Catholic Education in Dufferin-Peel
REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY - FALL 2015

Message from Mario Pascucci, Chair of the Board

We are now well into the opening weeks of the 2015-16 school year and I trust that it has been a positive start for parents, guardians and students alike. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I welcome those of you who are new to our Dufferin-Peel Catholic school community, as well as those whose children are returning. I also welcome those who do not have children in our system, but are Dufferin-Peel supporters. We appreciate your continued interest in, and support for, Catholic education.

As trustees, we take pride in our students, schools and distinctly Catholic school system. We look forward to meeting you during the upcoming months. We encourage you to be involved in your child’s education and engaged in the life of your child’s school by attending school activities and events, including Catholic school council meetings.

I encourage you to visit our Board website at www.dpcdsb.org and follow us on Twitter @DPCDSBSchools to keep abreast of happenings across the Board.

May God bless you and continue to keep you and your family during the coming year.

Message from John B. Kostoff, Director of Education

This publication, along with our Twitter feed, regular trustee and school newsletters, Director’s Annual Report and other communications, are all part of our effort to keep the community apprised of the many successful events and activities that are taking place in the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board.

This publication demonstrates the success this Board has had in many areas. We all know that Catholic education is both a choice and a unique gift to the community. This publication demonstrates what we provide to the community, and to your children, each and every day. Thank you for choosing Catholic education - it is an investment in your child’s future and a worthwhile one.

As this will be my last report to the entire school community, due to my retirement, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Dufferin-Peel community for the opportunity to serve and lead Catholic education in our region. It has been an honour and privilege to serve the students, community and staff of Dufferin-Peel over these many years, and in doing so, witness so many outstanding accomplishments as an education system.

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This document will give you a glimpse of some of the work done within our system over the past few months. As well, it features some of the many recent successes we have experienced as a system during this time.

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NEW for the 2015-16 school year!

Dufferin-Peel unveils enhanced outdoor learning environments for early learners

Kindergarten students at 25 Dufferin-Peel Catholic elementary schools are enjoying newly enhanced outdoor learning environments in their Kindergarten playground areas.

The playgrounds include several different areas and elements that stimulate creative and active learning, including: a large sand area, classroom area with blackboard and tree trunk seating, wooden gazebo with seating and flower boxes, paved areas with bike paths and other markings, and storage. A centerpiece to each outdoor learning environment is an animal indigenous to Ontario (i.e. bear, raccoon and owl) that has been carved from reclaimed wood.

These new outdoor learning areas are part of Phase 2 of a multi-year initiative. An annual process has been put in place to create outdoor early learning environments at the remaining elementary schools.

St. Sofia School celebrates official reopening

On September 8, the St. Sofia School community in Mississauga celebrated the official reopening of the school following a one-year renovation project, which included an eight classroom addition, expansion of the gymnasium, installation of a barrier-free lift, as well as improvements to the Kiss’n Ride, parking areas, washrooms and mechanical systems.

Board opens two new Child Care Centres

Dufferin-Peel opened two new child care centres this school year at St. Peter School in Orangeville and St. Raphael School in Mississauga. The child care centres are operated by YMCA of Greater Ontario (St. Peter) and PLASP Child Care Services (St. Raphael). Each site will serve 31 toddlers and preschool aged children. Parents who are interested in registering their child should call the child care operator directly.

Cardinal Leger Secondary School in Brampton unveiled its new athletic playing field, named after the Honourable William G. (Bill) Davis with a blessing and dedication on September 22. Mr. Davis is a long-time Brampton resident and Catholic education supporter, who served as Ontario’s 18th Premier from 1971-1985. The field is an engineered soccer field which conforms to FIFA Standards allowing a professional level of soccer competition.
New Confirmation Program
Within the Archdiocese of Toronto, preparation for the sacraments is the responsibility of the parish, family and the school working in collaboration with one another. Schools look after the remote preparation (the background information about the sacrament), while the parish does the immediate preparation. Parents and guardians play a pivotal role in the sacraments by their living example and daily witness to the sacraments and prayer life.

Commencing in the fall of 2015, parishes within the Archdiocese of Toronto will be offering preparation to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation for students in Grade 7. Traditionally, the sacrament had been received in Grade 8, but in a move to separate it as a “graduation” ritual, it is moving to Grade 7. Students will then have a year of elementary school to reflect on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how best they can use them in the service of others.

