

2005 BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND SENIOR ADMINISTRATION

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GINA MALCIW, Manager of Financial Services
PAUL TOFFANELLO, Director of Education
LINDA STEWART, Program Supervisor - now retired

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DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2005

Inspired by the mystery of Christ,
we will guide our students on a
journey of discovery that celebrates life.



Northeastern Catholic
District School Board
www.ncdsb.on.ca





DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As I look back through the pages of my calendar, I am in awe of the many milestones that we have reached as a Catholic school community this past year, while at the same time tackling many new challenges.

We have embraced these new directions because we know that they will put us on the path to helping more students achieve success and in becoming more Christ-centered in their growth and development.

Consider the launch of the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (LNS) of the Ministry of Education, a body committed to greater student achievement. The LNS is working in close collaboration with school boards to ensure that 75% of students are achieving at the provincial standard by grade 6. While this objective may seem ambitious, we are well on our way. Within our board, our approach has centered on the creation of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) in each of our schools. These collaborative working teams are hard at work sharing knowledge and increasing their capacity to support learning. Throughout the year, they will repeatedly be asking themselves the following three simple yet crucial questions proposed by renowned educator Richard Dufour:

What do we want each student to learn?

How will we know when each student has learned it?

How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

HEALTHY ACTIVE SCHOOLS

The Board is working in collaboration with the Porcupine and Timiskaming Health Units to ensure that our schools are healthy active places to learn. Through surveys on nutrition and physical activity, research was conducted to develop recommendations to enhance our programs. The Board took steps to ensure that we meet this objective through the Healthy Active Schools program at three of our schools in 2004-05. This model was extended throughout the system this year with a teacher at each school designated as the 'champion' for healthy living. All champions took part in a conference provided by the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association to build knowledge and skills as part of their commitment to the physical, health and education needs of children and youth in our Catholic system.

CPR PROGRAM

Students at O'Gorman High School will be trained to save lives thanks to a program launched by the Advance Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation of Canada, with support from the Ontario government, the Timmins Kinettes and Shoppers Drug Mart. With this funding, grade 9 students will be trained in the lifesaving skill of CPR. The ACT Foundation brought together partners to donate resources required to deliver the program, including manuals and mannequins.

It is through such open dialogue and collective inquiry that we will develop school improvement plans that have a real effect on learning.

This approach coincides with another major Ministry initiative, Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA), which is aimed at improving our ability to use data for evidence-informed decision making. Through the increasing access to and interpretation of data, we will be able to engage in formal analysis of administrative and educational data. Access to practical charts and graphs will allow our PLCs to easily identify learning gaps and trends with a click of their mouse. This data will then help to drive classroom instruction and ensure that school programming and board policy decisions are aligned with the actual, data-proven learning needs of our students.

Finally, and most importantly, I am so very proud of our staff and students in their efforts to assist those in need. This has been an awful year around the world with respect to hurricanes, tsunamis, and other natural disasters, and our children, the parents and the staff have prayed, raised funds, walked with the homeless and provided awesome support at the local and global levels throughout the year. In this way, we continue to demonstrate our support of each other and walk along the path that Christ has carved out for us. We beseech Him to continue to light our way as we grow and learn.

I thank all of you for your continued support of Catholic education, and I look forward to our paths crossing over the next year. God bless,

FAMILY MATH NIGHT

The Timiskaming-Cochrane Early Years Centre offered a unique community-based program at St. Patrick School in Cobalt this fall aimed at strengthening numeracy skills. For a six week period, early years practitioners delivered the Family Math Night program to a group of Junior Kindergarten to grade 1 students and their parents in the evening. Family Math uses everyday materials and math games to help children understand math ideas. Parents gain confidence and feel they are better able to help their children enjoy and understand math in a positive environment.



PLANT SERVICES

A safe and orderly learning environment is a must for student learning, and our Plant Services Department is the key to fulfilling this mandate. In addition to the general maintenance of our facilities, several construction initiatives were completed and planning has begun for an exciting new capital project on the horizon.

In order to encourage students and staff to continue to make optimal use of computer labs, the Board made a commitment to provide cooling systems which will make the IT learning environment more comfortable. Air conditioning was installed in the computer labs at seven schools that did not have it.

