



# InTouch

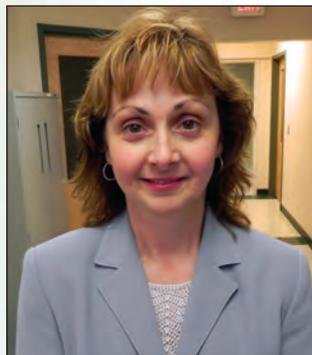
## Welcome Back Breakfast

On September 3, while school staffs were busy preparing for the influx of students, Senior Team hosted a Welcome Back to School event at the Catholic Education Centre. The breakfast was first hosted last year, with the aim of bringing board personnel and community partners together to kick-off another exciting year of teaching and learning at Thunder Bay Catholic! Among this year's 50 guests were local and provincial politicians, city officials, local business leaders, and friends from education, health care and Fort William First Nation. Also in attendance were local union and federation presidents, Trustees, board staff and Senior Team. Director Powell spoke about our commitment to excellence in all our schools, and our specific focus on Academic Success and Student Well-Being, founded on our shared values, virtues and Catholic Graduate Expectations. A highlight of the event was the screening of our **I Am Norm** video.



## Celebrating Norm!

Recently launched at our senior elementary schools and soon to be seen in our high schools is a Well-Being movement called, **I Am Norm**. Students are the leaders in this unique campaign, which begins with an investigation of the question, "What is normal?" Through discussion and reflection, students come to discover that there is no single definition that works. "When we think about it, no two of us are exactly the same," says St. Patrick High School student Larissa Warywoda. A video describing the **I Am Norm** movement was well received by Trustees at the September board meeting.



## Early Years Lead Announced

The Board was recently introduced to our new Education Officer with responsibility for Early Years, Nadia Marson. Ms Marson comes with a wealth of experience at the elementary and secondary levels, the Board level, and with the Ministry of Education. Most recently, she was Principal of St. Bernard School. In her new term position, Ms Marson will work to support the successful implementation of Full Day Kindergarten. She will also play an important role working with local day cares to expand our Before and After School programs.



### Anniversaries and Dedications 2013-14

This year, Holy Family School will be celebrating its 50th anniversary on Wednesday, May 7, 2014. Dedication ceremonies for new additions will be held at St. Jude and St. Bernard schools, with dates to be set shortly. Speaking of additions, work is ahead of schedule at St. Martin School, where a four-classroom and gymnasium expansion is well underway. Holy Cross will also see a significant expansion this school year to accommodate Full Day Kindergarten for September 2014.

### Getting Ready to Go with Mobile Technology

Earlier this month, 26 pilot teachers spent an intense day of learning as they prepare to bring mobile technology to their students. With MacBooks for teachers and iPad Minis for students, staff built their knowledge of hardware and developed skills with Apps and Web 2.0 tools. Their challenge is to use technology to engage secondary students in deeper thinking and more robust learning tasks. Teachers in the project span a number of disciplines, which means that students will have access to technology in a variety of classes at both high schools. The Board plans to expand mobile technology in high schools, using pilot results to inform best practices and guide a well-managed roll-out.



### Best Ever Technology Institute

Our third annual Summer Technology Institute, held on August 27 and 28, was our biggest yet! Thirty staff members from elementary and secondary panels participated in sessions on Apple Apps; blended learning; and e-content creation. Participants left the two-day training session with a cartload of practical ideas and motivating programs to try out this year. Many thanks to the staff of Pope John Paul II for hosting this year's institute.

### Off to a Great Start

Thunder Bay Catholic seems to be staving off the more dramatic effects of an enrolment decline that is impacting school boards across North America. It's been reported that the Toronto DSB is considering a reduction of 248 teaching positions and 100 support staff to address their decline. "Through careful planning, we've been able to address declining enrolment in our system in a relatively undramatic fashion," said Tom Mustapic, Associate Director and Superintendent of Business and Corporate Services. "Overall, our Board is experiencing a 2% decline compared to last year, which translates to approximately 190 fewer students this year. Our biggest loss is at secondary, where there are 120 fewer students this September. Elementary schools have experienced a decline of 68 students." School Boards in Ontario are funded primarily on a per-student basis.





## **Board Continues to Shine!**

Once again, Thunder Bay Catholic Schools have surpassed the Province in the annual EQAO assessment of Reading, Writing and Math at both the Primary and Junior levels. Our results were also tops in the region.

“Grade 3 showed improvements in all areas and Grade 6 results remained steady in Reading and Writing. We saw but we experienced a 5% decline in Math, which mirrors the provincial trend,” reported Superintendent Omer Belisle. “Staffs will analyze their individual results with care and consider next steps as they begin to build their School Improvement Plans for next year,” he added.

### **Math Success**

Our Board exceeded the Province in both Applied and Academic Math as measured by the EQAO Grade 9 Math assessment. St. Ignatius who showed an impressive 8% gain in Applied Math, with an impressive pass rate of 67%. Both high schools improved on the Academic side, with a 79% success rate at St. Pat’s and an 89% success rate at St. Ignatius.

“We are very pleased with the work that’s being done at both high schools,” reported Superintendent Pino Tassone. “We will be examining the results closely to build on best practices and provide supports where needed.”

At Monday’s Board meeting, Trustees congratulated all schools on their efforts and their successes this year.