

**Anna da Silva****Vice Chair****Trustee Brampton, Wards 1, 3 & 4**

Hello everyone,
Catholic education week was a smashing success this year. There were more events than ever. I was very lucky to be invited to school Masses, liturgies, art shows, school productions, assemblies, French Cafes, sports events, silent auctions, and much more. Thank you to our school administrators, faculty, support staff, and school councils for enabling these wonderful events. Your dedication to Catholic education is very much appreciated.

Thank you to all parents, clergy, faculty, students and support staff for your

participation in our Multi-Year Strategic Planning survey. The Board of Trustees have a strong desire to meet the needs of our communities, which is why we eagerly seek your input. The information that you provided in the survey for Multi-Year Strategic Plan will be used by the new Board of Trustees to determine the future focus of the board. We were very pleased this year with the level of contribution by parents, teachers, students and clergy in the survey and the focus groups.

A great big thank you, also, to all parents who tuned in to and participated in the budget consultation webinar. This session enables us to engage the community and provide an opportunity for you to give your opinions and feedback on the budget. We are grateful to everyone who took part in the webinar. All the questions about the budget that were asked during the webinar or that were sent into the board are now on the board's web site along with the answers. You can see these on www.dpcdsb.org. Please know that we will take all the information you provided into consideration when it comes time to approve the budget and develop the Multi-Year Plan.

Catholic Education is always under attack by various groups who believe that "a one school system" would be cheaper and better for Ontario. This year, due to the election, many of these groups are advocating with ratepayers and politicians to eliminate Catholic schools. In order to help you respond to questions or comments regarding such a practice, I thought it would be helpful for you to have some true facts about school board amalgamation.

Studies conducted to date indicate that there would be minimal savings if we amalgamated school boards and these savings would be nullified by the cost of amalgamation and the disruption to families. The reason for this is the following:

Education funding goes to the school that the student attends: if enough students do not attend a school, the school would have to close as the government does not the operation of low enrollment or empty schools. This in itself reduces costs and creates efficiencies while still supporting choices for parents.

Extraordinary lives start with a great Catholic education

www.dpcdsb.org

Currently, Catholic and public boards work collaboratively to reduce costs on shared services. Items such as: transportation, curriculum design, school financing, purchasing, and energy management are done collaboratively, thus incurring cost savings.

Catholics are a minority group that fought hard to obtain the right to Catholic education. The constitution would not have succeeded if the rights to Catholic education had not be included. I believe that the elimination of Catholic education, would constitute a removal of the constitutional rights of Catholics - a minority group in Ontario – and that it would set a dangerous precedent for minority groups everywhere in this country.

There are over, 600,000 students in Ontario's English and French Catholic school systems. This number represents almost one third of Ontario's vibrant education system.

Amalgamation would disrupt over 2 million students from both the public and Catholic systems. Thousands of faculty and support staff would be relocated and there would be a great deal of angst in communities due to boundary changes and school closures. Such a venture would only weaken communities and create stress on everyone.

Those who advocate for the “one school system” and the elimination of Catholic schools never mention the massive disruption this would cause. I am passionate about education and care deeply about families and children, and I do not want to see this happen.

Each leader running in this year's election has stated that they support Catholic education and have acknowledged the constitutionality of Ontario's Catholic education. However, let there not be any doubt in the matter. When you hear neighbors supporting such a thing, or when politicians come to your door, make sure you let them know the facts. Additionally, write your local MPP to let them know that you want to ensure that they support Catholic Education.

In closing, I would like to say thank you to all school councils for the **amazing** work that you are doing on behalf of our schools. I strongly believe that we could not deliver the wonderful extra programming and activities without your help. Your efforts are having a huge impact on your school and the children that we serve. I know from personal experience the time and sacrifice it takes to provide these outstanding opportunities for our students and how challenging it is at time to work within the confines of the school board policies. THANK YOU

Congratulations to our graduating students! To those graduating from grade 8 to grade 9, I wish you the very best in Catholic secondary school! It will be great! To those graduating from grade twelve, I wish you all the best at college, university or the world of work. Thank you to you and your parents for choosing a Catholic education. Keep in touch and let us know about your amazing adventures! God bless.

I wish all of the administrators in my schools a very happy and safe summer. Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication.

Wishing you all you a very happy summer and may the good Lord always hold you in the hollow of His hands!

Anna da Silva