Renovations were also completed at O'Gorman High School for the Special Education Department and additional classroom space to accommodate their rising enrolment. At Sacred Heart School in Timmins, the library and computer room received a facelift with new computers and work stations. Extra shelving will accommodate the over two thousand books that were brought in by families last year during the school's book drive. Students will now be able to access a much larger repertoire of educational reading material. Upgrades to the grounds at Sacred Heart School in Kirkland Lake were completed with the addition of sods and trees which provide a greener landscape around the school building.



A clean and modern school environment instills a sense of pride in students and makes it more pleasant to learn. With this in mind, a fresh coat of paint was applied to the hallways at Aileen Wright English Catholic School in Cochrane, St. Patrick School in Kapuskasing, St. Paul School in Timmins and O'Gorman High School.

As part of the Ontario Government's commitment to energy conservation, our Board received funding to reduce energy and operational costs. The monies were used towards an energy retrofit at English Catholic Central School in New Liskeard. A building automation system was installed to provide permanent cost reductions through increased energy efficiency and equipment upgrading.

With safety in mind, security access devices were installed at elementary schools in which the main office is out of direct visual contact with the front entrance of the school. All ten playgrounds on our school property received an annual inspection. Any required modifications were completed to ensure compliance with the latest CSA standards. Maintenance and custodial staff members received training and certification on the basics of fall protection, as required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act. This training allows them to perform regular maintenance duties at elevated heights and access rooftops.



As legislated by the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, the Board's Accessibility Working Group has revised the Annual Accessibility Plan for 2005-06. The latest projects included the installation of door openers at St. Patrick School in Kapuskasing, renovations to the elevator at Sacred Heart School in Timmins and the purchase of hush-ups (to minimize background noises) for three schools. Many thanks to the members of this group for their continued vigilance in improving access to our school premises for students, staff and community members with disabilities.

The Board was able to encourage greater and more affordable access to school facilities for community not-for-profit groups. Funding offered by the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Ministry of Education allowed the Board to eliminate user fees and custodial costs for these groups and purchase liability insurance. Our schools are open for sports and recreation activities which promote healthy active lifestyles for youth and other community groups.

Lastly, the Board announced a substantial investment in sustained growth with the construction of a modern new gymnasium at O'Gorman Intermediate Catholic School (OICS). The school has experienced rising enrolment which has created a need for additional teaching space. The existing gymnasium will be converted into classrooms, with a brand new gymnasium to be added at the rear of the school. This capital project will enhance our programming abilities particularly in the area of physical education, a key contributor to the cardio-vascular health of our students.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

2005-06 BUDGET

Parents and ratepayers can rest assured that the books are balanced and that resources are in place to meet the learning needs of the children again this year. The Board has a balanced budget for 2005-06 in the amount of \$32,051,396 which represents an increase of approximately 2.3 million dollars. The budget includes a commitment of over 4 million dollars in the area of special education to ensure adequate staffing, resources and programming. Over 1.2 million dollars have also been reserved for textbooks and classroom supplies

LIBRARY FUNDING

Our school libraries received a welcomed \$45,000 boost from the Ministry of Education this year for new books and learning resources. This infusion of money supports our Board focus on literacy by expanding our collections. If we can engage our students in positive literacy learning experiences, they are more likely to acquire strategies that will help them become independent readers and writers.



PSAB

As required by the Ministry, school boards have adopted the Public Sector Accounting Board format of financial reporting. As part of this transition, the Ministry has launched a Reporting Entity Project team to address implementation issues and to work with school boards in developing appropriate reporting mechanisms. The Board has completed stage one of this process which involved data collection on buildings and sites. The PSAB approach provides for greater transparency and public accountability for our Board.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES GRANT 2004-05

The Board used a potential \$54 000 in additional learning opportunities grant funding to support students in areas with poor socioeconomic conditions. A number of our students will benefit from a Later Intervention Program being initiated at Sacred Heart School in Kirkland Lake. The Kirkland Lake area has been chosen to receive the greatest proportion of the funding in response to the lack of new employment opportunities available to residents affected by local industry cut backs. Holy Family School in Englehart is included in the funding allocation and will be given support for the purchase of Early Literacy resources. St. Paul School in Timmins will receive funding to assist in providing learning materials for students. They may also use their funding to support Early Literacy programming. The funding is being used to support children in underprivileged areas of the Board.

