



**Dufferin Peel Regional Association of
Parents in Catholic Education
DRAPCE**

DRAPCE is the regional association of the OAPCE that represents all our Dufferin Peel publicly funded Catholic Schools.

The OAPCE represents all parents provincially.

Facts About Catholic Education in Ontario

- ✚ Catholic population in Ontario: 3,611,688 (approx. 33%)
- ✚ Number of Catholic District School Boards: 29
- ✚ Number of Catholic School Authorities: 5
- ✚ Number of Catholic trustees: 245
- ✚ Number of Catholic schools: Approximately 1,500
- ✚ Enrolment in Catholic schools: Over 600,000

There are people who are actively seeking to abolish the Catholic school system in Ontario. We need to take these threats very seriously and be aware of what they are saying. The Constitution is the foundational base of who we are as Canadians. We nurture diversity.

Historical Highlights of Catholic Education in Ontario

- 1817** Bishop Alex Macdonell promotes Catholic education in the Kingston area as early as 1817.
- 1841** The Act of 1841 establishes the Common School System of Ontario which had three sectors – a non-denominational sector which would become known later as public schools, a Roman Catholic separate school sector and a Protestant school sector.
- 1843** Legislation in Ontario retains the school rights granted in 1841. Subsequent amendments to the law, up until 1863, improve the conditions for both public and separate schools.
- 1863** The Scott Act is passed, bringing all aspects of existing legislation on Protestant and Catholic schools into line with legislation governing common schools.
- 1867** The British North America Act creates Canada. This legislation required that the rights granted in Ontario and Quebec to denominational schools are to be protected and retained.
- 1871** The province of Ontario introduces district secondary school boards apart from the Common School System, which are to be responsible for the new high school system. No provision was made for Catholic secondary schools, deviating from the spirit of the commitments made both before and at the time of Confederation.
- 1890** The non-denominational common school system and the separate school system are both given the authority to offer continuation classes, i.e. grades nine and ten to students who graduated from elementary school.
- 1908** Legislation allows common schools to operate continuation schools offering programs from grades nine to 13. These continuation schools could only exist where there is no district secondary school board.
- 1927** The Privy Council decides that separate school supporters cannot assign their secondary school taxes to support certain schools. It also decides that the Provincial Government has the right to determine which kinds of schools will offer secondary school programs.
- 1964** The Robarts Foundation Plan rectifies some of the financial difficulties for separate schools, as the funding of the kindergarten to grade eight program in separate schools is made equal to that of public schools. Grades nine and ten continue to be funded as elementary grades.
- 1969** The Provincial Government requires that every county or city have one board of education to administer both elementary and secondary schools, meaning that common or public school trustees now govern secondary education. This authority, though, is not given to separate school trustees. This is a deviation from the practice of equal treatment for both sectors of the publicly-funded provincial education system.
- 1978** The Provincial Government introduces a grant weighting factor for students in grades nine and ten of the separate school system.
- 1982** The new Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is enacted. It states that “nothing in this Charter abrogates or derogates from any rights or privileges guaranteed by or under the Constitution of Canada in respect of denominational, separate or dissentient schools.”
- 1984** Ontario Premier William Davis announces that the Provincial Government will grant separate schools the same rights and privileges that were granted to the non-denominational public school system in 1969, namely authority to govern secondary education.



WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT OUR CATHOLIC EDUCATION ?

Our Gospel Values enable each one of us to be ambassadors for Catholic Education. It is our voice that will be heard by our community and politicians when we are asked what is so unique about us. In 1867 the Constitution guaranteed funding for Catholic Schools in Ontario. Our Director of Education for Dufferin-Peel described it best—“It is our core values that are the very reason for our being.”

**WHAT CAN YOU DO ?
REFLECT....THEN.....**

- ✚ Question your local candidates about their support for a strong, publicly funded Catholic school system.
- ✚ Talk about Catholic Education-at the market, arenas, parks, café’s & everywhere. Talk about our distinctiveness. Talk about how well rounded our students are because we have the ability to educate them through FAITH every day!—though the teachings of our Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.
- ✚ Our students are responsible, caring, collaborative contributors to our community, They are reflective, creative and holistic thinkers. They are successful and have been formed in faith by the Catholic Community.
- ✚ As Catholics, we are taught and teach our children to be respectful of the rights and dignity for all Gods’

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10 Catholic School Values

The Most Rev. Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B., Archbishop of Indianapolis April 24, 1999 – Vol. 180, # 14

The first value

Is that *God comes first*. No individual or group, no doctrine or ideology, no material thing or spiritual experience can come before God. We believe in a personal, loving God who has been revealed through creation, through human conscience and through direct action in the world and in our lives. Catholic schools do not impose this belief (or any of our values) on people who do not share our faith. But everything about Catholic schools should proclaim this fundamental conviction or value. For us, God comes first.

