect moments in any given day. Stephen C. Paul  
There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.  
Thomas Merton

Let every step you take upon the earth be as a prayer. Black Elk

The goal of life is to make your heartbeat match the beat of the universe, to match your nature with nature. Joseph Campbell

And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Rev. 21:5

I call Heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live. Deutero. 30:19

And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace. James 3:18

For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, provided it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by God's word and by prayer. 1 Timothy 4:4-5

To those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honour and immortality, God will give eternal life. Romans 2:7

When you come into the land and plant all kinds of trees for food ... in the fifth year you may eat of their fruit, that their yield may be increased for you. [i.e. it takes time and patience for us to "harvest the new fruit" that God wants us to offer] Leviticus 19:23, 25

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23a

... having produced the harvest of righteousness [or justice] that comes through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:11

Look around you, and see: the fields are ripe for harvesting. John 4:35

### **Marveling in Wonder**

Lord, let me see your glory in every place. Michelangelo

To make a prairie, it takes clover and a bee. One clover, and a bee and revery. The revery alone will do, if bees are few. Emily Dickenson

Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies, those transcendent moments of awe that change forever how we experience life and the world. John Milton

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 2 Cor. 5:17

See, I am making all things new. Rev. 21:5

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise.

Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! Because of your great power, your enemies cringe before you. All the earth worships you; ... they sing praises to you, praises to your name."

Psalm 66

Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen strange things today.” Luke 5:26

Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders? Exodus 15:11

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe. Hebrews 12:28

Those who live at earth’s farthest bounds are awed by your signs; you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy. Ps. 65:8

Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure ... think about these things. Phil. 4:8

Let us ... offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe. Heb. 12:28b

Be astonished! Be astounded! For a work is being done in your days that you would not believe if you were told. Habakkuk 1:5

All the people were astounded at the greatness of God ... Everyone was amazed at all that [Jesus] was doing. Luke 9:43



**From:** [Loretta Notten](#)  
**To:** [Alice Figueiredo](#)  
**Subject:** FW: OCSTA Memo: Education Equity Secretariat/OCSTA Trustee Equity Training Program  
**Date:** Thursday, November 26, 2020 11:47:17 AM  
**Attachments:** [image002.jpg](#)  
[image004.jpg](#)

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**From:** OCSTA - Connie DeMelo <[CDeMelo@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:CDeMelo@ocsta.on.ca)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 26, 2020 11:39 AM  
**To:** OCSTA - Connie DeMelo <[CDeMelo@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:CDeMelo@ocsta.on.ca)>  
**Subject:** OCSTA Memo: Education Equity Secretariat/OCSTA Trustee Equity Training Program

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November 26, 2020

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Chairpersons and Directors of Education  
• All Catholic District School Boards

**CC:** OCSTA Directors and Staff  
Board Secretaries and Administrative Assistants

**FROM:** Patrick J. Daly, President

**SUBJECT:** Education Equity Secretariat/OCSTA Trustee Equity Training Program

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Further to our previous memo, the Ministry of Education's Equity Secretariat together with the OCSTA will be hosting a Human Rights and Equity Training opportunity for School Board Trustees. We are working with the Secretariat so as to develop content that meets the needs of Ontario's Catholic School Trustees and speaks to the distinct identity of Catholic education.

The Trustees Equity Training Program will be delivered in two segments – Part A and Part B

– and each segment will be offered on a different date. OCSTA is working with the Secretariat to finalize Part A of this program for Catholic Trustees which will take place on Friday, January 15, 2021 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

This first segment of the Trustees Equity Training Program will include:

- remarks from a representative of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario
- a presentation by an Ontario legal expert on equity in education
- an interactive case study discussion session for trustees, and;
- a presentation by the Catholic Board Council of the Ontario Student Trustees' Association.

We kindly ask that you reserve the morning of January 15 in your calendar for this event. A detailed agenda will be sent in the coming weeks.

To date the Ministry of Education has indicated it is their expectation that the cost of the training will come from School Board Trustee Professional Development funds. We continue to advocate that all or part of the cost should be funded through the Ministry.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call Sharon McMillan, Nick Milanetti or me.

**CONNIE ARAUJO-DE MELO** | Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association | 1804-20 Eglinton Avenue West, Box 2064, Toronto, ON M4R 1K8 | t 416-932-9460 ext. 226

**CATHOLIC EDUCATION: *Nurturing Hope***

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**From:** [Loretta Notten](#)  
**To:** [Alice Figueiredo](#)  
**Subject:** FW: OCSTA: Memo - Legislative and Policy Update  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 1, 2020 2:29:15 PM

---

**From:** OCSTA - Marie Palombi <[MPalombi@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:MPalombi@ocsta.on.ca)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 1, 2020 2:26 PM  
**To:** OCSTA - Marie Palombi <[MPalombi@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:MPalombi@ocsta.on.ca)>  
**Subject:** OCSTA: Memo - Legislative and Policy Update

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December 1, 2020

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Chairpersons and Directors of Education  
• All Catholic District School Boards

**CC:** OCSTA Directors and Staff  
Board Secretaries and Administrative Assistants

**FROM:** Patrick J. Daly, President

**SUBJECT:** **Legislative and Policy Update**

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### **Provincial Budget / Bill 229, *Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act (Budget Measures)***

This Bill has been time allocated and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. There will be three days of public hearings starting November 30, with the Bill due back to the house for third reading by December 7, 2020. OCSTA has submitted a [Pre-Budget](#) submission, and will be submitting its' Annual Finance Brief to the Minister of Finance

on key funding issue impacting Catholic boards.

### **COVID-19 Update**

On November 26, the Premier and the Minister of Education [announced](#) a number of COVID-19 initiatives and supports for school boards, including:

- The launch of voluntary testing for asymptomatic students in the regions of Ottawa, Toronto, Peel and York;
- Funding for the Durham, Halton, Hamilton-Wentworth and Waterloo Region district school boards in response to rising COVID-19 cases;
- Providing GSN funding stabilization for enrolment declines, for all school boards across the province;
- Instructing a mandatory training component on the first day of class in January 2020, to amplify awareness and compliance of COVID-19 safety protocols; and
- Creation of two learning portals for elementary students developed in partnership with TVO and TFO.

In addition to the news release, two backgrounders were issued with more details:

- [Ontario Dedicates \\$13.6 Million for Durham, Halton, Hamilton and Waterloo Communities](#)
- [Targeted Testing for School Communities](#)

The Ministry of Education also sent out supporting memos, including:

- [B23, COVID-19 Funding: Additional High Priority Areas and Funding for the Education and Community Partnership Program](#)
- [B22, 2020–21 Grants for Student Needs Funding Stabilization](#)
- [B21, Temporary Amendment to the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan \(OTPP\) 50-day re-employment rule](#)

### **Student Transportation Advisory Group**

Earlier this year, Sam Oosterhoff, the parliamentary assistant to the education minister, announced that the province was moving ahead with a review of its school bus funding model and established a Student Transportation Advisory Group. This group includes representatives from school board associations and school bus stakeholder groups. OCSTA’s representatives are Senior Policy Advisor (Finance) Dan Duszcyszyn and me. The topics of discussion under review include:

- Funding formula for student transportation;
- Consortia model and operations;
- Student transportation procurement.

The Advisory Group has met this past year to discuss the first two topics and will reconvene in early December to discuss the cost benchmark study and procurement review being undertaken by Deloitte, as well as gather information regarding student transportation

procurement.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at [pdaly@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:pdaly@ocsta.on.ca) or Steve Andrews at [sandrews@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:sandrews@ocsta.on.ca).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marie Palombi', with a stylized, flowing script.

**MARIE PALOMBI**

**Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association**

**1804 – 20 Eglinton Avenue West**

**Toronto, ON M4R 1K8**

**416-932-9460 Ext. 234 | Website: [www.ocsta.on.ca](http://www.ocsta.on.ca)**

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**From:** [Loretta Notten](#)  
**To:** [Alice Figueiredo](#)  
**Subject:** FW: OCSTA: Memo - GSN Consultation for 2021-2022  
**Date:** Friday, December 4, 2020 12:08:21 PM  
**Attachments:** [2021-22 Education funding consultation guide.pdf](#)  
[image002.jpg](#)

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**From:** OCSTA - Marie Palombi <[MPalombi@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:MPalombi@ocsta.on.ca)>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 4, 2020 9:06 AM  
**To:** OCSTA - Marie Palombi <[MPalombi@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:MPalombi@ocsta.on.ca)>  
**Subject:** OCSTA: Memo - GSN Consultation for 2021-2022

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December 4, 2020

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Chairpersons and Directors of Education  
• All Catholic District School Boards

**CC:** OCSTA Directors and Staff  
Board Secretaries and Administrative Assistants

**FROM:** Patrick J. Daly, President

**SUBJECT: Grants for Student Needs Consultation for 2021-2022**

---

On December 3, 2020, the Ministry of Education announced its annual Grants for Student Needs (GSN) consultation. We have attached the GSN Guide that provides boards with

background information and specific questions the Ministry is seeking feedback on. The focus of this consultation is:

- COVID-19 Outbreak Response
- Online Learning Adjustment
- Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPF)
- Reducing Administrative Burden and Red Tape
- School Board Administration and Governance Grant
- Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA)
- Census data
- Secondary Class Size Compliance.