DISTANT SCHOOLS AND RURAL SCHOOLS GRANT 2005-2006

Funding in excess of \$1.9 million was received by our Board this fall through this grant for the following purposes:

- ✓ to ensure adult presence in every school with full-time school principals and school secretaries in all our rural schools;
- ✓ to ensure that there are as few split grades as possible;
- ✓ to continue the implementation of full-time Junior Kindergarten and to continue to offer full-time Senior Kindergarten in all schools;
- ✓ to offer French Immersion in some of our schools at the JK to Grade 3 levels; and
- ✓ to keep the schools in good repair as well as safe and clean.

These funds will ensure that these schools can offer the same services and resources as those in our larger communities. The additional monies will give small communities the opportunity to keep schools open and ensure that they are clean, safe and in good repair, while giving the students the support and resources they need to succeed.



OUR CATHOLICITY

CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK

During the week of May 1 to May 6, our Catholic system came together to celebrate Catholic Education Week. This province-wide event brings together all members of the triad, including family, school and parish. Throughout the week, our school communities reflected on the significance of Catholic Education's presence in and contribution to our Church and our society. The theme this year was "Being the Body of Christ", a message that through our intimate participation in the life of Christ as Christ's body, we "keep God present to humanity and to the world".

Events included liturgical celebrations, open houses and barbecues at several schools to welcome our stakeholders. Others focussed on the beauty of diversity with presentations by groups to gain a greater understanding of the cultural heritage and pluralism of our community. Many students showcased their God-given talent through recitals and art galas. In Kirkland Lake, new Junior Kindergarten students for September took part in a Literacy Tea with their parents.

A trivia challenge on the history of Catholic Education in our communities was also launched on the Board's web site. The contest was based on the document "Tracing our Roots: A Historical Overview of the Northeastern Catholic District School Board". Many classes integrated this activity as a history/information technology lesson in the computer lab.

The writing talent of our students was a key focus of Catholic Education Week through our first annual Writing Forum. Students from Kapuskasing to Cobalt, including winners of the Writing Contest as well as randomly selected participants, travelled to Timmins to take part in this Forum. The students took part in various writing workshops, and listened to keynote speaker and northern Ontario author Glenda Lynn Sonier. The day, which ended with an awards ceremony, was held in the beautiful new Timmins Public Library, an ideal venue for this event. This annual initiative was launched in order to encourage all students to engage in various forms of writing simply for the love of it.

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral care services were expanded across our Catholic system this year. Our Pastoral Care Worker now administers Catholic faith services to students and teachers in our elementary schools, in addition to our intermediate and secondary schools. He provides leadership and spiritual support in the area of liturgies, masses, and social justice and/or any other topics.



CONFIRMED IN FAITH

The students and staff at O'Gorman High School witnessed a member of their Catholic school family take a deliberate step along her spiritual journey this fall. Teacher Marcy McCarty was confirmed in Faith during a school mass. It is an amazing moment when someone chooses to live closer to God. Many thanks to Mrs. McCarty for sharing this very personal experience with us.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL SUPPORT

Measures were taken to educate the community about the continued importance of declaring their support for the English Catholic school system through assessment rolls. With an election upcoming in 2006, communication was forwarded to all student families in September, as well as identified staff members. Resources prepared by the Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association were also distributed in our parishes to maximize the reach of our message and to ensure the preservation of our system.



NORTH EAST TRI-BOARD STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

The NCDSB is continuing the tradition of sharing student transportation services in the interest of efficiency this year, under a new model which oversees the operation of student busing for three of the four coterminous boards. The new North East Tri-Board Student Transportation ensures that students who qualify for busing reach their destination safely, while maintaining and enhancing services for their students. One of their first projects was the launch of a new transportation web site at www.netribus.ca. Policies, walking distances, safety tips and frequently asked questions are available for easy reference at the click of a button.



MUSICAL HIGH NOTES

St. Paul School shared their musical talent with the residents of the Georgian Retirement Residence during Holy Week by singing songs to brighten their day.

The choir at Sacred Heart School in Timmins shared the gift of music with the community during advent by singing Christmas carols at the Shania Twain Centre.

St. Anne English Catholic School raised over \$4354 for the Terry For Run Campaign and performed "The Bethlehem Project" musical, in the spirit of Christ.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

As technology evolves, so does the NCDSB! Progress over the past year has included the move towards the Maplewood web version of the Electronic Report Card. This web-based application allows teachers to access reporting from school or home through a secure site. Training for all teachers was successfully completed this fall after a pilot run at St. Joseph School and O'Gorman High School.

