

September 27, 2011

**Director's Report to the Board of Trustees**  
**September Start-up**

Good evening,

I would like to provide trustees tonight with an update on the September start up that has affected more than 85,000 students and over 10,000 employees in Dufferin-Peel. Tonight we can bring greater clarity to this process, as we come to the end of this month.

If you would permit me to tell a few brief quotes, from giants in our world, whose work changed the lives of many.

- Tom Watson of IBM, once said, "There is a world market for about five computers, total",
- Ken Olsen of Digital, once said, "There is a no reason why any one individual would want, or need to have a computer in his or her home."
- And more locally, trustees heard that semestering at Holy Name would result in students and teachers leaving the school. Once again, a perception not borne in reality.

Each of these quotes reflect a particular view, but in the end, that view did not ultimately become reality. It was their best guess, but reality had a way of shaping the world that they hadn't considered. Last February we began to bring forward reports for action and receipt; reports on budgets, new schools, resources and population, with the perception of what we thought September would look like in our 146 schools.

Tonight, I wish to provide some insight into the subtle shift that took us from our perception to our reality.

This year, we are educating 85,227 students. We were projecting a decline of 1.1% in enrolment but have decreased only .7%, which classifies us as a growth board. We gained over 350 secondary level students and lost only 8 elementary level students, leaving us above our projections. Our enrolment is down for a number of reasons, some of which have nothing to do with education, but with yield from communities, we see some interesting trends. The most recent issue of Issue and Events speaks to this phenomenon.

At the elementary level we continue to retain over 96% of our students from grade 8 to grade 9. Two weeks ago, reorganization saw a total of 36% of our classes either reorganized by adding or removing a class due to enrolment or class ratios.

- All of our 1,932 FDK spaces are now filled.
- Our board wide average in FDK is 28 students
- Primary (Grades 1-3), totalling 958 classes, 90% are capped at 20 students, 10% of those (106) are capped at 23.
- Grade  $\frac{3}{4}$  split classes: all were capped at 23 students
- Grade 4-8 Board wide average of 24.7
- All within mandated averages

As the secondary level, we began with a deficit of 976 students on the first day and today we have obliterated that deficit. In fact, we have increased our numbers by 331 students over projection at the secondary level this month. This trend tells us that open access students, parents and students continue to value the Catholic education we offer in our schools.

There will be more information on reports regarding population in the future coming forward. We have also begun, this September, the full implementation of the New Healthy Food Policy in our secondary and elementary schools; a significant change for many in our daily practice. More information will be forthcoming as we work through this year.

Trustees also approved a policy on school fees that is shaping our practice starting this September. With respect to hiring, we are pleased that we did not have to lay off teachers, as many boards do in September. We were actually in a hiring phase, with the addition of 37 Elementary French teachers, 35 specialty secondary, 253 elementary LTOs and 157 secondary LTO teachers to our system.

Our Full Day Learning, a plan that trustees approved over three years ago, has not only dealt with the increased enrolment in our FDL programs, but the safeguards we put in place to ensure we did not lose students, by redirecting them to half day programs, has also been successful. Our marketing program, this year, has been very successful in attracting parents, both to full day and half day programs. Trustees approved, in late spring, the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of our Multi Year Plan, based on the Strategic Plan that is governing our practice and in-service in our schools.

Last Spring, our School/Parish Baptism program began, inviting parents upon baptizing their child to become involved in Catholic Education. This program links Parish, School and Home, a goal in our Strategic Plan.

We opened two immersion sites with two grades in each site, grade 1 and grade 2 and two extended French classes, this year, to meet the demand. We had surveyed the community prior to bringing this proposal forward - an example of data drive decisions.

Your largest investment in Special Education this year has seen the hiring of a total of 37.5 qualified individuals to better service our identified students.

Our investments in school base resources for this September has been \$1.5 million for Science textbooks to support student achievement and \$2.0 million for text books for various subjects. All of these funds came from our accumulated surplus, as directed at the December 14, 2010 Board Meeting, for expending this fall.

In addition, we have launched our new Community Studies Project in Grades 7 and 10, which will provide students with an understanding and appreciation of this province and this region and the role Catholic Education has played in the development of our communities.

Did these curriculum changes make a difference? One only has to look at our EQAO scores and our equal concern over student well being, to see that we are educating students in a significant fashion. Work is moving quickly on our new Loyola site. This is in addition to the grades we have added to Cardinal Ambrozic, St. Roch and St. Michael.

This September, trustees approved a policy on *Dealing with Parental Complaints* and the *Role of the Trustee* that have been shared with the system and will govern our practice beginning this month.

### **Transportation**

This September, 62,478 students have been bussed by STOPR; 19,994 Catholic students are bussed daily.

Stopr has contract a fleet of 1,280 buses to run each day in our community with a total of 5,460 daily bus runs.

Stopr has implemented 94 integrated ridership routes this year. This new process has had a very smooth transition over the past four weeks.

STOPR staff responded to 1,950 calls during the first week of the school. They addressed the placement of eligible students on busses and resolved routing issues.

The newly created businfo.stor.ca web site received over 35,718 contacts from August 29 to September 9, where parents were able to access information regarding route timetables, bus stop location and late bus arrivals. This is a new and seemly well used innovation by STOPR.

### **Technology**

For this September:

- Installed 212 Smart Boards over the last 18 weeks. With these, we now have a total of 675 board-wide, since July 2007.
- During the summer, approximately 800 computers were refreshed.
- In preparation for the upgrade to Windows 7, a total of 3000 desktops in secondary received a memory upgrade.
- All elementary main offices were upgraded to Windows 7
- Two secondary schools were upgraded to Windows 7. This involved approximately 400 computers.
- Our first elementary school (Our Lady of Lourdes) using all Windows technology was set up.

### **Eco Green Schools**

One third of our schools are certified as Green Schools. One of our System Goals is that another third of our schools receive green certification this year.

This review of our work in September has resulted in many superintendents, trustees, administrators, teachers, and support staff indicating that this year's start up was one of the smoothest in recent memory. This is not by accident. We made sure that our perception matched reality, and it started last February with this board.

Madam Chair I would like to conclude by thanking all involved in the Dufferin-Peel Family, for their hard work in helping make this year's start up a great one for our students and the families that we serve. Thank you.