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**Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board**



## School Plan for Sustained and Continuous Improvement 2008 - 2010

### St. Thomas Aquinas – Secondary School

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<http://www.dpcdsb.org/AQUIN>



**“FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE”**

### Mission Statement

St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School aspires to be a truly Catholic community where the ideals of Jesus Christ are both taught and witnessed, where staff, students, parents and clergy are respectful and appreciative of each other's gifts, and where everyone is mutually caring and supportive, feels welcome, accepted, loved and challenged to live the Christian ideals. We aspire to be an educational community where everyone is a learner, a teacher, and we must:

- learn and work most effectively in an environment which is safe and supportive
- recognize and encourage contributions and achievements of individuals and groups
- develop a harmonious partnership among students, staff, trustees, parents, clergy and local community
- promote understanding, acceptance, fairness and tolerance of the diversity among us
- demonstrate leadership in equity and equality of opportunity in our policies and programmes
- develop a lifelong love of learning by providing the opportunities for the achievement of our potential so that we become active/interactive learners who are self-motivated, self-directed problem solvers and contributing and responsible participants in a changing Canadian
- be committed to success and service and willing to accept responsibilities and accountability for our actions
- reflect the "common good" in our policies, practices and programmes
- be characterized by our open and trusting relationships and by effective communication
- show respect for the environment

### Our School

St. Thomas Aquinas is a secondary school of approximately 2198 students of diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds, from Grade 9 to Grade 12. Our school population generally reflects the socio-economic mix found within Brampton East. St. Thomas Aquinas was established in 1976 to support Catholic parents in their responsibility for the spiritual, religious, moral, academic and physical development of their children in accordance with the teachings of the Church. The school community at St. Thomas Aquinas is committed to the search for excellence, the uniqueness of the individual and the education of the whole person while experiencing a life in a community founded on gospel values.

St. Thomas Aquinas is a caring school and community environment that stresses tolerance and acceptance of others, commitment to our Catholic faith, and high academic standards. We provide a safe and comfortable learning environment where models of Gospel values and Catholic doctrines, teachings and beliefs are an integral part of the daily life of our school. The school motto, "**Faith, Hope, Love**" was chosen through the process of community consultation and reflects a holistic philosophy where religion and daily life are intertwined. As such, all activities of administration, management, counseling, academic and pastoral work, prayer, worship and extracurricular involvement help to prepare Aquinas students for their lives as Catholics in the community.

Our prayer life, liturgical celebrations, sacraments, retreat program and faith and values system form the foundation of our school program. We are proud of our balanced religion, academic, arts technology and athletics program. It offers students a well-rounded and value-centered education to help them make good choices for the future and allows us to reflect and serve the entire community as we prepare our students for post secondary education and careers. The school curriculum offerings are broad, balanced and relevant to the needs and aspirations of all students. A wide range of subjects and learning experiences is offered in order to develop the skills abilities and talents of individual students.

**Measures of Student Achievement and Success**

All students in the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board schools are provided with the same opportunities to learn, to grow and to achieve their potential. Assessment results ensure that schools, parents and other stakeholders in our communities have access to high-quality information needed to make informed judgments and effective educational decisions. Schools continuously collect assessment data on student learning to plan for student growth. Teachers assess knowledge, skills and strategies on an ongoing basis. Regular assessments, both classroom and large scale, allow teachers to determine the effectiveness of their instruction, assess student learning, and make informed decisions about how to organize and pace instruction.

**Provincial Measures of Student Achievement**

The Primary and Junior EQAO assessments of reading, writing and mathematics are conducted annually by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) in every publicly funded elementary school in Ontario. The assessments are based on *The Ontario Curriculum* and measure how well students know, understand and apply their skills and knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. At the secondary level, the Grade 9 EQAO assessment of mathematics is administered at the close of each semester (or at the end of the year in non-semestered schools) each year to measure Grade 9 student achievement of mathematics expectations in *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10: Mathematics, 2005 (Revised)*. In addition, EQAO conducts the annual Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) each March. Successful completion of this test (or the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course) is one of the 32 graduation requirements of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

