

JOHN DEL GRANDE
Trustee Ward 7
Scarborough/North York

VICE-CHAIR HUMAN RESOURCES,
PROGRAM AND RELIGIOUS
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE



REPRESENTING

Elementary Schools:

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha	Epiphany of Our Lord
Holy Spirit	Our Lady of Guadalupe
Our Lady of Wisdom	Precious Blood
St. Aidan	St. Albert
St. Gerald	St. Henry
St. Kevin	St. Lawrence
St. Matthias	St. Maximilian Kolbe
St. Sylvester	St. Timothy
Superintendents: J. Nespolo, L. Nemes, G. Poole, D. Yack	

Secondary Schools:

Jean Vanier	Mary Ward
Superintendents: L. Nemes, G. Poole	

Parishes:

Annunciation	Epiphany of Our Lord
Holy Spirit	Precious Blood
St. Aidan	St. Lawrence
St. Maria Goretti	St. Timothy

Catholic Education Centre | 80 Sheppard Avenue East | North York, ON | M2N 6E8 416-222-8282 www.tcdsb.org

DEAR CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARTNERS IN EDUCATION,

I welcome you back to a new school year. Whether you are new to our Catholic community or a returning family, I wish to thank you for choosing the Toronto Catholic District School Board for your child(ren)'s education.

I am pleased to share with you a number of decisions that have been made recently, which directly benefit the students in our Catholic schools. At the regular meeting of the Board held on August 19th, the Board approved its 2004-2005 budget estimates of **\$780,963,680**. Within that budget we have been able to implement a number of new initiatives to improve student learning, including:

- ⊙ A full-day senior kindergarten program at seven school sites.
- ⊙ Lead literacy and numeracy teacher initiative in elementary schools. To date 85 teachers have received training to assist them in their role as lead teacher in their respective schools.
- ⊙ Primary class size reduction. To date 60 (full time equivalent) teacher positions have been implemented in 65 schools to reduce class sizes in the primary grades in many of our schools, including Our Lady of Wisdom, St. Aidan and St. Gerald.

The total allocation from the provincial government to our Board was **\$4.3 million**.

- ⊙ Funding was allocated to maintain a full-time secretary at Our Lady of Guadalupe.
- ⊙ **\$501,115** was allocated to provide additional staffing for secondary school libraries. The funding will provide for 12.5 additional library technicians for 25 secondary schools, which would enable those libraries to remain open on a full-time basis.
- ⊙ **\$4.6 million** for textbooks with a priority being given to Mathematics materials
- ⊙ **\$5.4 million** for the Success for All initiative to support those students who may be at risk of not completing their education, including equipment and reconfiguring of space for Jean Vanier's transportation program.
- ⊙ **\$600,000** fund for playground equipment.

Over and above the budgeted projects, at the September meeting of the Board, the Board of Trustees have also approved the following expenditures:

- ⊙ **\$4.95 million** for science labs in our secondary schools, including Jean Vanier.
- ⊙ **\$700,000** for summer literacy camps, much like the camps that were held this past summer in 12 schools, including Holy Spirit.

The Board of Trustees at its September meeting further approved the distribution of a one-time allocation of funds totaling **\$1,175,000** to schools. The Board decided that each elementary school should receive \$5,000 and each secondary school should receive \$10,000 to acknowledge and support the work of the parent community as well as that of our school staff. I am requesting that a meeting be scheduled with the Catholic School Advisory Council, Principal and myself to discuss how this one-time "Classroom Category" fund will be allocated.

We are pleased to direct more money back into the schools and classrooms where they are needed.

I look forward to meeting with each of you. Thank you once again for your collaborative efforts in support of your Catholic school community.

Sincerely,

John Del Grande, B.Comm

PARENTS SATISFIED

Enviro-nics in their Q2 Focus Ontario Report semi-annual poll found that 36% of Ontarians have a great deal of confidence in the Catholic school system. 38% said that they had some confidence. Strong confidence responses have jumped eight percentage points since the summer of 2003 & Summer 1997. These results also reflect a 2% higher response compared to Public schools.

56% of Catholic school registered supporters have a great deal of confidence with only 8% having little or no confidence. These represent figures almost twice as much compared to public school supporters.

