

## Remarks to the Catholic Partners Committee-February 4, 2009

Mario Pascucci

Welcome to the Catholic Partners Committee meeting of February 4. One of the many positive aspects of Dufferin-Peel is the excellent relationships that exist between and among the stakeholders ... groups and individuals representing these groups, such as those of us in attendance tonight.

It is an honour and a pleasure to be here as board chair. I know that the Partners Committee has traditionally been an excellent forum for the interchange of information and ideas and I look forward to being part of the dialogue.

I would like to begin with a recap of some of the events and activities undertaken by the board this year.

- ▶ Earlier this Fall, trustees and senior staff met with some of our local MPPs; a meeting in which we put forward some of our concerns about various issues.
- ▶ Recently, vice chair Abbruscato and I met privately with Minister Wynne; a session in which we further outlined some of our concerns.
- ▶ Trustee Abbruscato and I will also look to delegate our local municipal councils to let them know that we are their corporate neighbours and that Catholic education is alive and well in their neighbourhood.
- ▶ Looking back to December, trustee Hobin and I had the opportunity to attend the Veterans Breakfast at Iona Catholic Secondary School.
- ▶ We are now in our 40<sup>th</sup> year as a consolidated Catholic school board and look forward to events and activities throughout the year where we can highlight 40 years of excellence in Catholic education in our communities.
- ▶ We concluded a provincially mandated Pupil Accommodation Review process in three areas within our board and while the process was a painful and exhaustive one, our decisions were undertaken with a thorough understanding of our responsibilities to our communities, our entire system and to the province. On that note, the Ministry has received two, possible three appeal requests from representatives of the affected communities. This is something the board may have to deal with. We await the Ministry decision on this matter.
- ▶ We have started our annual budget process and will be engaging in consultation with our key stakeholders in the near future.
- ▶ I would point out that the province has begun a consultation process on school governance in Ontario, requesting feedback from boards and other stakeholders. The plan is to create a revised governance model with implementation scheduled for September 2009. We will be keeping an eye on that process and are involved through OCSTA.
- ▶ Trustees have sought a legal opinion regarding the registration of elementary students from the same family in two school systems.
- ▶ Chairs and directors of education from the Toronto-area Catholic school boards met recently with Archbishop Collins, the Toronto Bishops and other ranking representatives from the diocese to review initiatives and practices related to the maintenance and promotion of Catholic education. One of the items that was stressed is that we must continue to celebrate the good news of our catholic schools. We must continue to tell our story.