The provincial assessments provide a ‘snapshot’ of how well students are learning what is expected of them in the curriculum at specific points in time. The assessments complement local school data and can help identify ways to influence instruction and other practices to help students learn more effectively and efficiently. Students’ work is assessed according to curriculum expectations and using a four-level assessment scale that reflects the four achievement levels in *The Ontario Curriculum*. Level 3 on the assessment scale represents the provincial standard and identifies a high level of achievement of the provincial expectations. The results from the assessments are used by boards and schools to improve learning and teaching and not for ranking schools. **Ranking of schools is inappropriate and could result in misleading comparisons, which may ignore the unique conditions that affect student achievement and prevent schools and the board from addressing the critical issue of improving learning for all students.**

**School, Board and Provincial Achievement Results: 2007 - 2008**

Percent of students, enrolled in the grade (Method 1), who scored at and above the provincial standard (Levels 3 & 4):

OSSLT '07-'08	School	Board	Province
All	452	7 226	145 603
Successful	(396) 88%	86%	84%
Not Successful	(56) 12%	14%	16%
<b>% of students BELOW Ministry success standard ( Level 2 or lower)</b>	12%	14%	16%

	<b>Applied</b> (All Students) Levels 3,4	<b>Academic</b> (All Students) Levels 3,4
<b>Grade 9 EQAO Mathematics Test</b>		
<b>School</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>Board</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Province</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>75%</b>

School Plan for Sustained and Continuous Improvement 2008 - 2010

Planning for Sustained and Continuous Improvement

System Goals	Actions for Implementation	Indicators of Success	Monitor and Review for Success	
			Evidence from Monitoring and Review Cycles	Completion Date / Next Steps
<p><b>Catholicity</b></p> <p><i>The goal of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic community is to enhance the faith formation of all community members (staff, student, trustees, parents) by strengthening the partnership of home, parish and school.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase opportunities for students and staff to learn more about and experience social justice, service, and stewardship of the earth.</li> <li>• Continue to nurture relationships between school and parish teams, and school and home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster student spiritual development within the image of Christ through the development and implementation of pastoral plans with: parents, pastoral team, administrators, student council, Religion department heads and chaplaincy leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infusion of pastoral plan in departmental plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal feedback from: parents, pastoral team, administrators, student council, Religion department heads and chaplaincy leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• April 2009</li> <li>• Ongoing feedback will inform the school's planning for next steps</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Development</b></p> <p><i>The goal of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic community is to strengthen community relationships in an effort to sustain confidence in our commitment to improving support for student learning.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness and build system-wide capacity towards the development of a comprehensive whole-school approach to violence and bullying prevention, and progressive discipline within our Catholic faith perspective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish Student Leadership programs</li> <li>▪ Establish Peer-Mentorship Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced number of conflicts</li> <li>• Increased student sense of safety</li> <li>• Provide grade 9 students at risk with senior mentors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal feedback</li> <li>• suspension data / incident tracking data</li> <li>• Safe Schools Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• January 2009</li> <li>• June 2009</li> </ul>

School Plan for Sustained and Continuous Improvement 2008 - 2010

Planning for Sustained and Continuous Improvement

System Goals	Actions for Implementation	Indicators of Success	Monitor and Review for Success	
			Data from Monitoring and Review Cycles	Completion Date / Next Steps
<p><b>Excellence in Student Achievement</b></p> <p><i>The goal of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic community, within the context of the Catholic Graduate Expectations, is to continue to establish and nurture the conditions needed to advance high levels of student achievement, and narrow the gap in student achievement so that all students can grow in their journey to know God and ultimately transform the world around them.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance effective transition plans for students entering Dufferin-Peel and moving from elementary to secondary, and for students leaving secondary to community work place and post secondary institutions, with a particular focus on helping students with At-Risk factors.</li> <li>Enhance the continuous cycle of assessment for learning and intervention planning within a multi-disciplinary team process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement effective student programming (refer to detailed School Action Plan)</li> <li>Implementing Effective Assessment and Evaluation Practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement of Credit Accumulation for those students at risk</li> <li>Improvement in teachers' use of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Credit Accumulation and Attendance Data</li> <li>Pass rates in compulsory courses</li> <li>Enrolment in specialty programs</li> </ul> </li> <li>Use of Trillium/Skopus data warehouse to monitor student achievement data</li> <li>Analysis of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Markbook entries</li> <li>Course outlines</li> <li>Failure Diagnostics</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>October 2008</li> <li>February 2009</li> <li>June 2009</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>October 2008</li> <li>February 2009</li> <li>June 2009</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> See specific school goals below</p>

