

October 2024

This month's virtue of EMPATHY reminds us of our responsibility to uphold the dignity of all persons and care for one another. As part of our Catholic identity, we believe the cross is the ultimate sign of compassion and forgiveness. Empathy is integral to supporting our students in their academic learning and in nurturing their relationship with Christ.

Student Transportation Update and Service Delivery – In preparation for the 2024-2025 school year, Student Transportation of Peel Region (STOPR) worked closely with our school bus operators to ensure a successful startup. Each operator reported success in hiring, training, and retaining drivers for the upcoming school year. All operators had dedicated drivers assigned to every route beginning on the first day of school. STOPR continues to monitor all contracted bus operators daily to ensure that any potential driver challenges and/or service delays are reported and addressed, as quickly as possible.

The First-Time Rider Program is an educational and awareness program for families, designed to introduce young children, new riders, and parents/guardians to riding a school bus. This informative program is hosted annually in August by our local school bus operators. The presentation includes a safety video, on-board instruction, and a fun bus ride. The 2024 program was offered at eight schools across Peel Region with approximately 498 students from both the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) and the Peel District School Board attending in-person. The First-Time Rider Program was also available in an online format at: <https://www.stopr.ca/> for families to participate virtually.

The courtesy ridership process for the 2024-2025 school year began in the third week of September. Schools identified and approved courtesy seats for students starting as early as September 16, 2024. STOPR assigns courtesy students to buses, where space is available.

School Bus Safety Week is October 21-25, 2024. Parents/guardians are encouraged to visit the STOPR website <https://www.stopr.ca/> to view school bus safety videos



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I was hungry and
you gave me food. I
was thirsty and you
gave me drink. I was a
stranger and you
welcomed me.

- *Mathew 25:35*



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with their children. School Bus Driver Appreciation Day is on Wednesday October 23, 2024. Our school bus drivers are highly skilled professionals and we thank them for the important work they do to ensure our students get to and from school safely every day.

2024-2025 MYSP – The 2023-2027 Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) informs the direction of system operations and is fundamental to developing educational programs for students. In 2023-2024, our MYSP was shared across the system and externally with all DPCDSB partners, members, and stakeholders. As per the Ministry of Education requirements, the DPCDSB released the Fall MYSP Evaluation Survey last month to help monitor MYSP values and gather feedback. The survey closes on October 31, 2024. Learn more:

<https://www3.dpcdsb.org/Documents/COMMUNITY%20INFORMATION%20BULLETIN%20MYSP%20Survey%20September%2016%202024.pdf>

DPCDSB Treasury Report – *Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 41/10 - Board Borrowing, Investing and Other Financial Matters*, under the *Education Act*, requires all school boards to bring forward investment information to the Board of Trustees. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, DPCDSB continued to borrow money to meet operating expenditure obligations. Borrowing was necessary as a result of the deficit financial position of the DPCDSB, no accumulated surplus funds and timing differences between our collection of revenues from municipalities and the province, and expenditure payment schedules. DPCDSB has borrowing resolutions approved by the Board of Trustees for operating and capital needs, as follows:

- \$150 million – Temporary Borrowing Resolution related to operating needs.
- \$65 million – Temporary Borrowing Resolution related to capital needs.

The Ministry of Education has been working with DPCDSB to address cash management challenges, however, the primary tool to assist the board is to front-load Core Education (Core Ed) Grant payments. By yearend, this results in less transfer payments and pressure on temporary borrowing as the front-loaded amounts must be recovered before the end of August in any given year. To assist with current cash flow pressures, the September 2024 payment was advanced on September 5, 2024. The next tax instalment from municipalities was scheduled to be received by September 30, 2024.

Homework and Curriculum Expectations – As a faith-based system, the DPCDSB approaches all issues from a Catholic world view that recognizes the importance of family time, and honours the bonds between school, family, and parish. Homework, which plays an important role in the relationship between the school and the family, is defined by the Ministry of Education in *Growing Success* as “*work that students do at home to practice skills, consolidate knowledge and skills, and/or prepare for the next class.*” Given the importance of balancing learning and home/family life, the DPCDSB has a homework policy to support students as they balance their personal and school lives. To ensure that the process for implementing homework is reflective of DPCDSB values and practices, Policy 10.00: *Homework – Kindergarten to Grade 12, Including Students with Modified Curriculum Expectations and Alternative Curriculum Expectations* has been updated. Parents/guardians who have concerns

with homework expectations for their child(ren) should contact their child(ren)'s teacher(s) and/or school administrators.

There is no requirement that homework be assigned daily for students. When homework is assigned, it must be directly related to *what the student is learning in class* and has the following characteristics:

- is meaningful and relevant;
- is purposefully planned to avoid student overload;
- is clearly articulated by the teacher and understood by students;
- is differentiated, as appropriate, to meet student learning needs;
- is reviewed in a timely manner.