### Next Steps

OCSTA will be developing a submission to reflect the needs and concerns of Catholic boards over the next month. This will then be used to guide our advocacy on the financial needs of boards. In order to assist us in this work, please provide me ([pdaly@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:pdaly@ocsta.on.ca)) or Steve Andrews ([sandrews@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:sandrews@ocsta.on.ca)) any feedback you may have on the issues raised in the Guide by January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Boards may also make direct submissions to the Ministry at: [EDULABFINANCE@ontario.ca](mailto:EDULABFINANCE@ontario.ca) by January 15, 2021.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.



*Attachment*

**MARIE PALOMBI**  
**Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association**  
**1804 – 20 Eglinton Avenue West**  
**Toronto, ON M4R 1K8**  
**416-932-9460 Ext. 234 | Website: [www.ocsta.on.ca](http://www.ocsta.on.ca)**

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**From:** [Loretta Notten](#)  
**To:** [Alice Figueiredo](#)  
**Subject:** FW: OCSTA: Memo - Auditor General's Report - Dec 7 2020  
**Date:** Monday, December 7, 2020 3:59:33 PM  
**Attachments:** [20AR\\_summary\\_03curriculum.pdf](#)  
[20VFM\\_03curriculum\(1\) full report.pdf](#)  
[image002.jpg](#)

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**From:** OCSTA - Marie Palombi <[MPalombi@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:MPalombi@ocsta.on.ca)>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 7, 2020 3:42 PM  
**To:** OCSTA - Marie Palombi <[MPalombi@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:MPalombi@ocsta.on.ca)>  
**Subject:** OCSTA: Memo - Auditor General's Report - Dec 7 2020

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December 7, 2020

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Chairpersons and Directors of Education  
• All Catholic District School Boards

**CC:** OCSTA Directors and Staff  
Board Secretaries and Administrative Assistants

**FROM:** Patrick J. Daly, President

**SUBJECT:** Auditor General's Annual Report 2020—Curriculum Development, Implementation and Delivery

---

As you are aware, each December the Auditor General of Ontario releases an annual report assessing the value for money that various programs and policies deliver to Ontarians. This year the annual report included an audit of curriculum development, implementation and delivery. The Auditor General decided to conduct this audit for two reasons:



1. Recent concerns raised by education stakeholders regarding the consultation process when developing or revising curriculum, particularly regarding the Health and Physical Education curriculum and the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Studies curriculum;
2. Much of the curriculum was developed more than 10 years ago and some of it more than 15 years ago.

The findings include:

- There is a lack of a formal processes in place at the Ministry of Education (Ministry), school boards, or schools to provide assurance that all curriculum is being taught effectively across the entire school system;
- A substantial portion of current curricula in Ontario was developed many years ago: 15% was released 15 or more years ago, and another 51% released 10 to 14 years ago. Similarly, some approved textbooks were just as old;
- The Ministry did not always perform critical stages of its process for curriculum review; for example, obtaining stakeholder input or providing sufficient time to allow for proper fact-checking while revising the 2019 Health and Physical Education Elementary curriculum;
- Four of five recently released curriculum were released without sufficient time for school boards and schools to review it and for teachers to prepare instructional materials and resources to properly implement it.

Please see the attached for a summary of the report as well the entire report on curriculum development, implementation and delivery for your consideration.

Further details on the overall annual report can be found at the following link:

<https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arbyyear/ar2020.html>

If you have any questions, please contact me ([pdaly@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:pdaly@ocsta.on.ca)) or Steve Andrews ([sandrews@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:sandrews@ocsta.on.ca)).



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Submission to  
The Minister of Education

**Partners in Educational Excellence: Ensuring Sustainable  
and Flexible Funding**

**December 7, 2020**



Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association



## **Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association**

### **Mission Statement**

Inspired by the Gospel, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association provides the provincial voice, leadership and service for elected Catholic school trustees to promote and protect publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario.

### **Vision Statement**

Ontario is enriched by a publicly funded Catholic education system, governed by locally elected Catholic school trustees who serve with faith, commitment and compassion.

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## **Introduction**

The Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) was founded in 1930. It represents 237 elected Catholic trustees who collectively represent 29 English-language Catholic district school boards. Together, these school boards educate approximately 545,000 students from junior kindergarten to grade 12 and adults in continuing education programs province-wide.

Inspired by the Gospel, the Mission of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association is to provide leadership, service and a provincial voice for Catholic school boards in promoting and protecting Catholic education.

Annually, OCSTA submits a brief to the government with recommendations for improvements to the funding of education. Recommendations are made on the basis that the education funding system in Ontario must respond to four essential principles:

**Equity:** A funding formula must distribute education dollars equitably among all Ontario school boards and their students;

**Adequacy:** The level of funding for education must be adequate to ensure quality education for today's students;

**Autonomy/Flexibility:** The model must allow school boards the autonomy and flexibility in the spending they require to achieve the distinctive goals of their system, and to meet local needs; and

**Accountability:** The educational funding model must include mechanisms that ensure the appropriate degree of accountability for all parties and transparent processes and reporting mechanisms to support efficient and effective use of educational resources for students.

The recommendations contained in this brief are important issues to the 29 Catholic District School Boards in our province. In some cases, they represent long standing concerns and in others describe recent priorities. We trust that particularly in light of the government's commitment to consultation, our recommendations will be thoughtfully considered. As always, we would be pleased to meet with Minister Lecce or representatives of the Ministry to discuss any of the following items in more detail.

---

## **Catholic School Boards As Partners in Service Delivery**

The OCSTA, on behalf of Catholic school boards, make every effort to work closely with the Ministry of Education to develop education programs, levels of funding and curriculum that supports the legislative and regulatory requirements spelled out in the *Education Act*. We have enjoyed a positive working relationship for many years with all stakeholders in the education sector, including all Ontario political parties. Catholic school trustees are the democratically elected representatives of the Catholic community. The boards they serve on are responsible for:

- Establishing the Christ centered mission of their school systems;
- Developing school board policies that promote and protect Catholic education;
- Provide excellence in academics and faith formation opportunities for students;
- Establishing the Annual Budget;
- Hire Director of Education and other staff consistent with preferential hiring rights;
- Promoting the constitutional right of Catholic school ratepayers to govern, manage and control publicly funded Catholic schools.

Our member school boards design and deliver Christ centered education programs to students. These boards are directly supported by 2.4 million Catholic ratepayers and have been an integral part of the history and fabric of our province for over 175 years.

## **Efficiencies at Catholic School Boards**

OCSTA supports the government's objective of providing public services as efficiently and effectively as possible. Catholic school boards have historically, and remain good stewards of available resources they have and continue to find significant cost efficiencies in the following areas:

1. Student transportation;
2. Purchasing consortia;
3. Curriculum co-operatives including membership in the Institute for Catholic Education;
4. Ontario Education Collaborative Marketplace (non-profit group that sources products and services for the education sector at price discounts);
5. Ontario Education Services Corporation (OESC) provides a central repository for resources and provides a host of services for school boards;
6. Ontario School Boards' Insurance Exchange (OSBIE) is a school board owned, non-profit insurance program, representing 78 school boards/school authorities.

These partnerships save Ontario taxpayers millions of dollars each year. The Auditor General states that "school boards have been increasing their use of group purchasing arrangements to acquire goods and services. We noted that the value of school board purchases acquired through supplier agreements negotiated by the Ontario Education Collaborative Marketplace increased from \$10 million in 2010 to \$112 million in 2016". (2017 Annual Report, Chapter 3, section 3.12 p.615-616).

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## **Financial Impacts on Boards Related to School Reopening-COVID-19**

The OCSTA acknowledges and appreciates the funding provided to date by the Provincial Government with regard to school re-opening. Saying that, the financial impacts on Catholic boards in the current context of reopening and keeping schools open have been significant and will remain an ongoing challenge. In response to the guidance from the Ministry of Education and public health authorities, boards have established numerous protocols and practices to ensure a safe return to school for students and staff. Boards have also established virtual schools for those students that choose to learn remotely. With enhanced health and safety protocols including reducing class size where possible, enhanced cleaning, co-horting of students, providing digital devices and expanding broadband access and the requirements for virtual schools, boards have used significant financial resources. Even with the additional investments from the province and federal government as well as the use of reserve funds, boards will face enormous challenges in the near term in meeting the ongoing program and service requirements for students, while maintaining balanced budgets. Throughout the planning of and re-opening of their schools, the health and safety and well-being of students and staff has been and will remain the number one priority of Catholic School Boards.

Key areas of board operations impacted by the reopening and keeping schools open requirements during a pandemic include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Purchasing digital and information technology resources for students and staff;
- Creating virtual elementary and high schools and the costs of hiring, training and scheduling of teachers;
- HVAC and capital repairs to aging school infrastructure;
- Student transportation costs;
- Staff accommodation, sick leave and related human resource costs;
- Purchase of personal protective equipment for staff and students;
- Increasing social distancing by reducing class size;
- Human Resources and planning costs associated with the almost constant need to re-organize schools.

### **OCSTA Recommendations:**

- **That the Ministry provide any and all additional required investments to assist school boards in managing the extraordinary costs associated with school reopening and pandemic response;**
- **That the Ministry conduct a review of the education funding formula for its adequacy (and equity) in managing the costs associated with emergency pandemic response.**



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## **Cybersecurity in School Boards**

OCSTA acknowledges the recent announcement by the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services in establishing its Cybersecurity Modernization Strategy and its expert panel on cybersecurity to provide advice on cybersecurity threats to organizations in the public sector, including school boards. We look forward to participating in any consultations with the government in this area.

