



# Catholic School Board News

From Your Trustee –Sharon Hobin

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## 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 but at the same time, democracy does mean that we do work as a team 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.

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, Audit and more. The trustees of Dufferin-Peel now 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 meet these challenges in order to continue to provide excellent opportunities for students in Dufferin-Peel. 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 whom I represent. I celebrate our remarkable elementary school communities who along with teachers, parents, administrators, and parishes continue to provide experiences in the arts, athletics, academic achievements, and charitable work. For your information we are fortunate to have excellent secondary schools in our communities who as well are facing many challenges continue to provide academic programs as well as a myriad of extra curricular activities. Loyola is graduating 80 % of students who go to college and university, Iona is graduating 70 % and Holy Name of Mary graduates 94 %. The balance of the students return to their school for more credits, become apprentices or go to work. The average percent of students in Ontario who go to college and university is 29%. We are seeing remarkable results for our schools in Wards 2 and 8. We are still working with the MPP, Harinder Takhar, in Ward 8 to secure funding for a new Loyola. The school of the arts Iona is growing and Holy Name will have a new location in September.

## Liturgical Season

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

The season of Advent allows us to participate closely 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 will begin 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.

### **10<sup>th</sup> 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 was continued a few weeks ago when over 250 members of school councils heard a presentation on the Safe Schools Initiative as well as taking part in seminars to learn more about their council positions. A presentation by Barbara Coloroso will take place 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 school board met with our locally elected MPPs this month, to establish the concerns of our community. We congratulate all of those elected to public service. But, we also reminded 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 Charles Sousa who is our MPP in Mississauga South (Ward 2). Mr. Sousa's children are educated in Dufferin-Peel schools. As well, I congratulate Harinder Takhar, our MPP for Ward 8 and Mississauga Centre. We look forward to Mr. Sousa and Mr. Takhar's help in promoting the needs of our schools to the legislature.

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](mailto:sharon.hobin@dpcdsb.org).

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

All the Best  
Sharon