



InTouch

Great EQAO Scores Across the Board

EQAO results were released late last week. In all three categories of Reading, Writing and Math, Thunder Bay Catholic outperformed the province in both Grades 3 and 6. "It's so encouraging to see this kind of consistent growth across the Board," said Superintendent of Education Omer Belisle at the September 17 Board Meeting. Excellent results were also achieved in the Grade 10 Literacy Test (OSSLT), and more recently in the Grade 9 math assessment. Superintendent of Education Pino Tassone noted that, "The biggest news in secondary is the dramatic increase in the success of our Applied students. We saw a 14 % improvement in Applied Math scores - very significant because it increases life chances and choices for these students." Both our Applied and Academic students exceeded the Province, with increases in scores at both high schools. Congratulations to all!!

Enrolment Still Strong

As most school boards in Ontario continue to struggle with declining enrolment, Thunder Bay Catholic is holding its own. "We're pleased with our initial numbers and are optimistic that they bode well for the future," said Associate Director Tom Mustapic. "This year, we have 565 Kindergarten students, which is more than what we've seen in the past 10 years. We've also seen a significant enrolment increases at a number of our schools including St. Elizabeth, Pope John Paul II and Holy Cross. Our K - 6 French Immersion schools, St. Bernard and St. Martin, continue to attract large numbers." Although the long-term trend for enrolment points to a decline, the amount of decline this year was very minimal compared to last year. Our enrolment reflects the excellent reputation that our schools enjoy, thanks to the combined efforts of all our staff members.

Director Presents Action Plan

Director of Education, Joan Powell, presented Trustees with a plan for this year, "developed to ensure that we respond to system priorities and comply with Ministry directives and new legislation," said Ms. Powell. The ambitious document includes 12 goals in five key areas: maintaining a strong Catholic school community; high expectations for student achievement and well being; effective communications; excellence in board governance; strong staff relationships; and effective leadership development.

Partners in Sport

Grade 4-6 students are once again working up a sweat at Lakehead University. The very popular Partners in Sport program continues this year, with students participating in a range of activities conducted by university athletes and coaches. A new focus this year will be on Outdoor Education activities that encourage students to engage in active and healthy learning experiences.

Empowering Young Readers

This September, a group of Special Education teachers received two days of intensive training on the Empower Reading program. Developed at Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto, the program is based on 30 years of research into how children with learning disabilities succeed in reading. Last year the program was offered to 12 students who attended at one school; this year, it will be offered to 48 students at five different sites. The program forms part of our board-wide strategy to ensure that all children are reading confidently and efficiently when they reach the Junior grades.

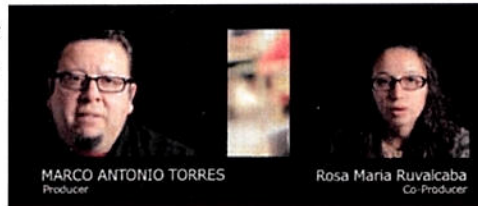


Welcome Back Breakfast A Hit!

To celebrate the beginning of a great new school year, a breakfast was held at the CEC on September 4. Guests included local union presidents, city officials, and business and community leaders who joined Trustees, Senior Team and board staff for conversation and a breakfast buffet. Among the guests were Mayor Keith Hobbs, Tourism Manager Paul Pepe, LU President Brian Stephenson, Confederation College President Jim Madder, Chamber of Commerce President Harold Wilson, Ministry of Education officials and a number of local business leaders. A special feature of the event was the airing of the newly-created video featuring mobile technology in our elementary schools.

Sharing Our Progress with Technology

With all the amazing teaching and learning going on in our K -8 schools using mobile technology, we decided that we needed to chronicle our work. With the help of Apple Canada, we secured the services of two remarkable filmmakers from Los Angeles, CA. Marco Torres and Rosa Ruvalcaba travel all over the world filming innovative practices, particularly innovation using technology. In June, the pair came to Thunder Bay and worked with our elementary students and staff to create an outstanding video highlighting our journey with technology. In a separate video, created at our request, Marco and Rosa recorded their personal impressions of technology in Thunder Bay Catholic. The two videos will soon be available on our website.



CEC Staff Donate to Two Worthy Causes

Throughout the year, staff at the Catholic Education Centre hold inhouse fundraisers for two local charities. This past year, the Regional Food Distribution Association and Harbour Youth Services were the designated beneficiaries. Volker Kromm from the RFDA and Ray Belluz from HY Services visited the CEC this week to receive their cheques of \$860 each. CEC staff organize other fundraising events during the year, including donations to the Faye Peterson, Toys for Tots and Christmas Cheer.

Expanded Special Ed. Team

Increased support and resources will be provided to staff and students this year. Kris Bragnalo, our new Student Success Teacher, brings many years of experience including three years working with students with behavioural needs. Kris is joined by SSP Rob Nigro and together they will be supporting staff and working with students in grades 3 to 8 on positive behavior intervention strategies. SSP Trudy Scavarelli has also been added to the team to provide specialized support for students using assistive devices for communication.

Good Places to Learn

Our facilities team of Joe Drcar and Claude Bourget were busy over the summer managing a number of construction projects. FDK renovations were completed at Holy Family, St. Francis, St. Jude, Corpus Christi and St. Pius X schools. FDK additions were started at St. Bernard and St. Jude. In addition, a variety of maintenance projects were completed, including roofing, landscaping and paving. Going forward this year, FDK renovation projects and new additions at Holy Cross and St. Martin schools will commence. To date, the Board has spent more than \$5 million on FDK renovations and additions.



Thunder Bay Catholic
District School Board