School boards throughout North America are facing increased threats from cybercriminals. With the increased use of digital resources in response to COVID-19, boards expect significantly more challenges in this area. According to Statistics Canada, incidents of cybercrime in Canada is increasing on average 23% each year and have almost doubled since 2014.

(<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510000101>)

In the Auditor General's 2018 Annual Report, cyberattacks is identified as a growing threat to the security of Ontario's school boards' IT systems and related infrastructure. The report identifies cyberattacks as those security breaches

“... both intentional and unintentional unauthorized access, use, manipulation, interruption or destruction of electronic information and/or the electronic and physical infrastructure used to process, communicate and/ or store that information. The biggest potential consequences of cyberattacks are disruption of operations and compromise of sensitive data. In extreme circumstances, cyberattacks can lead to damage to physical property and harm to human life.”<sup>1</sup>

School boards host large amounts of personal information about students and board staff that can make them vulnerable to cyberattacks. This information could be used for identity theft or other forms of criminal activity that pose a significant risk for student and staff safety. It is paramount then that school boards have the resources, training and support required to develop cybersecurity systems to prevent cyberattacks. While our school boards support the general recommendations of the Auditor General in refining existing cybersecurity and risk management frameworks to reduce the school boards' risks, including cybersecurity awareness training to teachers and staff who have access to information technology, additional funding and support resources are necessary.

### **OCSTA Recommendations:**

- **That the Ministry of Education ensure that boards have sufficient resources to develop and implement new cybersecurity policies and risk management frameworks;**
- **That the Ministry of Education expand the work of the Educational Computing Network of Ontario (ECNO) in building a shared service capacity for cybersecurity analysis and a shared security service for boards in Ontario;**

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter 3.12 p. 555 ( [http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en18/v1\\_312en18.pdf](http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en18/v1_312en18.pdf))

- 
- That the Ministry of Education expand the mandate of the Ministry's Broadband Modernization Initiative to fund and support cybersecurity training and awareness programs;
  - That the Ministry of Education facilitate coordinated consultations with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services and its expert panel on cybersecurity matters impacting boards.

### **Economic Realities with Capital Projects/Funding for Retrofitting/Renovating Schools**

#### ***Capital Costs Regarding School Construction:***

Several factors are increasing the capital costs related to school construction in Ontario. They include:

- Increased tariffs on steel and aluminum;
- COVID-19 safety requirements;
- Increasing labour costs;
- Current construction tendering environment.

The current Ministry of Education Capital Priorities Funding Benchmark ("benchmark") does not recognize these increasing cost factors and is currently not an adequate standard for determining construction costs. The last formal review of the benchmark was in 2010 based on the analysis provided by the Expert Panel on Capital Standards. There is an urgent need to increase this benchmark to better align with current economic realities in the construction sector.

Recently, however, the Ministry announced a review of the Design Standard and Benchmark standards as part of the launch of the Capital Priorities Program (July 22, 2019 B17). OCSTA welcomes this review and believes addressing the increased costs associated with school construction is overdue.

In addition, in the context of retrofitting and renovating schools to improve HVAC and ventilation issues for health and safety, funding has not been adequate to reduce the overall deferred maintenance backlog or provide sufficient funds for schools to replace or renew energy efficient building components or meet the heating, ventilation and cooling costs of schools. The loss of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, for example, has compromised many energy efficiency retrofit projects in our schools. The review panel represents an opportunity to address this issue of deferred maintenance.

#### ***Capital Program Planning:***

School boards benefitted from previous capital allocation programs in a number of ways. Paramount among these were the predictability and flexibility afforded to school boards to plan, on a district-wide basis, for the most effective and efficient means of addressing their various capital requirements.

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The continuing needs of school boards include the following:

1. Old schools need to be re-built;
2. Some schools need to be consolidated due to declining enrolment and this often requires some capital upgrades;
3. Ultimately all schools will need to meet AODA accessibility standards, but there are no funds earmarked to address these needs; and
4. Even with overall decreases in enrolment, new schools need to be built in boards' growth areas that are sometimes far from existing schools.

The Ministry of Education now issues calls for applications for capital projects. Each of these calls gives the appearance of being a one-off call, with no certainty about whether or when there will be another. As a consequence, many boards have treated these calls as though there will be no other. A multiplicity of different projects, which under the previous system were streamed into specific capital programs, is now herded into a single funding stream. This makes it difficult for boards to assign priorities and difficult for Ministry officials to make decisions that are fair and equitable.

In addition, the current approvals process under this single funding stream for capital projects is administratively burdensome and causes significant delay in design, planning and construction schedules. Streamlining this process will go some distance to increasing efficiency and lessening the administrative burdens for school boards. While acknowledging the good work of Ministry staff, the delays in the various required approval processes is causing increases in tender results as well as exacerbating the challenges associated with enrolment pressures. Particularly when Corporate Services board staff are focussed on the health and safety of students and staff and the good stewardship of resources, we would urge a freeze and where possible relaxation of capital reporting requirements.

The current situation would also benefit from the creation of a multi-year program to address capital needs. This would add an element of predictability to the system and would make it possible for school boards to plan and clearly articulate those plans to the Ministry. It would also make it easier for the Ministry to review applications and make allocations in an orderly and transparent manner that reflect the priorities of both the Ministry and school boards.

#### **OCSTA Recommendations:**

- **That the Ministry of Education include the OCSTA and other Trustee Associations, in the review panel regarding school construction capital benchmarks;**
- **That the Ministry of Education establish a multi-year capital funding process in order to restore the ability of both the Ministry of Education and school boards to plan for future capital needs;**
- **That the Ministry of Education streamline and provide increased local autonomy with regard to the capital approvals process for school boards to reduce administrative costs.**

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## **Student Transportation**

OCSTA acknowledges the government's ongoing review of the existing student transportation funding formula and looks forward to continuing to participate in that process.

As OCSTA has noted on numerous occasions, the structure and funding of student transportation is not based on the needs of a school board. The funding model is based on a "historical amount—each boards' 1997 spending level with annual adjustments for enrollment and inflation, and other minor adjustments. Catholic school boards ran extremely efficient transportation operations and have been disadvantaged as a result in the prolonged delay (since 1997) of the review of transportation funding. The most important influences on a school board's student transportation costs are not factored into the model such as enrollment density, geography, the number of special needs students and safety hazards.

In addition, the current competitive procurement process that school boards must follow in securing transportation has resulted in significant cost increases. In one case of a large urban transportation consortium, costs increased by roughly 20% and had to be absorbed by the affected school boards. It has as well reduced the number of bus operators and caused greater uncertainty with regard to the level of service.

### **OCSTA Recommendations:**

- **That the student transportation funding formula be restructured to reflect the actual needs of school boards;**
- **The competitive procurement process restore school board autonomy and flexibility in negotiating school bus operator contracts;**
- **That the Ministry of Education consult with OCSTA and other education partners in its on-going review of the student transportation funding formula.**

## **School Bus Driver Retention**

School boards across Ontario are facing a significant shortage of qualified school bus operators. In the current COVID-19 context, this shortage has been considerably exacerbated. Health and safety concerns as well as the demographics of bus drivers have driven the numbers of qualified drivers so low, that boards have been forced to cancel transportation routes. This has caused much disruption to students and families and is as well impacting the learning experiences of children. Although not limited to, the reality of bus driver shortages is particularly acute for rural and remote of Ontario. As well as additional funding in transportation, the reality of the bus driver shortage requires creative and sustainable solutions.

The government's continuation of the "School Bus Driver Retention Program" is welcomed. Saying that, an increase in the amount of funding provided and a review of all strategies to increase the number of drivers is urgently required.

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### **OCSTA Recommendations:**

- **That the Ministry of Education enhance, with additional investments, the School Bus Driver Retention Program;**
- **That the Ministry of Education continue to review the results of this program in the broader context of restructuring the student transportation funding formula to meet the needs of school boards.**

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Programs and Services for Students with Differing Abilities Including Diverse Learning Needs**

#### ***Student Mental Health***

Student mental health and the well-being of young people has suffered significantly in the context of the extended school closure in response to COVID-19. With the prolonged absence from school, the new virtual learning context and limited social interactions due to health and safety concerns, boards anticipate a significant increase in demand for their supports and services in this area. Catholic school boards appreciate recent enhancements in funding but urge that continued attention to and priority be placed on this important area.

In addition, recent research from Centre for Addiction and Mental Health shows that roughly 328,000 children in grades 7-12 report moderate to serious psychological distress (2016). The Provincial Centre for Excellence in Children and Youth Mental Health state that schools need to develop comprehensive mental health supports and strategies to address the growing challenge. In addition, with the legalization of recreational use of cannabis, many school boards anticipate greater demands on mental health resources and supports, with the potential increased use of cannabis products and accompanying impacts on student mental health and well-being.

Out of a commitment to the mind, body and soul of their students, Catholic school boards have developed comprehensive mental health strategies to build awareness/organizational capacity, reduce stigma, use evidence based best practices for promotion and prevention strategies and partner with community organizations.

Rural and northern school boards face unique issues with often far fewer professional resources to support student mental health services. Boards need more resources to expand promotion and prevention programs at the elementary and secondary school level. Key program areas include suicide prevention, anxiety issues, behaviour problems and addictions.

