

BOARD MEETING

HIGHLIGHTS

November 2018



Hamilton-Wentworth
Catholic District School Board

Believing, Achieving, Serving

Pilgrimage presents opportunity for authentic Christian witness

Several thousand students and staff participated in this year's 15th annual "Walk with Christ: Justice for the Poor" Pilgrimage on Sunday, October 14. The pilgrimage began with a mass at Cathedral High School celebrated by His Excellency Bishop Anthony Tonno, followed by an 8-kilometre walk along the Escarpment Trail to St. Anthony Daniel Catholic Elementary School. The annual pilgrimage provides an opportunity for students to participate in authentic Christian witness through an experience of solidarity with people in the Global South. The walk represents a pledge on their part to commit to changing the conditions that prevent people from living a full human life. Since its inception, the pilgrimage has raised almost \$650,000 to support development projects and emergency relief in some of the world's poorest countries.

Trustee Paul DiFrancesco thanked for service

On November 6, in what has become a tradition at the board, Paul DiFrancesco – who will step down as Trustee at the end of November – was presented with the official nameplate that has marked his place at the Board table for the past 8 years. DiFrancesco was elected in October 2010 as one of two trustees for Wards 9, 10 and 11. He served on numerous committees, including International Languages, Policy Review, Supervised Alternative Learning, Resolutions & Awards, and the Parent Conference. Beyond his outstanding service, "he will be remembered for his insight into many of the important student achievement and faith formation issues in our Catholic school system," said Chairperson Patrick Daly. "Paul has been a wonderful colleague and strong advocate for Catholic education. We thank him for his tremendous service and wish him well."

2017-2018 EQAO results provide measure of student achievement

EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) results for the [Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board](#) continue to show sustained improvement. On October 16, 2017-2018 results for Grade 3 and Grade 6 Reading, Writing and Math, Grade 9 Mathematics and the Grade 10 OSSLT were presented to trustees, including a breakdown by cohort, gender and Equal Opportunities schools. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Chairperson Patrick Daly congratulated and thanked members of the administration, principals/vice-principals, support staff and especially teachers for their outstanding work and commitment to the academic excellence and well-being of the students in our schools. Key findings show that the HWCDSB ranked 4th highest in the province in Grade 6 writing and was tied in 6th place in Grade 6 math. A historical comparison of results from 2000 to present shows increases of 20-30% in Primary and Junior Reading and Writing, and increases of 4-6% in Primary and Junior Math. Results for Grade 9 Academic and Applied Math were 82% and 42% respectively. In OSSLT, 76% of students achieved Level 3/4 compared to 79% provincially. Data from EQAO assessments are used to drive improvement at the student, school and school board level, and together with other indicators of student achievement provide a complete picture of student skills, abilities and knowledge.

Board reviews French Immersion expansion

A report, presented on Nov. 6, provided an update on a French Immersion expansion analysis initiated by trustees in April 2017. Currently 1,208 elementary students attend French Immersion programs at St. Eugene, St. Joseph and Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Elementary Schools, which represents 4.6% of the Board's elementary population. Another 157 students are enrolled in the secondary FI program at Cathedral High School. The number of students in Kindergarten French Immersion has doubled since the introduction of Full Day Kindergarten in 2012-2013, to the point that 2 of the schools are facing FI enrolment challenges due to accommodation limitations. A survey launched in Jan. 2018, provided feedback on the current delivery model and offered suggestions on how the program can be enhanced in the future. Next steps include identifying potential locations for elementary and secondary expansion of the FI program based on preferred neighbourhoods, enrolment projections and availability of space. The committee will also analyze the costs for staffing, transportation and resources for the recommended expansion sites. Its recommendations will be presented to trustees in early 2019.

Elementary class size compliance and enrolment update 2018-2019

As per Ministry memo 2018: SB 14, *Elementary Class Size Reporting for 2018-2019*, school boards are required to organize their Kindergarten (FDK) and elementary classes to conform on a board-wide basis with class size requirements set out in O. Reg. 13212 of the Education Act. Detailed reports of elementary class size, based on a count date (September 24, 2018), must be submitted to the Ministry of Education by October 31 of each school year. Data submitted by the HWCDSB, using the September 24 enrolment of 18,776 FTE (full-time equivalency), indicate compliance with the following elementary class size requirements:

Elementary class size organization	Ministry	HWCDSB
FDK classes with 29 or fewer students	90%	100%
FDK classes with 32 or fewer students	100%	100%
Average FDK class	< /= 26	23.8
Primary classes with 20 or fewer students	90%	91.4%
Primary classes with 23 or fewer students	100%	100%
Combined Grade 3-4 classes with 23 or fewer students	100%	100%
Average Junior/Intermediate class	24.79	24.73

Parent Conference “weaves Catholic partnership” of parish, home, school

The Parent Conference was established 26 years ago to bring parents and educators together as a faith community in the shared endeavor of Catholic education, provide a venue for parents/Catholic school councils to network and share best practices, and support parents through workshops, keynote speakers and exhibits. This year's conference was held on Nov. 3 at Bishop Ryan Catholic Secondary School, and was attended by approximately 150 guests.