<p><b>Financial Accountability and Transparency</b></p> <p><i>The goal of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic community is to continue to comply with board policies and best practices in the areas of fiscal responsibility, accountability, and transparency.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a balanced and sustainable budget to balance student achievement with fiscal prudence within the Catholic stewardship context.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the school budget is aligned to system/school goals vis-à-vis improved student achievement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget allocation will align with school priorities for student achievement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use i-Ren reports to monitor and track school budgets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September 2008</li> <li>• May 2009</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student Enrolment Impact</b></p> <p><i>The goal of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic community is to develop proactive strategies to address the impact of changes in student enrolment and its impact on staff, students, and our Catholic community through all practices of the Board including Human Resources, Employee Relations, Budget, Planning, Etc., in a manner that will ensure sustainable balanced budgets in the future.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closely monitor historical enrolment trends and use up-to-date assumptions in the development of enrolment projections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure accurate reporting of student enrolments through the electronic register (e.g. following Ministry guidelines)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Electronic registers reflect accurate classroom enrolments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enrolment registers align with Ministry guidelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly</li> </ul>

Instructional Improvement through Inquiry Cycles

**STUDENT SUCCESS COMPONENT: Implementing Effective Student Programming**

**School Practice:** Our school assists students in making informed decisions for their transition to high school and we also track and program for those students deemed at risk. Our school also assists students in making informed decisions for their post secondary destinations.

**GOAL SETTING**

Improvement Focus: Support all students who are considered at risk with course selection and programming before start of school year.

Evidence Base: Analysis of failures, increased attendance concerns and disengagement of students has led to the increased need for alternative, at-risk Co-Op and credit recovery programs.

SMART GOAL: To hand-timetable students at risk with parental and teacher involvement in order to place students in appropriate programming and recognize scheduling/staffing needs.

Tools to Measure the Impact of the Inquiry Process: Monitor the attendance, success and office referrals of those students identified as being at risk. Track the number requested schedule changes from students and the number of late registrants at the start of school year.

Strategies and Resources	Responsibility (Staff)	Evidence of Success	Cycles to Monitor and Review	Support Structures
Student Success Team meet to co-ordinate scheduling	Administrator Guidance Dept. Heads SST ARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scheduled meetings and established timeline</li> <li>- Collaborative approach to student scheduling</li> </ul>	<u>Cycle 1:</u> - Feb. 2009: School Team goes to elementary schools to collect information and register students in courses - March 2009: contact parents and teachers to ensure appropriate level selection for students - April 2009: Review course selections of current students	<u>Program Department Facilitated:</u> workshop, networking, adobe connect  <u>School Facilitated Action Research:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Inquiry Project</li> <li>o <a href="#">Capacity Building Team</a></li> <li>o <a href="#">PLC</a></li> </ul>
Scheduling and Teacher Placements	Administrator Guidance Dept. Heads SAAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriate class sizes</li> <li>- Reduced course conflicts</li> <li>- Students at-risk are placed in courses of interest/choice</li> </ul>	<u>Cycle2:</u> - May 2009: Master timetable completed – (student-driven) - June 2009: Department staffing and course allocation	
Monitoring of Course Changes	Guidance SST Student Success Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced number of course requests and changes</li> </ul>	<u>Cycle 3:</u> Sept. 2009: Collect data from Guidance Dept. on	