### **OCSTA Recommendations:**

- **That the Ministry of Education continue to review funding for student mental health needs is adequate in the current pandemic response context and is equitable and sustainable for all students over time;**
- **That the Ministry of Education continue to support funding of a board level “Mental**

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**Health Lead” into the Grants for Student Needs structure. We also encourage the government to monitor and update the financial supports to boards to support local mental health initiatives;**

- **That the Ministry of Education continue to address the changing nature of student mental health needs as evidenced in the need for on-going enhanced prevention/intervention and aligned staff professional development supports for students with mental health challenges in transition.**

### *Special Education and Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder*

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Catholic school boards remain committed to and are working hard to ensure the needs of its students with special education requirements are supported. However, providing the necessary level of support while ensuring health and safety presents unique challenges. For example, the need for specialized personal protective equipment for students and staff. Virtual learning for students with special education needs also presents particular issues for staff to ensure quality learning.

In addition, the vast majority of Ontario’s Catholic school boards are running deficits in meeting the educational, psychological and support needs of their exceptional students. More sophisticated diagnostic techniques related to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), have resulted in a significant increase in identifying this segment of the student population and led to increases in demand on special education services in boards.

Further, school boards are anticipating a significant increase in the number of ASD students entering the elementary grades over the course of the next year as the government’s new autism program is fully implemented. The Ministry of Education has recognized this issue and provided boards some increased funding to assist program planning, professional development and enhanced funding to hire applied behavior analysis therapists.<sup>2</sup> However, it is unlikely that these enhancements will be sufficient to meet the financial challenges boards face with students with ASD.

Additionally, with the introduction of full-day kindergarten and various social factors, school boards must reallocate funding between different program areas to ensure students receive the educational services and supports they require. In many cases, school boards are having their special education grant reduced due to phased in changes to a key part of the grant structure. The “high needs” amount of the grant is being replaced by the Differentiated Special Education Needs Amount (DSENA). This new model is composed of the Special Education Statistical Prediction Model (SESPM), Measures of Variability Amount (MOV) and Base Amount for Collaboration and Integration. This new grant structure has redistributive funding impacts across all boards, some gaining and some losing funding.

School boards also face a range of other funding and program challenges in meeting the needs of special education students. For example, boards struggle to fund the specialized staff required to

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<sup>2</sup> These supports and resources were outlined in the March 11, 2019 Memorandum from the Deputy Minister of Education to Directors of Education. For details on OCSTA’s concerns and recommendations, see the May 2019 submission to the Autism Consultation.

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support students with complex behavioural needs. This may include staff support for student transportation to treatment programs and other support services. Another example is the operational costs associated with classroom design to accommodate students that require quiet spaces for learning and behavioural management interventions.

A current issue is also the challenges associated with timely psychoeducational assessments for students with various disabilities such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Boards require more support to ensure they have sufficient human resources with the relevant training to conduct these assessments to ensure adequate programming for students.

### **OCSTA Recommendations:**

- **That the Ministry of Education establish a Special Education Working group, including OCSTA, to review the adequacy and flexibility of special education funding, including the structure of the DSENA;**
- **That the Ministry of Education review “needs based” funding models for high needs special education students to supplement the overall Special Education Grant structure;**
- **That the Ministry of Education continue to survey and monitor the current pandemic situation with boards and provide program/financial support as required to ensure students with special education needs can be provided psychoeducational assessments in a timely manner so boards can make the necessary accommodations.**

### **Parent Reaching Out Grants**

The Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grants program provides funding to district school boards to lead projects with a focus on the identification and removal of barriers that prevent parents and families from participating and engaging fully in their children's learning.

In 2019-20 the Ministry of Education invested \$1.25M in Parent Reaching Out Grants through the new Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPF). School boards will receive a predetermined funding amount for parent engagement projects.

Changes to the program were made for the 2019-20 school year from an application-based funding model to an allocation-based grant provided to each district school board. OCSTA supports this change in the manner in which the funds are allocated. This funding is intended to help district school boards address local needs and priorities connected to enhancing parent engagement.

Catholic school boards rely on these PRO grants to offset the costs of parent engagement events, programs and related initiatives. These are critically important for our Catholic educational community to foster parent engagement with our schools and to assist in our students' faith formation activities. OCSTA applauds the Ministry of Education in continuing to fund these PRO grants, while examining alternative funding options for boards to support parent engagement within the school community.



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### **OCSTA Recommendations:**

- **That the Ministry of Education continue to fund PRO grants and share examples of innovative initiatives;**
- **That the Ministry consider increasing funding for PRO grants to offset costs for parent engagement events.**

### **Information Technology and Digital Resources**

Remote learning and the creation of virtual schools in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the challenges boards face in securing adequate information technology and digital resources. To promote equitable access to learning for students, boards are spending significant amounts to acquire digital resources, and as well providing the IT technical support for staff conducting virtual learning. Catholic school boards have purchased tens of thousands of laptops, iPads and other devices in support of those students who are learning virtually. We believe this trend will continue and place increased financial pressures on school boards.

Funding in this area is of paramount importance for school boards as technology is increasingly prevalent in curriculum delivery and linked to equity of access and student engagement. The Ministry of Education provided Technology Learning Funds (TLF) to school boards that was discontinued, leaving boards with infrastructure sustainability concerns. Over the last several years, school boards have made large-scale investments in their information technology due to aging hardware. In addition, boards are required to support maintaining and updating their suite of devices, including software, programs, and infrastructure.

The Grants for Student Needs (GSN) funding does not address technology needs for corporate functions, including financial, plant and maintenance work order systems, payroll systems, student information systems and human resource and employee relations reporting. Aligned to the province's focus on modernizing learning and modernizing classrooms, and with plans moving forward to mandate e-learning opportunities for secondary students, school boards would benefit from increased and stable funding to support the technology priorities of the government.

### **OCSTA Recommendations:**

- **That the Ministry of Education provide boards with sustainable funding for information technology infrastructure through the GSN especially in light of the pressures faced in response to the pandemic;**
- **That the Ministry of Education provide school boards with the funding associated with the cost of replacing devices that were transferred from schools to students (at home) learning remotely;**
- **That the Ministry of Education continue to consult with boards and OCSTA in respect of its Broadband Modernization strategy to ensure the IT needs of boards are factored into the strategy.**



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## **School Board Flexibility and Autonomy**

Catholic district school boards in Ontario face increased budget pressures in the delivery of educational programs and services required by the Ministry of Education. Over the past number of years, successive governments have introduced regulations/legislation that have significantly reduced school board flexibility. This loss in local autonomy and flexibility is of particular concern to Catholic school boards. We could cite numerous examples where Ministry of Education actions have reduced the flexibility Catholic school boards require to realize their distinct mission. Proposed revisions to the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline is one such example. We would as well call for a review of the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act to ensure school boards maintain the level of flexibility and autonomy they require.

The Ministry has as well-placed increased restrictions on how school boards spend their capital and operating funds. For example, the increased number of areas in the GSN that are “enveloped” reduces school boards’ budget flexibility along with more targeted Program Priorities Funding (PPF). These restrictions on school boards have reduced their capacity to plan for, fund and operate specific education programs that serve the unique needs of their local constituents.

We cannot stress enough that Ontario’s publicly funded school boards require sufficient flexibility and autonomy to realize their distinct missions and unique local needs.

### **OCSTA Recommendations:**

- **That the Ministry of Education review regulations/policies with a goal of increasing school board autonomy and flexibility:**
  - 1. In overall school board planning/program design and the implementation of Ministry policy directives;**
  - 2. Reduce restrictions (enveloping) on operating funds that decrease school board flexibility.**

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## Summary of Recommendations

### Financial Impacts on Boards Related to School Reopening – COVID-19

- That the Ministry provide any and all additional required investments to assist school boards in managing the extraordinary costs associated with school reopening and pandemic response;
- That the Ministry conduct a review of the education funding formula for its adequacy in (and equity) in managing the costs associated with emergency pandemic response.

### Cybersecurity in School Boards

- That the Ministry of Education ensure that boards have sufficient resources to develop and implement new cybersecurity policies and risk management frameworks;
- That the Ministry of Education expand the work of the Educational Computing Network of Ontario (ECNO) in building a shared service capacity for cybersecurity analysis and a shared security service for boards in Ontario;
- That the Ministry of Education expand the mandate of the Ministry's Broadband Modernization Initiative to fund and support cybersecurity training and awareness programs;
- That the Ministry of Education facilitate coordinated consultations with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services and its expert panel on cybersecurity matters impacting boards.

### Economic Realities with Capital Projects/ Funding for Retrofitting/Renovating schools

- That the Ministry of Education include key education stakeholders, including OCSTA, in the review panel regarding school construction capital benchmarks;
- That the Ministry of Education establish a multi-year capital funding process in order to restore the ability of both the Ministry of Education and school boards to plan for future capital needs;
- That the Ministry of Education streamline and provide increased local autonomy with regard to the capital approvals process for school boards to reduce administrative costs.

### Student Transportation

- That the student transportation funding formula be restructured to reflect the actual needs of school boards;
- That the competitive procurement process restores school board autonomy and flexibility in negotiating school bus operator contracts;

- 
- That the Ministry of Education consult with OCSTA and other education partners in its on-going review of the student transportation funding formula.