Throughout the year, teachers and students alike received training on new softwares available for their instructional use, namely Geometer's Sketchpad, Corel Presentations, Math Trek, QuattroPro and Smart Ideas.

The Board is also installing the network version of the Kurzweil educational software, which will allow students access from any school computer. This application is a scanning, reading and writing solution for people with learning disabilities or reading difficulties.

To maximize the use of technology in the classroom, each school has been equipped with a new multi-media projector with camera arm, which will allow greater flexibility in how teachers help students visualize concepts. All schools now have at least four multi-media projectors. In addition, SMART Boards have been purchased and will be piloted in four schools. These interactive white boards engage students through their touch-sensitive display that connects a computer and digital projector. The computer application can then be controlled directly from the board.

With progress in technology, many of our computer savvy educators are designing modern new web sites. Board support staff is available to assist with technical and design aspects of their sites.

Through effective liaison with other boards and software providers, we are keeping abreast of about the latest technology for the classroom and the implementation of Ministry directives. Two such projects include the Ontario School Information System (OnSYS) and Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA), both of which are aimed at increasing the use of data to make decisions to improve student achievement

All of these initiatives require training, which has been facilitated by the extensive use of our video conferencing system, both for administrative and professional development purposes. A bridge was added this year to allow video access to all sites simultaneously. New video polycoms were also purchased to further facilitate communication between educators and administrators and to reduce travel costs and time.

Our advancements in area of information technology are made possible thanks to the diligence and vision of our Information Technology Committee. The Help Desk services provided through our contract with Northern Telephone also ensures the maintenance of our communication infrastructure to maximize the use of IT.



GREAT INITIATIVES

St. Jerome School hosted a Literacy Tea for new Junior Kindergarten students and parents.

Grade 6 students at **St. Joseph School** honoured veterans by organizing and running the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the cenotaph in South Porcupine.

St. Patrick School in Cobalt won a dozen trees and landscaping services for their schoolyard through a contest by the Temiskaming Health Unit to create or increase shade in their play area.

O'Gorman Intermediate Catholic School received funding through the Canadian Red Cross for equipment to support their cooking club which promotes healthy eating habits through events such as "Fruity Fridays".

St. Patrick School in Kapuskasing learned about customs and cultures from around the world with a Foods of the World Fair



Sacred Heart School in Kirkland Lake raised \$3606.72 for Save the Children Tsunami Fund, to the delight of Bishop Paul Marchand who congratulated them on their efforts.

The social justice class at **O'Gorman High School** took part in fundraisers for the "Feed My Sheep" campaign in the Andes mountains and for the Praeda Foundation in the Phillippines, realizing that it is by standing in solidarity that we will ensure that everyone's human rights are protected.

FAITH IN ACTION

Grade 6 students at **Aileen Wright English Catholic School** brought the passion of Christ to life during Holy Week by presenting three religious plays: The Last Supper, The Agony in the Garden and the Trial Before Pilate.

Holy Family School played a leadership role in their community during Holy Family Cares Week by engaging in fundraising and inviting local businesses and other agencies to host a money jar for donations for the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace Tsunami Fund.

English Catholic Central School celebrated the life of Pope John Paul II in April, with a liturgical service filled with song.

HUMAN RESOURCES

It has been another busy year in the HR department with new hires across our system. We are confident that we have recruited and promoted exceptional teachers and support staff to help us fulfil our mandate of delivering the best in Catholic education programs for our students.

FOUR-YEAR AGREEMENT

Students are the key beneficiaries of the new four-year agreement between the Board and the Northeastern Unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, which provides for a wage parity adjustment. The agreement was made possible with new provincial policy that provides benefits in the form of new funding for elementary specialty teachers, student success leaders and other enhancements. In order to qualify for this funding, boards were required to reach four-year agreements with their teachers. The ratification by both parties showed our joint commitment to ensuring the continuation of program delivery and to maximizing resources for student achievement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

First aid recertification training and basic health safety training was conducted this year to ensure rapid access to treatment by qualified personnel in each of our facilities. Each school was also provided with new first aid kits and eye wash stations.

RETIREEES

It is with regret that we said farewell to several individuals during the course of the year who headed off for a well deserve retirement. We wish our retirees all the best as they begin a new stage in their life.

BENEFITS AUDIT

A comprehensive review of our the Board's contract with our benefits provider was completed to assess costs and services. Through this audit, the Board was able to generate additional savings to our benefits program.

