

BOARD MEETING

HIGHLIGHTS

October 2018



Hamilton-Wentworth
Catholic District School Board
Believing, Achieving, Serving

Individuals recognized for Distinguished Service to Catholic Education

Trustees, at the October 16 Special Meeting of the Board, approved the selection of the following individuals for the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board's 2018 Awards for Distinguished Service to Catholic Education: Nancy Castura, a teacher at St. Mary Catholic Secondary School; Jenny Frappa, Principal of St. Marguerite d'Youville Catholic Elementary School; Jerry Ponikvar, Retired Director of Education (1990-1995); and Teresa Susi, Assistant Custodian Trainer at the Thomas Mahony Building. The award recipients will be honoured at a Special Liturgy & Presentation at Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King on November 27, 2018.

Board approves revisions to By-Laws & Regulations

Trustees, at the October 2 Committee of the Whole Meeting, approved revisions to the By-Laws & Regulations. The proposed revisions were presented to trustees for review at an earlier board meeting. Please reference [Board Meeting Highlights – August/September 2018](#) for details.

OCSTA announces 2019 Catholic Education Week theme

This year's Catholic Education Week celebration takes place on May 5-10, 2019. The theme, "Catholic Education: Living as Joyful Disciples" was inspired by three sources, including the Ontario Bishops' pastoral letter on Catholic education, *Renewing the Promise*. Mindful of the recent *Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*, the theme was directed to young people in our schools, specifically to their growth in holiness and formation as disciples of Christ through the discernment of vocational pathways. Catholic Education Week is marked by special activities at all grade levels, including prayer celebrations and service activities.

Secondary Student Council Leadership Retreat develops Catholic leadership skills

An annual leadership retreat was held for secondary school council members at Camp Brébeuf on September 17 & 18. The retreat experience was established in 2003 to develop students' Catholic leadership potential, strengthen relationships among school councils, and build a support network for the coming year. This year's theme, "You are God's microphone," was taken from Archbishop Romero and challenged students to incorporate Catholic teachings into activities back at their schools. The retreat concluded with a student commissioning ceremony.

Tell Them From Me survey measures students' school climate perceptions

As legislated by *Bill 13: Accepting Schools Act*, school boards are required to conduct an anonymous school climate survey every two years. The *Tell Them From Me* online survey is administered each year to Grade 4-12 students from one of three cohorts of schools. The survey measures factors that influence student engagement. Survey data revealed the following:

- 82% of elementary and 67% of secondary students have a positive sense of belonging;
- 88% of elementary and 76% of secondary students have positive peer relationships;
- 24% of elementary and 27% of secondary students report moderate to high levels of anxiety;

- 23% of secondary students report moderate to high levels of depression;
- 76% of secondary students report experiencing positive self-esteem;
- 26% of elementary students and 15% of secondary students experience bullying or exclusion at school;
- 61% of elementary students and 58% of secondary students feel safe attending school.

Findings show that targeted, individual school interventions utilizing evidence-based, anti-bullying strategies are having a positive effect on bullying and exclusion in elementary and secondary schools. While the rates of reported anxiety and depression have declined over the past three years, they continue to exceed the national average. To address this problem, the board has appointed 9 Child & Youth Workers and 2 additional Social Workers to provide expanded direct service to students. Other strategies include mental health training for staff, Christian Meditation, Tools for Life, Restorative Practices, and increased physical activity.

Catholic School Student Achievement Visits (CSSAV) promote best practices

A report on Catholic School Student Achievement Visits (CSSAV), presented to trustees, outlined how collaborative practices increase student achievement. The CSSAV process was created to support the implementation and monitoring of the School Improvement Plan. Each year ten elementary and two secondary schools, grouped into six learning pods, are identified for visits. The process includes a pre-visit to examine school practices; a visit to CSSAV school classrooms where student feedback, observations, photographs, recordings and data are captured; a debrief and sharing session; and a post-symposium in which school improvement work is presented during a principal's meeting. Research shows that teachers can achieve more when they work together (Visible Learning, 2018).

Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement 2017-2018 report summary

A BIPSA 2017-2018 report summary presented to trustees on Sept. 18 provided an overview of initiatives implemented over the past year to support students in the areas of faith, academics, wellness and service. The Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement provides the framework for individual School Improvement Plans with goals and targeted actions to support student achievement in the three pillars of Believing, Achieving and Serving. Highlights from the 'Believing' pillar include expanded Christian Service opportunities, purchase of new religious education curriculum resources and faith activities such as the annual pilgrimage and Faith Day. For 'Achieving,' activities included CSSAVs, school coding experiences, ESL/ELL development programs, math gap closing, K-12 technology integration and literacy/numeracy interventions. In the 'Serving' area, the Board continues to explore pathways professional learning and mental wellness interventions. Findings will be used to inform the 2018-2019 BIPSA.

St. Charles 2018 Summer Program Update

Close to 4,700 learners participated in summer programs through St. Charles Adult and Continuing Education in 2018. Elementary summer offerings included International Languages, Grade 7 Maker Camp, Grade 8/9 Exploration and Creator Camp, Passport to Grade 9, and Reach Ahead Integrated Arts for a total enrolment of 1,965 elementary students. International Languages remains the largest of the elementary summer programs, serving 1,190 students in 9 languages. At the secondary level, 2,125 students registered for credit programs at Cathedral High School, St. Thomas More and Bishop Ryan Catholic Secondary Schools. Options were offered in in-class, e-learning, independent study and co-op. More than 400 adult learners participated in summer Literacy & Basic Skills (LBS), ESL and self-paced credit programs.

Trustees review interim financial statements

Trustees, on October 2, received interim financial statements for the second quarter ending June 30, 2018. The statements include a Consolidated Summary of Financial Results, Summary of Enrolment and Statement of Expenses for the ten months ending June 30. The report compared the actual year-to-date expenses and revenues for the period ending June to revised estimates as filed in December 2017 and to prior year. Interim financial statements provide a mid-year measure of the board's financial position and are used for decision-making and risk management. Financial oversight is one of the key responsibilities of the Board of Trustees.

HWCDSB invests in iPad technology

The HWCDSB will be purchasing between 1500 and 2000 iPads in 2018-2019 to replace older models as part of a five-year refresh cycle. The Apple iPad is used in a variety of educational practices that support student learning. Currently there are roughly 9,200 units (including 2,000 deployed to Special Education students) in use in our elementary and secondary schools. The purchase will enable the board to maintain its elementary school 4:1 student to mobile device ratio. The total expenditure for the iPads is anticipated to be between \$770,000 and \$1,045,000.

HWCDSB recruitment and hiring report

A statistical report presented to trustees on Oct. 2 outlined recruitment strategies undertaken by the Human Resources Department in 2017-2018 to attract and retain qualified candidates for positions within the HWCDSB. Of the 328 new hires, 167 were occasional teachers, 28 Designated Early Childhood Educators, 78 Educational Assistants, 10 Custodians, 13 Assistant Custodians, 25 Secretaries and 8 professional administrative support staff. More than 1,500 applications were received by the board. There continues to be a province-wide shortage of French and Technology teachers. HR recruitment strategies to address the shortfall include the Apply to Education web-based employment management tool, as well as various outreach methods, including job fairs and internal/external job websites and social media platforms.

Student & Staff Awards & Recognition

Congratulations to the following students, staff and schools on their recent accomplishments:

- Regina Mundi CES, St. Marguerite d'Youville CES, St. Francis Xavier CES, St. Clare of Assisi CES, St. Brigid CES, St. Michael CES and Cardinal Newman CSS were certified as OPHEA Healthy Schools in June 2018 after successfully completing the 6 steps to Healthy Schools process during the 2017-2018 school year. Ophea's Healthy Schools Certification recognizes and celebrates school communities for promoting and enhancing the health and well-being of students, school staff, and the broader community.
- Sheldon Francis, a teacher and coach at Bishop Ryan CSS, and Stefanie West-Howorun, at teacher at St. Thomas More CSS, were inducted into McMaster University's Athletics Hall of Fame. Both were recognized for their wrestling achievements. Also honoured were Matthew Fortuna, a teacher at St. Jean de Brébeuf CSS, and Michael Grilli, a teacher at St. Patrick CES, who were members of the Marauders' national title-winning 1997 baseball team.
- Mary Begadon, a teacher at St. Teresa of Avila CES, Cynthia Lolua, a teacher at Our Lady of the Assumption CES, and Michael Stechey, a teacher at St. Thomas the Apostle CES, received Bishop's Medals at the C.Y.O. Annual General Meeting on Sept. 19 in honour of their dedication and long-term service to the youth of the Dioceses.