### **School Bus Driver Retention**

- That the Ministry of Education enhance with additional investments the School Bus Driver Retention Program;
- That the Ministry continue to review the results of this program in the broader context of restructuring the student transportation funding formula to meet the needs of school boards.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Programs and Services for Students with Differing Abilities Including Diverse Learning Needs**

#### **Student Mental Health**

- That the Ministry of Education continue to review that the funding for student mental health needs is adequate in the current pandemic response context and is equitable and sustainable for all students over time;
- That the Ministry of Education continue to support funding of a board level “Mental Health Lead” into the Grants for Student Needs structure. We also encourage the government to monitor and update the financial supports to boards to support local mental health initiatives;
- That the Ministry of Education continue to address the changing nature of student mental health needs as evidenced in the need for on-going enhanced prevention/intervention and aligned staff professional development supports for students with mental health challenges in transition.

#### **Special Education and Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

- That the Minister of Education establish a Special Education Working group, including OCSTA, review the adequacy and flexibility of special education funding, including the structure of the DSENA;
- That the Ministry of Education review “needs based” funding models for high needs special education students to supplement the overall Special Education Grant structure;
- That the Ministry of Education continue to survey and monitor the current pandemic situation with boards and provide program/financial support as required to ensure students with special education needs can be provided psychoeducational assessments in a timely manner so boards can make the necessary accommodations.

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## **Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants**

- That the Ministry of Education continue to fund PRO grants and share examples of innovative initiatives;
- That the Ministry consider increasing funding for PRO grants to offset costs for parent engagement events.

## **Information Technology and Digital Resources**

- That the Ministry of Education provide boards with sustainable funding for information technology infrastructure through the GSN especially in light of the pressures faced in response to the pandemic;
- That the Ministry of Education provide school boards with the funding associated with the cost of replacing devices that were transferred from schools to students (at home) learning remotely;
- That the Ministry of Education continue to consult with boards and OCSTA in respect of its' Broadband Modernization strategy to ensure the IT needs of boards are factored into the strategy.

## **School Board Flexibility and Autonomy**

- That the Ministry of Education review regulations/policies with a goal of increasing school board autonomy and flexibility:
  1. In overall school board planning/program design and the implementation of Ministry policy directives;
  2. Reduce restrictions (enveloping) on operating funds that decrease school board flexibility.

Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2020-2021

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Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association

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# CANADIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2020



Our shared faith is what unites Catholic Schools across Canada, and with that faith brings hope.

The end of the 2019/2020 school year was unlike any other in recent memory. COVID-19 arrived in the spring and shut down schools, businesses and churches around the world. Globally we held our collective breath to see where the virus would take us next, hunkered down in homes with family by our side. We celebrated milestones like graduations, birthdays and family events over Zoom and with car parades.

Education kept going through June, teachers and students pivoted to emergency distant learning, keeping students on track. Equally as important as the academic lessons was maintaining connections during the times of uncertainty. Talking with teachers and peers made the days a little less long, joining in prayer and continuing to provide hope. Catholic School Boards across Canada reached out to families they knew might need a little extra help, and through the generosity of various groups provided what they could.

The summer and fall brought new challenges as students and staff were readying to return to school. Administrators across Canada worked tirelessly over the summer planning and re-planning what the 2020/2021 school year would look like. What they couldn't plan, was the FEELING of what return to school would be. The traditional excitement of returning to school was sometimes replaced by feelings of anxiety, nervousness and at times a little fear. As a Catholic school community, we acknowledged these emotions, but collectively changed the conversation to one of hope. We knew that the inside of the buildings would look a little different, just as grocery stores did. The daily routines and school gatherings would be different as well. What we knew wouldn't change was the feeling of warmth and welcoming that are offered through our schools.

Whether face to face or in a virtual classroom, students and staff join daily in prayer, asking for hope and safety for our communities. We are taught that prayer helps in healing the hearts and souls of people. Through prayer, we are united in our faith and belief that better days are ahead. The Gospels' remind us that prayer can move mountains, and through prayer, nothing is impossible.



**PAULA SCOTT**  
*CCSTA President*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2020 has been a year. This time last year, I had just attended the SCSBA and ACSTA AGM's, planning was in full swing for the CCSTA AGM in Blue Mountain, Christmas concerts were being prepared and we were ready to celebrate our faith with the arrival of Jesus. This Christmas may look different in our schools, our homes and our churches, but the significance of the birth of Jesus never changes.

During this advent season reflect back on the year and find the joys that you have experienced. While there have been a lot of hardships, disappointments, and fears, there has been joy, love, and peace too. Whether it was spending more time with family or being out in nature, there has been happiness. As we light our Advent candles, let us pray for all the people around the world who have been negatively impacted by this pandemic.

I attended the SCSBA and ACSTA AGM's this year. Both were held virtually in November. The decision was made to hold the CCSTA AGM virtually in June. Greater Saskatoon Catholic has agreed to host in 2023. The CCSTA Board of Directors will also hold our lobby day virtually in February. I truly miss the opportunity to meet in person. Building relationships is a significant part of what we do as trustees. It is more of a challenge to do that virtually.

As we continue to face uncertainty, let us pray and hope that God's love will continue to grow in each of us. Our Catholic schools continue to be beacons of hope for our families. While there may be less hustle and bustle this Christmas season, take a moment to be present with Christ, family and friends. Each of you is a gift and I thank you all for your commitment to growing Christ's disciple in our schools. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and hope for a better 2021.

Paula Scott  
*CCSTA President*





## FROM THE OFFICE DESK

Stating that 2020 has been a challenging year would certainly be an understatement. This time last year, I commented on the fact that the Christmas season is a very enjoyable time to be working in a school setting. I mentioned that Christmas liturgies and other events were always a highlight of the school year. While the Christmas season is still very much alive and well in our Catholic schools, like everything else, it will be different. COVID-19 has had an impact on all aspects of education. It is safe to say that some of these changes could become part of the way we do business in the future. Distance learning comes to mind, regardless of when the pandemic subsides, I believe we will see a huge uptake in on-line learning as a viable option for many students.

Another change that will certainly have an impact is the move to on-line meetings. SCSBA and ACSTA both held their AGMs virtually this past November. CCSTA has already announced that our June 2021 AGM/Convention will be held virtually. I would be remiss if I did not thank the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools for all the work they have done in anticipation of holding this year's AGM in Saskatoon. A sincere thank you to them for agreeing to host CCSTA's 2023 AGM/Convention.

Our February Board Meeting and Lobby Day on Parliament Hill will take place virtually this year. While face-to-face meetings with MPs is certainly preferable, we are confident our virtual meetings will be successful. Once again, we encourage all trustees to reach out to their MPs and have a discussion on the merits and impact Catholic Education has across this country. CCSTA can provide assistance, if required.

Our Toonies Campaign continues to provide support to families wishing to send their children to Catholic schools in provinces that do not provide full funding. Many families are experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19, and paying tuition fees is certainly more challenging. The money we provide to schools goes a long way to help alleviate this financial stress. Any support you can provide to the Toonies Campaign would be greatly appreciated.

In spite of these challenges, it comes as no surprise that the Catholic Education community is continuing to provide our students with a first rate education. Congratulations and thanks to all! In closing, I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas, and hope for a much-improved 2021.

Julian Hanlon  
*CCSTA Executive Director*



**JULIAN HANLON**  
*CCSTA Executive Director*



# PROVINCIAL REPORTS

## BRITISH COLUMBIA



BC was the one of the provinces that opened schools in June; on-sight attendance was optional as families could keep their children at home for online learning. About 50% of the students returned to the building at that time. With a smaller number of students in the building, it allowed schools more easily establish health and safety (H&S) protocols and routines in preparation for a full student return in September. Throughout the summer, superintendents continued to meet regularly with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and FISA in preparation for a full BC school restart. The preparation included:

- Preparing a plan for what the restart in our schools would look like with 100% attendance. Each diocese had to submit their plans to the MoE for review.
- Surveying staff to see if everyone would be able to return to work.
- Surveying families to see how many students would be coming back full-time versus those needing transition time versus those who are immunocompromised and unable to return.
- Scheduling the students and staff accordingly.
- Creating an enhanced health and safety plan based on updated Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and WorkSafeBC requirements.
- Training staff, students and parents on the updated health and safety plan.
- Developing creative ways to celebrate mass within the H & S protocols (individual class and virtual school-wide liturgies).

Both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education continue to put out updated information and requirements on how schools are to continue operating under COVID. Additional funds for health & safety expenses (from both the federal and provincial allocation) were and will be issued to independent schools similar to normal grants (50% of what the public schools receive). FISA is lobbying for 100% funding allocation since this is a health issue and not an education issue.

Overall, our CISBC student population is down slightly with small schools being challenged to meet their budgets. Toonies for Tuition is more important than ever.

### **Annual Theme and Catholic Schools' Week**

The theme for all Catholic schools in the province this school year is Walk with Jesus, Our Living Hope. Administrators in each diocese discussed what this meant at their respective admin days in August and they have continued discussions on this topic with staff and students.

Catholic Schools' Week (CSW) is an opportunity to celebrate the incredible gift that Catholic schools offer in the education of all who are open to the Good News. Each diocese determines a week based on local schedules; with all diocese celebrating CSW sometime between January 26 and February 9.

### **Provincial Election**

With the surprise announcement of an October 24 Provincial Election, FISA struck an elections committee tasked with determining the various political party stances on Independent Schools and getting that information out to independent school stakeholders. Now that the election is over the Committee will continue to meet with the purpose developing a post-election strategy. This includes building relationships with the new NDP government, Premier Horgan, and locally elected MLAs.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA (CONTINUED)

### Evangelization

The National Evangelization Canada Mission Team (NET) will spend the school year in the Diocese of Prince George. The eight schools have extended visits with the Team working within the required allowances set for COVID in all instances. The NET team will also be available to parishes for retreat days.