PAY EQUITY

The Board completed the pay equity process with members of CUPE Local 4681, which represents secretaries, educational assistants, custodians and other unionized support staff. We are now compliant with the Ontario Government's Pay Equity Act.



SUCCESSFUL PATHWAYS

A little over two years ago, a Successful Pathways portfolio was introduced to support students who are at-risk or struggling. The Program Principal for this area works with grade 7 to 12 teachers and administrators to implement improved teaching methods for students in literacy and math across the curriculum. Significant steps were taken this year through this initiative, the highlights of which are listed below.

STEPS TO SUCCESS PROGRAM

A new alternative learning program was launched at O'Gorman High School this year, thanks to a sizeable grant from the Ministry as part of the Pilot Project Funding to Support Learning to 18. The Steps to Success program will help to increase credit accumulation, reduce the drop out rate and increase the graduation rate. Students who have dropped out of school will also be able to access the program as a bridge to returning to part-time or full-time studies. Participating students who were previously disengaged have found a connection to the school and are experiencing greater levels of success and renewed confidence in their abilities.

LATER LITERACY

A guest speaker conducted two sessions this year in Later Literacy intervention. Four trainers from within the Board are now fully equipped to provide the training. The overwhelming consensus on this approach is that students leave with a renewed sense of confidence in their ability to read, which permeates their classroom work and participation in class activities.

WRITE TRAITS

All Grade 4-8 teachers were trained in the use of the Six Traits. The program is being used in the majority of classrooms from grades 4-8. Follow-up is planned for this school year to in-service new teachers and to refresh the process with current teachers.

MATH SYMPOSIUM

A team from the Board was involved in learning about Math and how to best deliver programs to students. The strategies discussed will be part of the board-wide plan for Math.



BOYS LITERACY

A Board team took part in an informative session about the need to work differently with our male learners. Ideas were shared with all principals and teachers. A CD has been developed and will be distributed to all schools with valuable resources.

PLANNING FOR LITERACY RICH UNITS

All teachers of grades 7 to 12 were released for at least 1 day to plan literacy rich units. This lends itself well to the Professional Learning Community concept being adopted board-wide.

LITERACY COMMITTEE

The literacy committee met on several occasions to discuss the needs of the system. The committee will continue to develop board-wide plans for literacy.

PATHWAYS TO THE FUTURE

Teachers from grades 7 to 12 were involved in discovering opportunities available for students in the trades. This was arranged through the School to College to Work Initiative.

THINK LITERACY

Think Literacy subject-specific documents were distributed to grade 7/8 teachers to help ensure that students graduate with the essential literacy skills for life. The Program Principal for Successful Pathways visited classrooms to support the implementation of these resources.

PRISM-NEO

A team from the Board is working in conjunction with all of the other Northern Boards to implement Program Remediation and Interventions for Students in Mathematics (PRISM-NEO). This exciting action research project will help to build a professional learning community around Math instruction at OHS and OICS.

MATH IS BEAUTIFUL

Trevor Brown, the Course Director of Mathematics Education at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, conducted two high energy Math workshops on the use of manipulatives and Geometer's Sketch Pad. Increased use of these strategies will help in the implementation of the new Math program from Pearson.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Through a proposal submitted to the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE), the Board was successful in securing \$50,000 in additional special education funding, plus an additional \$200,000 to work on a special project to help increase the understanding of effective instructional strategies for all pupils, including those with special needs. This project will address differentiated learning and universal design, the use of technology to help pupils with special needs better access the Ontario curriculum leading to more success, and instructional leadership for our principals. This project, which is being funded through CODE, will focus on two schools in particular, namely Sacred Heart School in Kirkland Lake and Holy Family School in Englehart.

As part of our priorities for 2004-05, an agreement was formalized for access to Autism School Support Services. Two representatives will be available for case-conferences and to assist with in-servicing. Autistic children generally face challenges with speech and non-verbal communication. Each school is now equipped with the new Writing With Symbols software which works as a word processor but uses symbols instead of letters for writing.

The Board is proud to be a sponsor of the Integrated Services for Northern Children (ISNC) program. ISNC facilitates access to and delivery of health, mental health and education services to our pupils with multiple needs living in rural and remote areas.