The second value

That Catholic schools represent is *reverence for the sacred*. We believe that a person is not fully human or truly free unless he or she can recognize and respect genuine spiritual realities. We want our Catholic school graduates to be keenly aware of the mysteries of life – at the same time that they are fully prepared for life's practical, day-to-day realities. We believe that the very name of the Lord is holy, and we try to teach our students (and ourselves) that true wisdom involves a sense of majesty, awe and reverence for the things of God.

The third Catholic school value

Reflects a theme that Pope John Paul II has recently stressed: the importance of Sunday, the Lord's day. Time is sacred, the Pope reminds us. We honour God and one another when we set aside at least one day each week for prayer, worship and the kinds of leisure activities that truly enrich individuals, families and communities. Catholic schools promote responsible stewardship of the gift of time. We believe that healthy individuals and communities learn how to balance work and play with worship and service to others.

The fourth value

We value parents and families. We recognize the family as the first unit of the Church and of society. We even call families the "domestic Church." And we want to do everything in our power to help families remain spiritually vital, as well as materially secure, in spite of the many social and cultural influences that threaten family life today. Especially today we want our Catholic schools to reflect a deep reverence and respect for the senior members of our community – our parents and grandparents – who have given so much to our families and communities and who still have so much more to offer us as a result of their wisdom and experience.

The fifth Catholic school value

Is absolutely central to who we are and what we believe. Catholic schools proclaim the dignity and sacredness of every human person – from the first moment of conception to the final moments of natural death. We believe that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God. We treat our students, their families and every member of the school community as unique and gifted persons – regardless of race, religion or economic or social circumstance. We want every child to have a chance – and every parent to have a choice – in the great adventure that education is meant to be. Above all, we want to communicate to our students the profound respect for life that we believe is at the heart of all truly human values.

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The sixth Catholic school value

Is a positive understanding of the beauty and dignity of human sexuality. At a time when we are overwhelmed by negative sexual images in the news media and the entertainment industry, this may be our most counter-cultural value. We believe that God created human sexuality to unite man and woman in a sanctified married life and to bring forth new life in the stability and harmony of family life. Seen in this context, there is nothing more wondrous or joyful than sexual love. But we also know that, divorced from marriage and family, sex can be very dangerous and destructive. This is the view of sex that we want to share with our children – through clear, consistent teaching and through programs that emphasize abstinence, chastity and a true appreciation for this precious gift from God.

The seventh value

Is respect for the material world that God has entrusted to our care as stewards of all creation. This value acknowledges that each of us has a right – and a duty – to care for our own property and possessions, but also for the great bounty we have received from God's goodness: the land we work, the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat (and share with others). We believe that God has made us stewards of the earth and its fullness. That is why we respect one another's property. It is also why we commit ourselves to economic justice and political responsibility among all nations and people of the earth.

The eighth Catholic school value

Is to tell the truth. Pope John Paul II has written forcefully about the splendor of truth and its essential connection to human freedom. Lies deceive, corrupt and enslave us. Invariably they cause pain, embarrassment and humiliation for everyone involved. We believe in telling the truth, but we also believe in charity and respect for the privacy of others. Talk shows and tabloid journalism do not serve the truth when they "tell all" without regard to the good and safety of others, or when they fail to have respect for privacy or the common good. In an age when doublespeak and spin doctoring are everywhere, we can give our children no greater gift than a profound appreciation for the plain, unvarnished truth.

The last two Catholic school values speak directly to the human heart.

The ninth value

Is purity of heart, which involves honesty, simplicity and genuine desire for what is right and good. In human relationships, this means treating others with dignity and respect. It also means resisting the temptation to treat other people as objects that we use to gratify our personal needs or desires.

The tenth and final Catholic school value

Is also a counter-cultural value. It is the very opposite of the modern belief that happiness will come from acquiring (and consuming) more and more of what the world has to offer. A heart that is burdened by a consuming desire for wealth, prestige or power will never be free. We believe that true happiness comes when we let go of our attachment to worldly things and honestly turn our attention to the things of the spirit. So the tenth Catholic school value is "to seek first the kingdom of God," confident that all the rest will follow.

Of course you recognize these 10 values. We call them the Ten Commandments. They are not unique to Catholic schools. They come from the Hebrew Scriptures as a direct revelation from God to Moses, but they also reflect basic religious and moral principles that have guided countless peoples and cultures throughout human history. As such, we believe that these "natural laws" have been inscribed in the human heart by God as fundamental principles that should govern human behavior.

These values are the foundation for every Catholic school curriculum. They also form the basis for our schools' strong commitment to service in the Church and in the wider community. Because we are human, we are not perfect in our witness to these values. But we insist that they remain as fundamental principles that challenge all of us – students, parents, teachers, educators and religious leaders – to make these values our own and to share them joyfully with others.