### Celebrating the Sacraments

In each diocese, there has been a need to catch up with the celebrations for the Sacraments of First Holy Eucharist and Confirmation that usually take place in spring. In the province of BC, we have a 50-person limit when gathering for services. As such, parishes have been offering multiple sessions to support children in receiving their sacraments. In some dioceses, those parishes with a high number for Confirmation candidates allow the Candidate and sponsor only to attend, with the Sacrament being conferred by the parish priest without Mass. In other dioceses, the Sacrament is small gathering with extended family joining from a far via livestream.

## ALBERTA | NORTHWEST TERRITORIES | YUKON

Certainly, 2020 has been an interesting year at ACSTA besides the obvious struggles with dealing with COVID in schools. We are in a time of transition in a number of ways. We said goodbye to two long time employees: Dean Sarnecki our Executive Director of eight years and Michelle Collette our Executive Assistant of 29 years have left ACSTA for other opportunities. We were blessed to have them for as long as we did. Of course we have also had to look at how we work as an organization in light of the pandemic and all the complexities that come along with that.

We welcomed Dr. Eugenia Pagnotta-Kowalczyk as our new Executive Director September 1st. We couldn't be more excited to have her. She was already with ACSTA as our Director of Advocacy. Her PhD is in Leadership and we feel we couldn't be in better hands. This will be a time of change in the organization of the office and hopefully the Board as well.

Our AGM was held as a virtual one-day event focused on the business of ACSTA. The morning was the business portion of the meeting with the afternoon consisting of a panel on governance within other Catholic organizations in the region. The panel discussion was followed by break out rooms for further discussion.

As in all provinces, the focus has been on providing education to all of our students in the midst of the pandemic. Of course, much of the work has been done by administrators while Trustees remain focused on advocacy for our students and our staff during these uncertain times. We went back to school in September with all schools open for in person learning. However, we did have some families choose to continue with their school divisions via online learning. As well, as some families choose to leave their divisions and move forward with a Homeschooling delivery method.

The Choice in Education Act was enacted in the Province. The Government sees this as an important way to strengthen the already rich system that recognizes the parental right to choose the education that is best suited for their children.

We continue to be aware that we may need to make changes in the delivery of education due to the evolving medical needs in the community. We can leverage this as an opportunity to be creative and innovative, with the safety of our students at staff at the center of every decision we make.

## SASKATCHEWAN



Opening day in September was moved back one week amid concerns about pandemic preparedness in Saskatchewan schools. Generally opening day events were conducted without a hitch. Opening masses were virtual and went over well. Most divisions had speakers lined up who were connected virtually or their presentations were pre-recorded.

Pandemic plans are in place. Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools had the first positive test results in the province and had to be the guinea pigs for pandemic preparedness. Their plan was put in effect and worked relatively well. Communication issues were the main learnings from the experience. Given the speed at which social media works, communications needed to be quick and prioritized. Boards are managing the pandemic response better than expected.

Generally speaking, enrolments were down in Catholic school divisions. A number of reasons led to that result. Pre-K program enrolments were down as many parents were reluctant to send their children. That reluctance extended to other grades. Many parents chose home-schooling, online learning platforms or other online education providers. It is expected that parents will wait until the pandemic experience of schools becomes clearer before sending their children. Use of online learning platforms has resulted in some movement of teachers from the classroom to virtual platforms. Divisions without an online resource saw some loss of enrolment. Special programming saw some loss of enrolment. Special programs, such as one for international students have experienced a drop in enrolment. Interestingly enough, Catholic divisions in Saskatchewan often have hockey players choosing to enrol in their schools. Because of the uncertainty around hockey scheduling, that enrolment did not materialize.

### **Theodore Court Case**

Briefly, on May 21, 2020 Good Spirit (Public) School Division served its Application for Leave to Appeal the Theodore case to the Supreme Court of Canada. Ordinarily we would have had 30 days to respond to the application. However, because of a few errors by Good Spirit the Supreme Court did not open a file until June 17. The 30 days began to run on that day, but because no days in July are counted against the time limit, we had until August 17 to file our response to the application. We actually might have had more time because of COVID-19, but we decided to file our response on August 14. The Government of Saskatchewan filed their response on August 17. Thanks to those who intervened at the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal for assisting us by reviewing the Response. It was a real team effort. True to form, however, Good Spirit filed a Reply to our Responses on September 3. As usual, Good Spirit took the opportunity in their maximum 10-page Reply to file attachments that resulted in a filing of 739 pages. Our estimate is that it will take the Supreme Court 3 to 5 months to render a decision on the Leave Application.

When the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal rendered their decision in the Theodore case on March 25, 2020, the Communications Plan was put into effect. Communications were distributed to media and stakeholders, including our Catholic Education partners across Canada. The communication plan ran smoothly. We went from that high to dealing with an announcement by the Public School Boards of Saskatchewan of their intention to seek leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. The media continue to be interested in developments in the case.

### **Advocacy**

An ad hoc committee of the SCSBA addressed the creation of an SCSBA Former Members Connection group made up of former Catholic Trustees and Directors of Education. The intention behind the creation of the group is to tap into support by former trustees and directors of education in our advocacy efforts for Catholic Education in Saskatchewan.

## SASKATCHEWAN (CONTINUED)

### HIV/AIDS Resource Development

Saskatchewan has unique requirements for HIV/AIDS education in the Saskatchewan Health Curriculum. A made-in-Saskatchewan resource was developed. Bishop Mark Hagemoen of Saskatoon reviewed the materials for each grade and shared the materials with the other Bishops in the province for their input. Further review by Father Stefano Penna took place and the resource passed the review. Bishop Mark, in consultation with the other Bishops, authorized the use of the resource in Saskatchewan.

### Permeation Materials

Materials to support teachers in permeating the Catholic faith in their lessons have been developed over time and are posted on the SCSBA website. These had gotten a little dated so an effort was made to update the materials. It was recognized that more work was needed and on October 22, the Catholic Education Coordinators Association of Saskatchewan (CECAS) presented a plan to update the materials and make them more user friendly by June, 2021.

### Election 2020

The ad hoc Election Promotion Committee spent some time developing a poster and a brochure as well as recommendations for promoting Catholic trusteeship in Saskatchewan. The poster and brochure are on the SCSBA website. There were 3 at-large elections in Saskatchewan: Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina as well as an election for one seat in Swift Current. All told, we had 19 new trustees elected out of the 61 trustees in the province.

## MANITOBA



School enrolment continues to be strong although there are some small fluctuations in individual school communities because of the pandemic. As of September 30, we had a reported student population of approx. 5350 from kindergarten to grade twelve in our nineteen schools. This is a loss of 40 students which is mostly related to families moving to home schooling or public due to financial considerations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the main focus of the last 8 months as we moved from a temporary suspension of classes in March, suspension of classes in April/May, the reopening of schools for limited programming in June, creation of three scenario plans in July, reopening plans on a new yellow, orange, red response plans in August, and start of classes in September. All these responses have taken a great deal of time and energy as we move forward with no immediate end in sight. We are now dealing with our first school cases but there has been no school spread. The use of the word cohort has become everyday vocabulary as we deal with social distancing.

Much of the pandemic response has created increased workload for our teachers, support staff, and principals as we only have a small staff (2) in the Manitoba Catholic Schools Office. Teachers responded well to the development of offsite programming and the return of students in June and September. Families adjusted well and we had high student engagement. Support staff shifted to new responsibilities from increased cleaning to communicating with students at home. We did have to have some temporary layoff of some support staff during the time when school buildings were closed. We did not have a major loss of tuition revenue as schools continued to offer strong



## MANITOBA (CONTINUED)

programming. This is when the close relationships between schools and families had positive benefits and we had little recovery learning needs in September.

Principals really stepped up to the plate as they took to the challenges of an ever-changing reality. They gave up their evenings, weekends, and holidays to deal with the demands of a pandemic. The MCS office supported their efforts as we dealt with many requests of the Department of Education. There were daily and then weekly meeting with the Department that included superintendents, independent school principals, and representatives of provincial organizations. The Minister of Education has been supportive of our schools through the process as we secured our block funding and were given safe school funding at the same level as the public system. I appreciated the many calls I had with the Minister and other representatives from the Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools. The profile of independent/Catholic schools has grown in Education as we are included in the consultation process.

The focus of our most recent interactions with the Government is our concern over a proposed provincial plan for remote learning. Manitoba has home schooling with no teacher supports or the current public and independent school systems. Divisions and independent schools do provide remote learning for individual students who medically cannot be at school. This is not an option available to parents as a choice. We are concerned that school division or a central model of remote learning does not fit the model of Catholic / independent schools in the province. We would like to have access to the federal funds to develop our own school based remote learning. This would also assist our schools in the Orange stage where blended learning is an option for schools that cannot maintain 2m distancing or the Red phase where classes are again suspended. Dialogue continues as we prepare for an uncertain future. We are hoping that we will remain in the yellow stage as there has only been one case of school spread in all Manitoba schools since they reopened. Our current model is working well, and nothing is better than having students in class and connecting in person with their teachers.