Navigator Inc., the Board's external political consultant and research group conducted some internal polling and found that

- 76% of Catholic school parents rate the educational experience of our schools as good or excellent.
- 77% say facilities are good or excellent.
- 94% say religious teachings are important.
- 58% agree with the statement that Catholic schools are safer and 69% more disciplined

This board will continue to work towards educational excellence and facilities conducive to learning.

BUSSING CANCELLATIONS AND/OR SCHOOL CLOSURES INFORMATION

The Transportation Department informs the Communications Department of any bus cancellations. This is done in consultation with the bus carriers and the Toronto District School Board since we are in a shared bussing agreement with Toronto District. This consultation process starts as early as 4:30 a.m.

The recommendation to cancel bussing services is made by 6:30 a.m at the very latest. The Director of Education is contacted and the final decision is made.

When bussing cancellation occurs, the Communications Department immediately releases this information through a News Release to the main A.M. and F.M. radio stations, as well as all the breakfast television news programs.

Radio and television news rooms are extremely busy in reporting cancellations, weather and traffic conditions. That is their main focus. They do not announce what is open and operating especially when the majority of the city is running as usual (as our bus service usually does). Only in rare extreme situations, do our busses and schools close during major weather storms.

Staff, parents and students should rely on the media to inform them of any cancellations. You are also invited to call our information line at 416-222-8282 ext. 2873 for regular updates but please understand that the extremely high volume of calls do jam our main lines and it may take awhile before you get through.

VOTER REGISTRATION

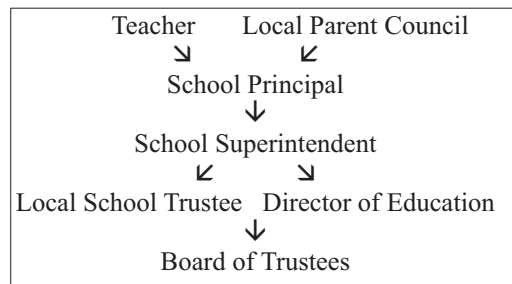
Many of you received a form from your school advising that you or members of your family were not identified as Catholic School supporters. Registering is important to ensure Catholic families are represented and eligible to vote for Catholic school trustees every three years. It is also a requirement under ADMISSION OF PUPILS Policy SA.01 to be a Catholic school supporter if eligible to attend a Catholic elementary or secondary school. Please ensure that your Catholic relatives and friends who do not have children in school are identified as separate school supporters. Please email me if you would like our registration department to check your status.

TRUSTEE EXPENSES

Recently, the board of trustees approved \$18,000 per trustee to hire contract employees (defined as constituency assistants). I voted against this new level of trustee support and alternatively use this allotment towards contract work that directly benefits our Ward 7 school communities or the board as whole. As the position of school trustee is a part-time position, I will continue to return all phone calls within 24-48 hours and facilitate action/ response from staff or the board at my earliest opportunity.

ESCALATION WITHIN THE TCDSB

Local in school concerns should first be directed to the teacher then to the principal or vice-principal. Similarly, the in school parent council is responsible to also express concerns of parents and working with the school administration to address/ understand the issue.



City councillors, MPPs and MPs are generally not involved in local school board matters such as policy, admissions, transportation and planning.

BOARD MEETINGS FOR 2004

All Board and Committee Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Catholic Education Centre. Any group or member of the public may address the Board for up to 5 minutes at any of the regular committee meetings (except full Board). Call the recording secretary at (416) 222-8282 extension 2293 to register to attend as a delegation to the appropriate Board Committee.

HR & Program
Thursday, October 7
Thursday, November 4
Thursday, December 2

Admin/Corporate Services
Thursday, October 14
Thursday, November 11
Monday, December 6

General Information

Parents/ratepayers may find the following list of contact telephone numbers helpful:

Admissions
416-222-8282
ext. 5320

Communications
416-222-8282
ext. 5314

Continuing Education
416-222-8282
ext. 2491/2556

24-hour Information Line
416-222-8282
ext. 2873

CSAC Access Line
416-222-8282
ext. 88000

Permits
416-222-8282
ext. 4370

Security
416-229-5360

Curriculum and Accountability
416-222-8282
Ext. 2490

Special Services
416-222-8282
ext 2486

Transportation
416-229-5313

Information about programs and services, Board policies and the latest news can also be found on TCDSB's website at www.tcdsb.org

