

Report to the Board, May 27, 2008

► System Goals

Introduction to System Direction

Pope John Paul II in 2004 wrote, "It is of utmost importance, therefore, that the Church's institutions be genuinely Catholic: Catholic in their self-understanding and Catholic in their identity." Add to this sweeping goal, the Ministry of Education goals, i.e., that student achievement continue to be a focus, narrowing the achievement gap among students, and continued public confidence in Catholic schools, along with our own trustee priorities, and you have a very broad area for our system to develop a System Direction.

This year, our direction is for a two-year approach that will align budget, resources, and our staff energies in a few specific strategic directions that will help us attain the target set for Catholic schools. Our approach, this year, will see individual schools develop strategies to attain the System Direction, while also providing flexibility for schools to identify up to two goals for their school.

The System Direction includes measurable goals that will be reported back to the board in May 2009. During the year, support will be given to faculty and staff, administrators and students, to assist them in attaining the specific focus of the board as expressed in our System Direction. The System Direction is being presented in May to facilitate discussion at the school level and at the family of schools and corporate levels, on methods for reporting and attaining these Directions.

Dufferin-Peel continues to provide outstanding curriculum and programs for our students. But, just as important is our commitment to developing the spiritual side to each student's mind, body, spirit and heart. Our students bring to the community a deep awareness of social justice values, the knowledge of the importance of living a principled life based on religious truths, and the ability to engage the world because of attainment of skills. As the System Direction indicates, Children First is more than just a motto, it is what we work towards.

I. Catholicity

..... enhance faith formation of all community members (staff, students, trustees, parents) by strengthening the partnership of home, school, and parish.

- Review board-wide and school expenditures in the area of Religious Education and faith formation during the 2008-2009 budget year, to determine the average budget commitment and make recommendations for future annual budget commitments commencing in 2009-2010.
- Create and implement a Catholic Community Study Unit for elementary and secondary schools.
- Increase opportunities for students and staff to learn more about and experience social justice, service, and stewardship of the earth.
- Recognizing the Catholic call to be stewards of the earth, to be champions of social justice, to make ethical decisions and to care for one another, the Dufferin-Peel community will work to develop a sustainability committee that will review best practices for design of new schools, sustainability and recycling programs and targets and an integrated curriculum approach that will assist all in our community in working towards greener schools.

- Identify and integrate faith stories and teachings (all staff within their roles as Catholic educators), in order to provide a Catholic perspective across the system.
- Expand work on equity and diversity by focusing on hiring and promotion practices, professional and staff development, and curriculum development and learning resources, so that all feel valued as part of the fabric of our diverse community.
- Continue to nurture relationships between school and parish teams, and school and home.

II. Community Development

..... strengthen community relationships in an effort to sustain confidence in our commitment to improving support for student learning.

- Continue to focus on Catholic professional learning communities.
- Enhance opportunities for communication and collaboration with all community partners.
- 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.

III. Financial Accountability and Transparency

..... continue to comply with board policies and best practices in the areas of fiscal responsibility, accountability, and transparency.

- Maintain a balanced and sustainable budget to balance student achievement with fiscal prudence within the Catholic stewardship context.
- Develop a financial support tool (Finance Department), that will identify best practices to ensure financial accountability and transparency at the system and school level, including compliance with:
 - Board Policy
 - Audit Recommendations
 - General Administrative Procedures
- Provide in-service sessions related to the finance support tool for administrators and support staff.

IV. Excellence in Student Achievement

.....within the context of the Catholic Graduate Outcomes, 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.

- Expand and deepen the implementation of high quality literacy and numeracy practices and achievement in all schools in order to contribute to the development of the whole child.

- Expand differentiated learning opportunities, within fiscal responsibility, for students including cooperative education, dual credits, specialist high skills majors, credits for external credentials, the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs, e-learning opportunities, experiential learning, Continuing and Adult Education, and specialized programs including Extended French, French Immersion, and International Baccalaureate programs.
- Develop electronic resources to support teachers of combined grades that reflect curriculum expectations, differentiated instructional strategies, and planning for assessment and reporting.
- 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.
- Enhance the continuous cycle of assessment for learning and intervention planning within a multi-disciplinary team process.
- Implement Ministry initiatives relating to:
 - ongoing curriculum review
 - Ministry Policies (e.g. ELL, Aboriginal Policy Framework, Safe Schools)
 - Special Education
 - Literacy / Numeracy Secretariat
 - Student Success / Learning to 18
 - Alternative Education / Continuing and Adult Education
ensuring the distinctiveness of Catholic education is explicitly infused.

V. Student Enrolment Impact

..... 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.

- Develop labour relations and human resources strategies that will minimize the impact of fluctuations in enrolment.
- Closely monitor historical enrolment trends and use up-to-date assumptions in the development of enrolment projections.

Approved by the Board – May 27, 2008