To assist teachers with the preparation for this sacrament, a resource program was developed by the Board for implementation this fall. The program will be used in conjunction with the current Religious Education book, Stand by Me. It is designed to give students an overview of Confirmation, information on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, an update on Creed and prayer, and how they can use these as they live a Christian life. Scripture citations, vocations resources, and material on saints, fruits of the Holy Spirit round out the curriculum package.

Revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum
In February, the Ministry of Education released its revised curriculum for Health and Physical Education.

We are working with the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO) and the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) to ensure that the content taught in our schools is delivered through our distinctly Catholic lens in a way that is faithful to our Catholic teachings.

As is our practice, the component on Human Development and Sexual Health will be taught as part of our Fully Alive Family Life/Religious Education program in the spring of 2016.

Fostering a culture of excellence
Our students continue to meet or exceed provincial EQAO averages
Dufferin-Peel students continue to meet or exceed provincial EQAO averages. Results from Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments of reading, writing and mathematics have climbed consistently and steadily over time; the proportion of Dufferin-Peel students who are achieving at, or above, the provincial standard in Grades 3, 6 and 9 assessments, as well as the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), continues to meet or exceed provincial averages.

This can be attributed to the culture and tradition of excellence that is fostered through all areas of Dufferin-Peel. This culture of excellence includes the hard work of teachers, support staff, administrators, senior management and trustees, whose vision, guidance and allocation of resources provide our students with ongoing opportunities for success.

Results from the spring 2015 EQAO assessments will be released in late September.

Dufferin-Peel graduation rate continues to climb
Dufferin-Peel students continue to graduate from secondary school at a higher rate than the provincial average. To support the diverse learning needs of all students, a variety of programming options are available, including Specialist High Skills Major program, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship program (OYAP), International Baccalaureate program, Dual Credits, Pathways, eLearning and Blended Learning. These opportunities help to ensure that students complete their journey to becoming Ontario Catholic School Graduates.

Technology
This past summer was a busy one for the Board’s Information and Communication Technology (ICT) staff. Among technology-related projects:

- Configured 600 iPads for Special Education
- Implemented mobile carts in schools with over 400 devices (laptops and iPads)
- Refreshed over 4,000 computers

Dufferin-Peel’s Adult and Continuing Education centres offer a range of programs for students of all ages, including: secondary night school, adult credit courses, professional and language training, and general interest classes. Over the past summer:

- 14,739 learners enrolled in Continuing Education courses
- 1,100 learners enrolled in Adult Credit programs

The Fall 2015 Course Guide is now available online at www.dpcdsb.org. Registration is now open.
Summer Programs

The Board's summer programs successfully supported 10,000 elementary, secondary and adult students in a variety of programs, including: elementary literacy camps, Focus on Youth summer camps, mathematics programs, international study tours, mission trips, secondary summer school, Co-operative Education, eLearning and Adult general and credit programs.

Summer Institute

This year marked the 20th anniversary of Dufferin-Peel's Summer Institute, which provides an opportunity for educators to grow professionally through self-selected professional development. This year's institute offered 97 professional development sessions to over 1,800 participants.

Korean Teacher Training

51 teachers from Korea received training in English instruction through the Dufferin-Peel Catholic Institute for International Education.

Approval of Capital Priorities

The Board's Capital Priorities were submitted to the Ministry of Education on July 15. We anticipate that the Ministry will announce funding for approved projects sometime in the fall/winter.

Facility Renewal Projects/Site Preparation

Seventy-two facility renewal projects were initiated over the summer. Projects included roof repairs, painting, plumbing, electrical, accessibility enhancements and flooring. Maintenance staff also completed 76 projects related to outdoor space. Work included new signage, fencing, landscaping projects and upgrades to existing playfields.

St. John XXIII School in Mississauga was one of the facility renewal projects undertaken by the Board. Director of Education, John Kostoff, recently visited the school.

Have you seen us around town?

The Board is continuing to build public awareness of our Catholic schools with the branding of our maintenance vehicles with vehicle wraps featuring our students and tagline...Extraordinary lives start with a great Catholic education.
Support Catholic Education - Are you ticked?

Did you know that unless the municipality is notified, the school support designation on your property taxes, for assessment purposes, automatically defaults to public school support when an individual or family moves to a new address. This may have an impact on students’ eligibility to attend Catholic elementary schools, trustee representation on school boards, and on government perception of support for Catholic education.

To find out about your school support designation, or to receive more information, call our Admissions Department at 905-890-0708 ext. 24512.