*School Plan for Sustained and Continuous Improvement 2008 - 2010*

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students requiring specialized programs are in courses at semester start</li> </ul>	course request changes and on students in specialized programs	
Analysis of Failure and Tracking of Student Behaviour	Administrators SST Student Success Team Guidance CYW Social Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review Failure Diagnostic Forms</li> <li>- Compare attendance with student success rates</li> <li>- Analyze rates of suspensions and causes</li> </ul>	<u>Cycle 4:</u> January 2010 and June 2010: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collect data on suspensions, attendance and academic success</li> </ul>	

**Instructional Improvement through Inquiry Cycles**

**STUDENT SUCCESS COMPONENT: Implementing Effective Assessment and Evaluation Practices**

**School Practice:** Our staff use a variety of assessment tools and scaffolding to develop student skills. Diagnostic, formative and summative assessment have all been used to evaluate student performance through the use of Markbook 2008.

**GOAL SETTING**

Improvement Focus: Support all staff in distinguishing different types of assessment and to be more consistent in the use of Markbook 2008, Achievement Categories and weightings.

Evidence Base: Analysis of Markbook 2008 use, collection of course outlines and inconsistencies in methods of evaluation have demonstrated that staff require support in making the paradigm shift from reporting student progress through assessment tools (tests, quizzes etc.) to reporting to the achievement categories.

SMART GOAL: To provide ongoing PD and support to staff on the use of Markbook 2008, Achievement Categories and distinguishing between Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning.

Tools to Measure the Impact of the Inquiry Process: Monitor the use of Markbook 2008 mark entry program. Review department Course Outlines to ensure adherence to achievement categories and Ministry/Board prescribed percentage allotments. Analysis of student achievement to determine clarity and consistency in assessment.

Strategies and Resources	Responsibility (Staff)	Evidence of Success	Cycles to Monitor and Review	Support Structures
Establishment of Secondary Assessment Learning Team	Administrator Department Heads Staff SST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scheduled monthly meetings</li> <li>- Department representation</li> </ul>	<u>Cycle 1:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sept. 2008: SALT meets to identify immediate areas of need and prioritizes PD and resources</li> <li>- PD for dept. heads on</li> </ul>	<u>Program Department Facilitated:</u> workshop, networking, adobe connect  <u>School Facilitated Action Research:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Inquiry Project</li> </ul>

*School Plan for Sustained and Continuous Improvement 2008 - 2010*

			assessment literacy - PD for dept. heads on use of Markbook	o <a href="#">Capacity Building Team</a> o <a href="#">PLC</a>
Distribution of Board/Ministry and published Assessment and Evaluation materials to assist with program planning	Administrator SALT Department Heads Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revised "Early Warning" letter created and implemented for reporting early student progress</li> <li>- Few Formative assessments are recorded in Markbook</li> <li>- Backward Design Planning implemented in depts.</li> </ul>	<u>Cycle 2:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oct. 2008: Purchase resource - "Talk About Assessment" by D. Cooper for each dept.</li> <li>- Create a professional assess/evaluation Library with Board/Ministry documents for staff</li> <li>- SALT meets to draft a revised "early warning" letter which focuses on learning skills</li> </ul>	
Establish department learning teams for multiple section courses to allow for more consistency and effective use of formative assessment.	Administrator SALT Department Heads Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sample "Fishbone" templates for dept. multiple section courses are submitted to SALT</li> <li>- Markbook reports demonstrate more assessment and less evaluation – fewer entries</li> <li>- Weightings of tools for mark entered in Markbook are consistently used throughout department</li> </ul>	<u>Cycle 3:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jan. 2009: Dept. learning teams complete "fishbone" templates for multiple section courses in semester two – effective use of scaffolding</li> <li>- Depts. establish consistent weightings for assessment tools when using Markbook</li> </ul>	
Creating a school calendar for culminating activities. Creating school templates for course outlines and final exams.	Administrator SALT Department Heads Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dept. heads collaboratively establish a school calendar identifying the dept. week(s) for culminating activities</li> <li>- School templates are established through dept. consultation for final exam cover pages and course outlines for next school year</li> </ul>	<u>Cycle 4:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- March 2009: School calendar is established for department culminating activities</li> <li>- June 2009: SALT drafts templates for departments' consideration on school course outlines and exam cover pages for Sept. 2009</li> </ul>	