Extensive professional development was conducted throughout the year to ensure that staff are up to date on the latest practices and strategies in dealing with students with special needs:

- Principals and school teams participated in workshops on Understanding and Managing Aggressive Behaviour, provided by our internal trainers. Guidelines will be developed in the coming year in regards to this training.
- Special Education Resource Teachers and school principals attended a workshop on Differentiated Learning. The session focused on an instructional approach recommended in the Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students with Special Needs (Education For All).
- The Early Success reading intervention program was purchased for all schools with primary grades. This research-based program is geared at students who need extra support to become proficient, grade-level readers.
- All Special Education Resource Teachers and Principals have received in-servicing on the new Individual Education Plan document. The guidelines will assist them in the preparation of IEPs, a process which has been facilitated through last year's purchase of the web based IEP Engine. Updates to the IEP Engine have made the product more user friendly this year.
- The Board continues to reach out to community partners to deliver the best in special education services. An agreement was reached with Northern College on the use of their therapeutic lab for the delivery of a behaviour modification program.

The identification of students with special needs requiring IEPs has been streamlined thanks to the work of our ad-hoc committee. The Board Assessment Committee revitalized our approach to assessment of students with special needs by reviewing and finalizing new guidelines for educational testing of pupils. One of the strategies identified included the purchase of the Canadian Test of Basic Skills for yearly administration in grades 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8. The administration of these tests will allow teachers to collect and analyze data for student improvement.

Funding under ISA Level I made it possible for the Board to purchase approximately \$60,000 worth of specialized equipment in 2004-05. These resources which include laptops and specialized software such as Kurzweil will help students with various cognitive disabilities better access the curriculum.

The Special Education Advisory Committee was active again this year to examine special education programming and delivery. The group, which includes parents and representatives from community agencies, completed the 2004-05 school year with the revision of the Special Education Plan 2005-07.



OCSTA FORUM

The NCDSB welcomed Catholic trustees throughout Northeastern Ontario this fall for the Regional Meeting organized by the Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association (OCSTA). OCSTA President John Stunt provided an overview of critical issues that OCSTA is addressing, and facilitated discussion on their impact at the individual board level. Representatives from the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat of the Ministry of Education then presented on the Catholic trustees' role in improving student learning and achievement. They provided an overview of the functions of the Secretariat and the resources in place to support improved student achievement. The annual gathering provides opportunities for trustees to address local issues and participate in faith and professional development activities.



PROGRAM & CURRICULUM

The implementation of meaningful Professional Learning Communities in each of our Catholic schools has been the focus of the program staff, with school leaders in place to meet this challenge. The success of PLCs is incumbent upon the provision of appropriate support and training for our educators, a responsibility that we have fulfilled over the past year. A brief overview of the initiatives undertaken in 2005 figures below.

LITERACY and NUMERACY SECRETARIAT

We have recently received funding for local initiatives from the Office of the Secretariat. Our educators also continue to participate in Web Cast learning opportunities sponsored by the LNS, by internationally known presenters, such as Dr. Ben Levin, Deputy Minister of Education and Michael Fullan, Special Advisor to the Premier and Education Minister. The LNS has also launched a series of teleconferences for a book study group on the work "Misreading Masculinity". Four participants from the NCDSB are taking part in this initiative to examine the differences in learning styles between in terms of literacy and to suggest alternative strategies to improve boys' literacy in particular.

FAMILY OF SCHOOLS

The concept of the Family of Schools was introduced this year with each of the Program Principals assuming responsibility for a group of schools within our Board. The structure has helped us enhance ongoing communication with principals, staff members and parents/guardians through school visits, email, telephone, conversations and teleconferences. This approach has afforded new opportunities for sharing of best practices as well as for support and assistance of the daily responsibilities of school leadership, particularly for new principals.

TURNAROUND TEAMS

A turnaround team has been working for the past two years with the St. Jerome School community to provide support to improve literacy acquisition by students in the primary grades. Ministry Diagnostician Dr. Helen Bochar as well as two educational officers with a strong background in curriculum and school leadership have provided ongoing mentorship and support in the form of staff development to enhance teaching and learning. Dr. Bochar observed classroom teaching practices, looked at lesson planning, engaged in dialogue with the staff and looked at student produced materials. Progress has involved a move towards literacy-based activity centres and the implementation of a school improvement plan. St. Paul School has also been selected for inclusion in this project beginning this year.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Funding received through the Office of the Secretariat for Literacy and Numeracy was used to engage our teachers in several summer program opportunities. Both curriculum staff and classroom teachers shared their knowledge by leading sessions. This training is based on the most widely accepted research in the areas of literacy, numeracy, geometry and assessments. We are grateful to all teachers who volunteered their time to attend these informative workshops.