Childcare Update: Before- and after-school guidelines and programming 2018

Ontario school boards are mandated to provide before/after school programs (BASP) for K-Grade 6 students at all elementary schools, subject to demand. Currently, the HWCDSB offers BASP at 47 sites. In July 2018, the Ministry released an updated version of *Before and After School Programs Kindergarten–Grade 6* whose policies and guidelines have been amended to reflect feedback from a community consultation completed in Feb. 2018. The policies and

guidelines define what is an “authorized recreation program.” The majority of before/after school programs are offered by Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Child Care Corporation (HWCCCC) Inc.; 4 others are provided by Today’s Family, Heritage Green, St. Joachim and YWCA/St. John. Programming is also available in Early Years and Childcare, birth to age 3.8, at various sites.

Board Improvement Plan identifies strategies for Student Achievement

The [Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement \(BIPSA\) 2018-2019](#), approved by trustees on October 16, represents a clear commitment on the part of all staff to the mission, vision and values of the Board “to enable all learners to realize the fullness of humanity of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the model.” The BIPSA offers specific goals and strategies to support each of the pillars of “Believing, Achieving, Serving.” The plan includes monitoring and data sources that will be collected throughout the school year to show evidence of student achievement and well-being. Indicators of success are also listed to enable staff to monitor improvement.

Physical Literacy projects support student learning and well-being

An update on Physical Literacy outlined initiatives implemented by the HWCDSB in 2018-2019 to support students’ physical literacy. On Sept. 18, 98 staff from the HWCDSB attended the Ontario Physical Literacy Summit at Redeemer University to build teacher capacity in developing strategies to improve students’ physical literacy and physical fitness levels. The summit offered over 40 workshops, including a keynote address by Dr. Ian Pike on adventurous play. In other activities, the HWCDSB has partnered with Rising Stars in the 2nd year of a 3-year “Hamilton Moves” project to build teacher capacity in the delivery of essential fundamental movement skills in physical education classes. St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School was chosen as the host site for the launch of the project. A 3rd initiative, The Recess Project, focused on improving physical literacy through quality recess opportunities and supports. L.E.A.D. (Linking the School, Energy on the Playground, All Play, Dynamic Leaders) recesses have been introduced at St. Lawrence, Sts. Peter and Paul, Regina Mundi and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Elementary Schools. Beyond the benefits of physical literacy on body health, physical activity is also associated with better cognition, brain function and mental health.

Funding provided for childcare playground enhancements

Childcare facilities at 13 HWCDSB schools will receive playground enhancements, thanks to funding from the City of Hamilton’s Child Care Services Department. Existing playgrounds will be converted into natural playgrounds which provide a variety of rich, stimulating experiences and environments for a wide range of play. Playground elements include log benches, planters, tunnels, stump activity tables and seats, chalkboards, sandboxes, mud kitchens, mulch and trees. Schools were chosen based on their commitment to the Hamilton Early Years Quality Program. They include: St. Ann (Hamilton); St. Bernadette; St. David; St. Francis Xavier; Holy Name of Jesus; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. Marguerite d’Youville; St. Matthew; Our Lady of Mt. Carmel; St. Vincent de Paul; St. Joachim; Cathedral High School; and St. Thomas More CSS. Each site will receive \$35,000 for the natural playground design and reconstruction, with the exception of St. Thomas More which was awarded \$135,000 as a larger scale project.

Trustees approve modification to Rural and Northern Education Funding eligibility

St. Mary Catholic Secondary School was added to the list of schools eligible for Rural and Northern Education Funding (RNEF). Schools are considered rural when at least half of its students came from rural communities. St. Mary CSS will be allocated \$25,000 while Our Lady

of Mt. Carmel, Our Lady of the Assumption and St. Matthew Catholic Elementary Schools will each be apportioned \$10,000 of the funds. The remaining \$2,132 will be used for Board level expenses. RNEF is intended to improve education for students from rural communities and can be used toward operational expenses and support services.

Windows replaced at Blessed Sacrament

A window replacement project at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Elementary School was awarded to Welland Glass and Entrances Inc. for the amount of \$168,675.15. The window replacement is part of Phase II renovations at Blessed Sacrament CES to accommodate the move of Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Child Care Corporation (HWCCCC) Inc. to the second floor of the school and ready the first floor for the displaced classrooms. Blessed Sacrament was identified through the annual Community Planning and Facility Partnership Initiative as having excess capacity.

Student & Staff Awards & Recognition

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

- Cierrah Warnick, a Grade 11 student at Bishop Ryan CSS was presented with the Spirit of Hope Award at the annual St. Joseph's Healthcare Mental Health Morning on Oct. 2 for her contributions in advancing knowledge of, and advocating for mental health;
- Five graduates from the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board were recognized for academic excellence and community service at the 23rd annual African Caribbean Cultural Potpourri Inc. youth scholarship banquet on October 20th. They include: Jessica Bistawrous, Cathedral HS; Ruth Masuka, St. Jean de Brébeuf CSS; Emily Radcliffe, Bishop Ryan CSS; Jonathan Bowen, St. Thomas More CSS, and Oghogho Asemota, Cathedral HS.
- Charlie Agro, Vice-Principal at St. Thomas More CSS, was recognized by Business Link Media Group as one of Hamilton's Top 40 Under Forty at the 5th Annual Business Achievement Awards on Sept. 19. The award recognizes individuals under 40 who consistently make their mark in business and contribute regularly to their respective communities.