Manitoba was fortunate in the spring and summer when we escaped having many cases which were almost entirely travel related and not community spread. Ours was more a ripple than a first wave. This fall we are now experiencing the wave as numbers are growing rapidly in the past few weeks, especially in Winnipeg. This will create new challenges if the trend continues and our schools will need to be prepared for them as best, we can.

## ONTARIO – OCSTA



Ontario Catholic School  
Trustees' Association

### Key Issues regarding the School Reopening Process:

- Despite the information provided by boards leading up to the reopening date, many families found it hard to commit to a particular learning modality by the designated deadline. Many families flipped back and forth between remote and in-person learning for their children which exacerbated staffing and scheduling challenges.
- With more students than expected choosing virtual schooling, more teachers had to be hired, trained and scheduled within a brief period of time. In many cases the increased and unexpected hiring depleted the supply of occasional teachers in respective board communities.
- Use of school board reserves – in many cases, funds in reserves were to have been used to address other expenses (especially capital improvements) and this may create further challenges ahead.
- Gaps in communication between the province and Boards has created substantial issues throughout the reopening process. Direction and timeline from Ministry was challenging as information was changing regularly and at times conflicted with local health unit direction.

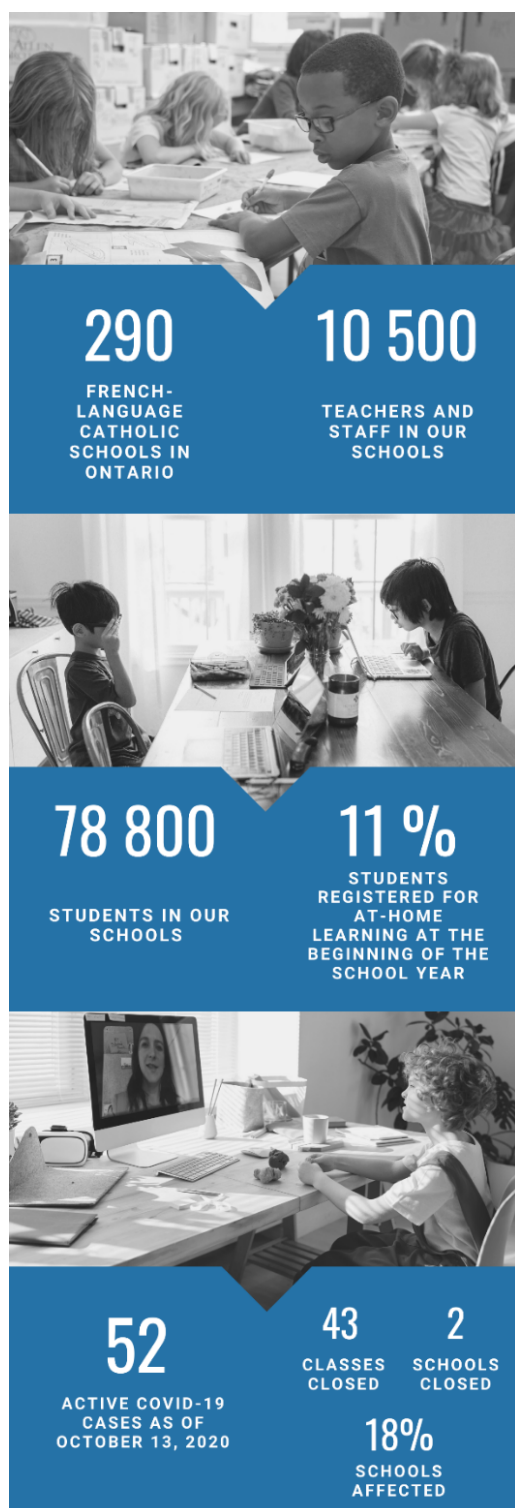
## ONTARIO – OCSTA (CONTINUED)

- Due to the demand for remote learning and secondary schools opening in the adapted model, in many instances the number of devices requested by students and parents exceeded that of the school in some communities.
- Developing virtual schools has been a challenge creating enormous pressure on both instructional and corporate staff to organize virtual schools that are significant in size. In some urban centres boards' virtual schools are larger than many districts across the province.
- Procurement and distribution of PPE and physical preparation of school buildings required a significant amount of planning, work and constant monitoring.
- Ensuring sufficient occasional teachers to support schools/absenteeism as a result of the need for staff to isolate for 14 days or to stay home if symptomatic is an unknown pressure that will likely begin to become prominent as the year progresses.
- Challenges associated with bus driver shortage experienced over the past 4-5 years increased significantly. In some cases, the volume and variety of data needed (e.g., attendance, bus seating plans, student schedules) required that IT develop new processes.
- Wi-Fi to families not always equitable (with some boards having in excess of 10,000 students in remote learning, boards are finding it difficult if not impossible to provide devices for all those in need of them).
- Shortage of qualified teachers, qualified French teachers – in some cases online virtual elementary schools unable to offer French programming. Other HR shortages re: EA's, ECE's, and custodians. College of Teachers backlog in issuing OCT numbers.

### Reasons for Hope and Gratitude

- In many instances boards reported online and in class learning were running well with proper protocols being followed and enforced.
- Student trustees expressed that they were witnessing the teachings of Jesus through staff and students demonstrating acts of kindness.
- Boards reported being proud of the willingness of all staff to go above and beyond to ensure students returned to school safely.
- Boards expressed gratitude for parents and their willingness to be flexible and understanding in the face of so much change.
- Gratitude was expressed for the opportunity for staff at one board to gather for three days of professional development. Each day, staff gathered together as a system for live, synchronous virtual prayer. The experience was unifying and provided opportunities to share common messaging to focus on mental health and well-being, while setting the tone for the school year.
- Many teachers and staff have shared positive messages and photos on social media of their classrooms and outdoor learning and how they are welcoming back students to in class learning showing empathy and leadership.
- Gratitude for: "The reimagining of learning environments that adapt to the changes and introduction of new ways to reach students as well as the embracing of a new learning experience."
- School boards west of Thunder Bay have been working together on common plans and messaging to support families and students in the region with transitioning back to school.
- Linkages with local parishes, priests and the Catholic Women's League continue to support schools through services that include breakfast/nutrition programs and preparation for Confirmation.
- During the shut-down, one senior elementary school up north used to visit on a monthly basis with their "grand-friends" but as this was cut short due to the pandemic they decided to prepare video messages that were then shared with their grand-friends.

## ONTARIO – AFOCSC



- June 2020: All 8 French Catholic school boards in Ontario began preparations for the 2020-2021 school year.
- June 19, 2020: School boards develop three different back-to-school scenarios:
  - Conventional school-day routine, full time
  - Distant learning, remote education delivered online
  - Hybrid school day routine, combining both models with a maximum of 15 students per class group
- July 30, 2020: The Ministry of Education announces a \$309 million investment to support additional health and safety measures in Ontario schools.
- Throughout the Summer, school boards lead training sessions on health and safety management during a pandemic and on protecting the mental health of students.
- August 26, 2020: Ontario receives \$736 million in additional funding from the Federal government to ensure a safe back-to-school.
- September 8, 2020: It's Back-To-School at all 8 French Catholic school boards. Classes begin in accordance with their board's selected scenario and following COVID-19 guidelines.
- Every day, the Ministry of Education publishes up-to-date information on their website relating to COVID-19 cases in schools and child care centres in Ontario.

Since the beginning of the school year, all schools are applying strict health and safety measures. Students and school staff must conduct a self-assessment test every day before going to school. Wearing a mask is required for students from grades 4 to 12 and strongly recommended for students from pre-K to grade 3. Students from pre-K to grade 8 are divided into cohorts and remain with the same group throughout the day. In high school, students' timetables ensure their contact with other within the school is limited. Approximately 70% of these students have a combined schedule of in-class and online learning. Schools collaborate closely with local health units, especially in the event of an outbreak.



## ATLANTIC

Despite the many challenges of 2020, our Atlantic Canadian Schools started off to a wonderful school-year filled with joyful reunions of staff and students and thanksgiving for the gift of in-person education. Each of our 5 schools (in NB, NS and NFLD) opened their doors to students in September 2020.

This unique year brought RCISA-AR the opportunity to gather for an online Zoom call, allowing us the chance to finally meet one another and share our experiences of Catholic Education in Atlantic Canada and our concerns, thoughts and ideas on the Global Pandemic and its effect on our schools. This call was well received by everyone and we hope to have more in the future.

Each school has introduced new protocols and guidelines and continually keeps up-to-date on public health directives. There is slight variation between provinces but for the most part, masks are worn upon entry, in hallways and any places where students are gathered outside of their classroom. Schools have increased sanitation and cleaning measures and implemented stronger policies on students staying home when they have symptoms. Each school has "cohorts" of around 15 students and has made accommodations to keep cohorts from mixing as much as possible. This has meant creating separate play areas and entrances, staggering breaks, and having fewer staff changes throughout the day.

It was abundantly clear in our Zoom Call meeting in June 2020 that Administrators and Staff wanted to be back in schools with students this Fall – and we were all delighted that we've been blessed enough to have that happen. However, the new protocols certainly place a heavier burden on Staff and Administration. In many cases, this means fewer breaks for teachers, much more paperwork for Administrators and less external support due to stricter regulations on non-staff members entering school buildings during the day. Because the situation of COVID-19 is ongoing, we are regularly adjusting our schools to adhere to new and changing information. Each school is ready and equipped to move online if schools shut down again.