Our school administrators support the value of homework by:

- ensuring school-wide understanding and consistent implementation of homework procedures;
- coordinating school-wide resources and practice to support homework;
- providing information to parents about homework procedures and how to access community supports.

Eco Schools Certifications – *EcoSchools Canada* (formerly Ontario EcoSchools) was created by a consortium of education stakeholders to address environmental issues in the formal education system. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) has been engaged by the Region of Peel to assist with the implementation of the *EcoSchools Program* in Peel schools. The *Peel EcoSchools Project* is structured as a joint initiative with TRCA, EcoSchools Canada, Region of Peel, the Peel District School Board and DPCDSB. For eleven years in a row 100 percent of our DPCDSB schools have attained Eco Schools certification status. DPCDSB accomplishments and commitments to stewardship and sustainable practices have been achieved through platinum, gold, silver and bronze certifications. The collaborative efforts of Board staff, educators, administrators and school Eco-Teams have been instrumental in the success of environmental initiatives geared to conserving our natural resources and reducing our carbon footprint on the planet. Congratulations to the following Mississauga West DPCDSB schools that achieved platinum status for the 2023-2024 school year including: St Elizabeth Seton CES, St Edith Stein CES, St John of the Cross CES, St Sebastian CES, St Albert of Jerusalem CES, St Aloysius Gonzaga CSS, Our Lady of Mercy CES, St Simon Stock CES, St Teresa of Avila CES and St Faustina CES.

Board-wide 2023-2024 Key Statistics from Eco Schools Certification Applications

- 131 DPCDSB schools participated in Earth Day activities;
- 133 DPCDSB schools participated in The Great Gulp;
- 118 DPCDSB schools participated in Earth Hour;
- 127 DPCDSB schools participated in National Sweater Day;
- 96 DPCDSB schools organized and completed Waste-Free Lunch campaigns;
- 170 various planting actions were completed by DPCDSB schools;

- 2,584 total Eco Schools actions were completed across DPCDSB;
- 3,010 students were part of their schools' Eco Clubs.

Extended Excursions – The DPCDSB has a rich tradition of offering students the opportunity to participate in extended excursions as an enhancement to their regular program of study. Local schools offer these through educational travel, social justice, and special programs. Proposals for consideration are submitted by schools including the rationale, documentation, itinerary, budget, and approved Tour Operator information. Our Catholic faith is reflected in all itineraries including an expectation that all students and supervisors attend a Catholic Mass on all Sundays during the trip. Schools do not sign any contracts, deposit student/parent funds, or make any form of commitment to students and families until the excursion is approved by the Associate Director of Instructional Services, the Board's Legal Department and is presented to the Board of Trustees for receipt. All extended excursions should take place during Christmas, March break, or summer breaks, with no more than two (2) instructional days being missed, although exceptions may apply for special circumstances. Appropriate steps are in place to ensure students have opportunities to make up assignments and/or assessments during the missed instructional day(s). Appropriate levels of supervision are in place in keeping with the Board's policies. A communication plan must be made available to parents. All participants are expected to purchase cancellation insurance, and medical coverage/insurance appropriate to the excursion is required. The DPCDSB has a duty to provide Catholic conditions for the safety, well-being and learning of all within our community. Staff will continue to monitor the threats associated with international travel as we move forward with future extended excursion trips.

WISHING YOU ALL A HAPPY THANKGIVING!



HERMAN VILORIA
Trustee, Mississauga Ward 2 & 8

UPCOMING DATES

OCTOBER – MONTH DEDICATED TO OUR BLESSED MOTHER MARY

October 1 – Memorial of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus

October 2 – Walk to School Day (Provincial), Memorial of The Holy Guardian Angels

October 3 - Parent ProGrant Session: Preparing Your Child with Differing Abilities for the Sacraments In-Person

October 4 – Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi

October 5 – World Teacher Day (International), Memorial of St. Faustina Kowalska

October 6 – Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 7 – Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary, Empowering Women Day

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October 6-12 – Fire Prevention Week

October 9 – Parent ProGrant Session: Navigating the Individual Education Plan Virtual Information Session

October 10 – World Mental Health Day

October 11 – Memorial of St. John XXIII, International Day of the Girl

October 11 – PA Day (Elementary & Secondary)

October 13 – Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 14 – Thanksgiving Day – No school for students

October 15 – Memorial of St. Teresa of Jesus

October 16 – World Food Day, The Feast of St. Marguerite d'Youville

October 17 – The Feast of St. Ignatius of Antioch

October 18 – The Feast of St. Luke, Evangelist

October 20 – Twenty Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time World, World Mission Sunday

October 21-25 – National School Bus Safety Week

October 23 – Bus Driver Appreciation Day

October 24 – Child Care Worker & ECE Appreciation Day (Provincial)

October 25 – Dress Purple Day (October is Child Abuse Prevention Month)

October 27 – Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 28 – The Feast of St. Simon and St. Jude, Apostles

October 31 – Halloween