



Catholic School Board News

From Your Trustee –Sharon Hobin

sharon.hobin@dpcdsb.org

Year One

I am finishing my first year as your school trustee. It has been an interesting experience for me; one that is most rewarding. I share the board table with 10 other trustees who each represent wards in Mississauga and Brampton. Each of us has one vote. From time to time, we will disagree on direction or decisions and that has been difficult. Democracy also means that we do work as a team and agree upon the direction that we must take to improve our schools. We are part of a large organization with almost 10,000 employees, 700 million dollar budget, 144 schools (121 elementary and 23 secondary) and approximately 87,802 students. Esther O'Toole is my colleague who is also a trustee for St. Joan of Arc.

The most rewarding part of this position has been the opportunity to help individual students, parents, and schools. I have visited all of the schools in my areas (Wards 2 and 8) many times, including school Masses, graduations, award ceremonies, presentation of the arts, class presentations and more. As well, I have joined several committees of the board including the Secondary Assessment and Evaluation Committee, Board Wide Strategic Review Committee, By-law Committee, Contract Negotiations and more. The trustees of Dufferin-Peel have full control of the board finances and to date, have balanced the budget. We face many challenges including declining enrollments, delivery of needed programs, ministry funding of infrastructure, and challenges to Catholic education. It is my hope the strategic review will bring us to an agreed upon plan to continue to provide excellent opportunities for students in Dufferin-Peel to prepare themselves for a bright future. It has been over 18 years since our community participated in a Strategic Review of our Catholic education system.

At our September board meeting, trustees approved a plan for broad public consultation from our priests, parents, guardians, ratepayers, employees and students regarding the future of our board, new directions, revisions to our Mission Statement and a host of other areas that will be impacted by the data collected. **You** will have further opportunities to participate from January through to June of this school year. This is another indication of the importance of celebrating our success and re-visioning our school system for the future.

As I begin year two, I hope to accomplish a few more personal goals but also to continue to contribute where I can, to the improvement to Catholic education to the students, parents and school communities who I represent. I celebrate the wonderful community of St. Joan of Arc which continues to excel in academics, awards, the arts, athletics, and charitable work. I toured the school again with Ms. Pitoscia in November and was so impressed with the school but more with the students I met. Staff is working hard to meet the goals of improving student achievement and it shows. As we walked, we met students who had just returned from a Music Festival. Their enthusiasm warmed my heart because these students were truly engaged in their school. As well, almost one third of students are on the St. Joan of Arc Honour Roll and many graduates are applying to colleges and universities. Of course, this will be the first graduating class from St. Joan. The Administration team and academic and support staff are to be congratulated for their dedication to the work of making St. Joan a flourishing school. **Go Archangels!**

Liturgical Season

As we enter the last phase of our Liturgical Year, our schools are studying and celebrating Advent, and will begin our new liturgical cycle. Our schools celebrate our faith with prayer, study, and action. The



Catholic School Board News

season of Advent allows us to participate closer with our parishes, through food drives, community service projects, Share Life events, and food baskets. It is another sign of faith in action in our schools.

Budget

Trustees are beginning the budget process in December, by reviewing final submissions. Public consultations take place in early spring. Our public consultations will be advertised in our schools and through our board and school web sites. Trustees, throughout the year, also gather community input at school council meetings and other events. Our board looks forward to Phase Two of the funding promised by the government last August.

November 7 Faith Day

On this day, all available staff gathered to celebrate Eucharist with our local parish priests and Archbishop Thomas Collins, Bishop John Boissonneau and Eparch Stephen Chmilar. Over 10,000 staff was present for the morning sessions, before returning to their schools, and the CEC in the afternoon to discuss further their faith development. Events such as these, along with our regular faith events and program-related in-services for teachers, helps to ensure a vital and robust Catholic curriculum and a faith life for all who attend our schools.

10th Anniversary Celebration of CCCSC

On October 17, the board gathered to celebrate with our Central Committee of Catholic School Councils. This council is a significant part of the fabric of Dufferin-Peel. Over the years, this committee has made recommendations, communicated directly with school councils, hosted an annual conference for school councils, and meets with trustees and senior staff on a monthly basis. The work of CCCSC continued with this year's School Council In-service on November 24th and we look forward to the presentation of Barbara Coloroso on February 12, 2008 at 7:00 at the Mississauga Convention Centre, for parents and staff. Check the school board web site for CCCSC meeting dates. You are always welcomed at the CCCSC meetings.

Results of the October 10 Election

Our board met with our locally elected MPPs in November to establish the concerns of our community. We congratulate all of those elected to public service. But, we also remind them that support for Catholic education was always a position held by the three major parties and, as a community, we will expect them to continue that support during their term of office. We look forward to many educational supportive actions from the government, since education was a major platform of the elected Liberal government in Ontario. I congratulate Bob Delaney who is our MPP for the area of St. Joan of Arc. We look to Mr. Delaney to help support the improvement of the funding formula which will benefit the St. Joan of Arc community.

I know that it is early, but just in case I do not have another opportunity, I wish you and your family a happy and holy Christmas and all the best for 2008! Please feel free to contact me by phone at (905)301-1210 or at sharon.hobin@dpcdsb.org.

May the good Lord always hold you in the palm of His hand.

All the Best
Sharon

From Your Catholic School Trustee



Catholic School Board News