Several staff mentioned that while August 2020 was spent reading through extensive documents on re-opening procedures and every staff meeting held the stress of the many different challenges and changes of this year, September 2020 was marked, instead, with the joy of students faces as they reunited with friends and teachers after 6 months. This joy and trust of students helped ease the tension and uncertainty of the staff. In many ways, the return of the students reminded us all what Catholic Education is all about and sparked in us a greater fervor for this mission to which we have been called.





## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Praised be Jesus Christ!

We just finished up trustee elections here in Saskatoon. It was an exhausting event. That Monday, 35 cm of snow fell on polling day. Add an ice base with a touch of COVID pandemic, and this is the recipe for "I think I will just stay at home and let others vote." Not here, for we are Canadians, and we sneer at the snow. Well, OK, they added another day to vote: Friday. There was Providence at work. For that was the day that our parish buried Alice. Her incredible energy, spirit of community engagement, leadership, and passionate faith burned bright for 87 years and then just gave out. But not before she had given the last 26 years of her life to serving as a Trustee on our Catholic Board. When many retire at the age of sixty, she started a new adventure that spanned three decades in Catholic Education. She did it because she loved kids, and she loved the Lord. Were it not for COVID, our Co-Cathedral would have been packed – as it was the countless children for whom she was responsible were certainly there.

We just heard at Mass the Parable of the Talents. The encounter between the returning Master has his slaves to whom he had entrusted talents. The Master came to "settle accounts" with Alice on her Dies Natalis (Christians always referred to the day of their death as their "birth day"). She had been entrusted with many talents, and she was not empty-handed – I have a confident prayer that she hears Jesus' voice say, "well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your

Master." Pope Francis reflected on this parable, teaching us that we must wake up from the "illusion of 'if only.'" How many excuses stop us from engaging the talents we have been given? "If only there were no pandemic." "If only there were more funds to do faith formation of teachers." "If only I were younger." "If only I had that person's talents."

Alice was not one who ever excused engaging her responsibility with "if only." She recognized that what she had been given was amazing – remember that a "talent" was the name for a considerable amount of money in Jesus' time. Her faithful attendance at Holy Mass always oriented her to this recognition. Not only had she been given the incredible gift of the Holy Spirit to order her talents, but she was also one who at Mass received the very Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of Jesus Christ. What a gift! And entrusted and transformed by this gift, she knew that in Christ, she was God's gift to transform the world. She never stopped studying, exploring new areas (she was a real leader in engaging our Indigenous community). She wanted our children to meet that same Master. Knowing the greatness of the gift, she was no mediocrity.

Mediocrity is the sin of too many institutions. Keeping the axle greased while finding a place in the vehicle headed for a comfortable retirement – how many schools slip too easily into this? Enthusiastic teachers get ground down by the demands of families and governments who see education as a vehicle for career credentialing – and the bottom line is the bottom line. Trustees get elected only to find themselves caught between government bottom lines and parental expectations. Thrown into this is the almost total eclipse of faith from the public sphere (did you see that the "Chaplain General" of the Armed Forces offered "prayers" at Remembrance Day that never once used the name of GOD!). And not just in government, for the children and grandchildren of Trustees are opting out of the Church. All too many of our staff become "professional" Catholics (as Pope Benedict described those, 'in whom the deep stream of living faith has dried up'). Into the mix comes the prophetic call of Pope Francis to understand that Catholic Education is about "forming children to be agents of another possible world" – a world founded on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is profoundly challenging and not very nice. Easy to see that Mediocrity is more than a temptation – it



**FR. STEFANO PENNA**  
CCSTA Chaplain



## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER(CONT'D)

becomes a plan for survival in a society in which Social Media is waiting to “cancel” anyone who might actually advocate for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. One does have to get elected, eh?

Not Alice. A friend related a story of bumping into Alice as she stood at one of those food samplers in Costco (where does an eighty-year-old have time for that?). She asked him out of the blue, “Are you Catholic?” Well, he did pay his taxes to the Catholic Schools but sent his kids to French academies. “Not good enough, you should send your children to Catholic schools,” came Alice’s reply. This is the story of one who lived the other challenge raised by Pope Francis when considering the Talents. The Pope insists that our faith cannot be a “faith of rules” but must be a “faith that risks.” Risks are stepping out into the post-Christian Canadian society with bravery. Risks are being “Catholics who are professionals” – trustees who see their relationship with Jesus not as something to be managed on spreadsheets but as the very source of who they are. The Master is coming, like a thief in the night, to settle accounts as our Judge. Are we ready? Alice was – and she lived with a freeing joy because she knew that her Judge is also her Saviour. No mediocrity is possible for one who knows the Christ Alive: healing her sins, inspiring her thinking, and loving her.

Who can replace someone like Alice? Well, frankly, no one. According to the great French Spiritual writer, Jean-Pierre de Caussade, each of us is “a particular Gospel of Jesus Christ written by the Holy Spirit.” No one is “replaceable.” Each of you is a part of the great story of Jesus Christ.”

We must say at all times, “Lord, what will you have me do?” We must not be selective, but gladly do whatever he asks of us. The mind likes one thing, the body another, but, Lord, I desire nothing but your holy will.” (de Caussade, Abandonment to Divine Providence)

Alice has left us a story of how to do the Lord’s holy will and live the parable of the talents. I see how so many of you risk living the gift for which Christ has paid the price. No listening to mediocre voices of “if only’s.” Instead, only the voice of Jesus alone can say, “well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Master.” I pray every day that you feel that joy as you hear His voice.

– Fr. Stefano Penna

Let everything that  
breathes praise The Lord!

– Psalm 150:6





## 2020-2021 Executive

**Paula Scott**, President  
**Marino Gazzola**, Past President  
**Patrick J. Daly**, Vice-President  
**Fr. Stefano Penna**, Chaplain  
**Julian Hanlon**, Executive Director

## 2020-2021 Directors

British Columbia: **Colleen Easson**  
Alberta/NWT/Yukon: **Serena Shaw**  
Saskatchewan: **Vicky Bonnell**  
Manitoba: **Teresita Chiarella**  
Ontario French: **Langis Dion**  
Ontario English: **Bev Eckensweiler**  
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**Number: I 001**

**Subject: Ends**

**Approval Date:** September 2, 2008  
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**Revised:** May 31, 2010; November 29, 2010; January 27, 2014, February 23, 2015,  
February 26, 2018

## **ACCESSIBILITY:**

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## **POLICY STATEMENT:**

In a policy governance model, “ends statements” act as guiding principles that will lead us to our preferred future as a system. On behalf of the Catholic ratepayers of Waterloo Region and, in part under its duties as a Board under Section 169.1 of the Education Act and Regulations, as well as at a justifiable use of government and community resources, the WCDSB will create, implement and monitor a multi-year strategic plan that ensures – via the Director of Education – the Board acts responsibly to ensure learners achieve their fullest potential in learning communities that are a living experience of Catholic faith.

## **Heart of the Community:**

Our schools are heart of the community:

- I. When faith practice is integrated into the daily lives of our students as members of their school community,
- II. When they have the knowledge of the history, and regular experiences with, the values, doctrines and social justice imperatives of the Catholic faith,
- III. When they are contributors to society, dedicated to the common good and,
- IV. When all are included, welcomed, cared for, respected, and treated with dignity in invitational learning environments that help every student fully utilize their unique gifts while meeting their individual spiritual, physical, learning and/or emotional needs.

## **Success for Each:**

We create the conditions for success for our students by knowing our students, knowing our staff and doing what matters.

Our students achieve academic success:

- I. When given the necessary supports to work to their highest level of ability,
- II. When they have the knowledge, skills and confidence to pursue their desired career and life paths and,
- III. When they are prepared for the challenges and opportunities of an ever-changing world that demands a diverse skill set as well as a broad social conscience aligned with our Catholic values and,
- IV. When they meet the Ontario Catholic Schools Graduate Expectations.



### **We Create A Place for All:**

When our schools, system departments, processes and policies reflect our belief that students deserve the best programs, delivered by well-prepared staff who are supported in their professional learning. Our schools will be supported in this by a strategic plan that includes processes whereby:

- I. WCDSB school and system initiatives are monitored through ongoing internal and external assessment measures to ensure students are learning at their highest possible level of achievement through programming that meets their individual learning needs, spiritual needs and learning styles and
- II. When all WCDSB departments are held to the highest standards through periodic external reviews to ensure the Board meets its financial and legal obligations to its employees, the Ministry of Education and its ratepayers.

Monitoring would take place on an ongoing basis but more formally in the June of each year, as the Multi-year Strategic Plan is monitored along with CEO Performance.



## **Number: II 005**

### **Subject: Consultation**

**Approval Date:** September 29, 2008  
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#### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

The Board of Trustees values a culture that holds consultation at its core. Consultation occurs to gain different perspectives. We believe that meaningful consultation is planned, purposeful, and equitable and that it contributes to enhanced decision making. Consultation occurs because the views and experiences of our owners, stakeholders and other partners in Catholic education are valued and inform the work of the board.

1. The Board of Trustees and associated advisory committees will confirm that meaningful consultation occurs on matters of importance that affect the WCDSB. Matters of importance shall include but not be limited to:
  - a. Establishment or amendment of Board policies affecting one or more groups.
  - b. Matters which specifically require a board decision.
2. Consultation may be formal or informal.
3. All consultations will provide feedback to participant groups/individuals.