We believe that schools built on this foundation make a difference. Better families, better businesses and better communities are the result

From OCSTA

✦ **Catholic Schools** have been educating students in mind, body and spirit in Ontario since before the birth of the province. For nearly 170 years they have provided educational excellence, in a school culture imbued with the Gospel values of Jesus Christ. Catholic education has been the foundation for millions of students to develop their full spiritual, academic, physical and social potential.

✦ **A History of Success** - ONTARIO'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS go back as far as the 1600s. A formal system was established in 1841, and the Scott Act of 1863 gave the Catholic community the right to establish and operate publicly funded Catholic schools. Since then, Catholic schools have made a tremendous contribution to the vitality and success of Ontario's education system, which ranks among the best in the world. Today, Ontario's Catholic education system consistently produces high levels of student achievement. Further, graduates are taught the virtues and values of the Catholic faith – including community, responsibility, accountability, collaboration, caring and family – making them not just good students, but good citizens.

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✦ **Distinctly Different** - ONTARIO'S CATHOLIC EDUCATION system is not a duplicate of other school systems. While it adheres to Ministry of Education requirements, it does so from a Catholic perspective. The curriculum is enhanced by Gospel values. Teachers are professionally trained and committed to serving in Catholic schools. At the heart of Catholic education is the person of Jesus. Faith development is integral to every part of Catholic education, as students are called to respect the dignity of all human persons in a caring community. In the Catholic education system, home, school and parish form a vital partnership. Through participation in the community and involvement with the parish, students are guided by the Gospel values, principles and standards that reach into every facet of school life.

✦ **CHALLENGING TIMES**: In recent years, there has been growing discussion around the funding of faith based education. Despite its longstanding history of academic excellence and contributions to Ontario society, the funding of Catholic education has been drawn into this debate. The 2007 Ontario election campaign was a particular focal point, in some areas re-invigorating the efforts of interest groups that want to end public funding for Catholic schools in Ontario. These detractors miss a crucial point: Catholic education is an integral part of Ontario society. It has deep roots throughout the province's history and culture – as much as any other institution. Catholic education is built on a strong foundation supported by parents, students, teachers, administrators, religious sisters and brothers, the clergy and the community. It is a proven success. There is simply no good reason to destroy a system that is working so well. Nonetheless, it is important to be vigilant and to refute these renewed attacks. Following are responses to some of the arguments critics have used to try and end funding for Catholic schools in Ontario.

✦ **Fairness** - Some contend it is unfair for only one faith to have publicly funded schools. Historically, Ontario's Catholic education system was established in fairness to Catholics, a religious minority in this province. In 1867, the British North America Act guaranteed that all educational rights held by minorities at the time of Confederation would be constitutionally protected. Without this protection of denominational schools, Confederation would not have been achieved, and the Supreme Court of Canada has upheld this pillar of our nation. Whether other faiths should receive public education funding is a matter of public policy debate.

Governments of all political stripes, for various reasons, have decided against it. At the same time, Ontario governments throughout the history of the province have recognized not just the legal rights of the publicly funded Catholic education system to continue, but the merits of keeping it in place. The fact is, Catholic schools have maintained and enhanced their foundational place in Ontario's public education system as it has evolved. It would be unfair to the Catholic community and the people of Ontario to dismantle a school system that has been an integral part of publicly funded education since 1841.

✦ **Other Provinces** - Catholic schools are fully or partially funded in six other Canadian provinces. Education is a provincial jurisdiction, and school governance in each province is unique – including Ontario, where the history, commitment and support for Catholic education is unlike any other. Two provinces in particular are often cited as moving away from Catholic schools. Quebec changed its system to a language-based model in 1997, to reflect that province's linguistic and cultural reality (which is far different from Ontario's). In Newfoundland and Labrador, a 1997 referendum supported a single education system to replace the historical model of a myriad of denominational schools. In both instances, the circumstances were dramatically different from Ontario, and should not be compared.

✦ **The United Nations** - In opposing Catholic education, some critics say the United Nations has called Ontario's funding system "discriminatory." In fact, the U.N. has not made such a ruling. It was the opinion of members of one committee, and never moved beyond that committee. Both the Canadian and Ontario governments responded to the opinion, strongly defending the existing system. Notably, the matter has not been pursued by the U.N. or any member government.

✦ **Financial Savings** - The notion that creating a single education system in Ontario would save money is unfounded. As amalgamation in the education, municipal and health care sectors has demonstrated, bigger is not necessarily better or more efficient. Funding in Ontario is based on per-pupil calculations. Amalgamation would not reduce the number of students – who would still require similar levels of teaching and support staff, classroom space and administrative support in the schools and board offices. Economies of scale have already been achieved, with Catholic and public boards cooperating in areas such as transportation, school financing, purchasing and energy management. In fact, trying to amalgamate into a single system would cost more money – not to mention time to sort out the complex details. It would also unleash a period of great upheaval for students, parents, teachers and administrators throughout the education system.