NEW TEACHER ORIENTATION

New teachers from throughout the Board participated in the New Teacher Orientation Day at the Shania Twain Centre in Timmins. The day was designed to allow participants the opportunity to become better acquainted with each other and with our policies and procedures. New teachers engaged in discussion about instructional strategies, assessment and evaluation practices, and planning endeavours specific to their grade and teaching assignments.

SEPTEMBER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

In September, educators from throughout the Board participated in a Professional Development Day. The day began with an opportunity for all to revisit their role in the development, implementation and maintenance of Individual Education Plans. During the afternoon, they gathered in the theatre for a session on Professional Learning Communities. Through breakout sessions, they engaged in dialogue on strategies to ensure that we reach our goal of helping each child succeed.



CARMEL CREVOLA SYMPOSIUM - SUDBURY

School principals and lead educators gathered in Sudbury to hear internationally renowned speaker Carmel Crevola share a powerful message. She discussed cutting edge research on student achievement and strategies that improve classroom practices.

PRINCIPALS' RETREAT

A retreat was held for all school principals and lead educators to provide intense learning opportunities regarding the seven Expert Panel Reports released by the Ministry of Education. Through creative and engaging activities, the facilitators consolidated the key findings of each report, which focused on the following areas:

- ✓ Literacy and Numeracy Instruction For Students With Special Needs, K to Grade 6
- ✓ Math, Grades 4-6
- ✓ Literacy, Grades 4-6
- ✓ Student Success and Math Literacy, Grades 7-12
- ✓ Early Reading
- ✓ Early Math
- ✓ Students At-Risk

The retreat ended with spiritual reflection through a beautiful mass at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Kirkland Lake. The inclusion of lead educators supports capacity building in each school, as well as the notion of sustainability and shared leadership.

EQAO SEMINAR

Board representatives attended a seminar led by the Education Quality and Assessment Office, on using data to inform professional practice. The sessions helped participants develop a better understanding of the uses of EQAO data and reporting procedures to enhance student success.

EQAO

We continue to strive to reach the Ministry's goal of having 75% of all grade 6 students at or above provincial standard by 2008. Strategies to reach this objective included workshops for grade 3 and 6 teachers responsible for preparing student for the annual EQAO provincial assessment. The workshops included a classroom visit to view a colleague demonstrating excellent instructional approaches to reading and writing.

NUMERACY COMMITTEE

A Numeracy Committee was launched in October to develop a plan of action to focus on numeracy instruction, learning and parent/guardian connections. The team will initiate an email platform for NCDSB teachers to communicate with each other and share best practices, teaching strategies, and assessment practices. They will continue to investigate meaningful ways to better serve our students and their families and to "Make Math Work" in our schools.

FRENCH PROGRAMMING

A committee on French Programming has been formed to investigate programming options and delivery to ensure a consistent approach to the French Immersion and Core French programs in place within the Board. All divisions and regions of the Board will be represented on this committee.

CURRICULUM REVIEW

Our Board is an active participant in the Curriculum Review process facilitated by the Ministry of Education. We are presently in the process of sharing our proposed revisions in the areas of Language, the Kindergarten Program, and Science and Technology.

ADDITIONAL WORKSHOPS AND IN-SERVICE

- ✓ Junior Numeracy Workshop for junior mathematics teachers
- ✓ Junior Literacy training
- ✓ Primary retreat for all primary teachers within the Board
- ✓ Bridging Literacy Initiative between St. Jerome School and Sacred Heart School in Kirkland Lake to ensure an effective transition between the schools and building a consistent approach to instruction that better meets the needs of the learners
- ✓ Math Makes Sense Program Session along with Pearson representatives for effective delivery of the math program. Participants to share with other numeracy teachers
- ✓ Revised Mathematics and Social Studies Curriculum Session with school principals and lead educators
- ✓ Representation at PRISM Math Conference in Toronto
- ✓ Participation in Differentiated Instruction Conference at OSBONE
- ✓ Video-conference opportunities led by NCDSB staff
- ✓ Principal meetings focused on instructional leadership

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Board Policy Manuals were updated over the summer months to ensure that each school has access to a hard copy of our policies. The Manual continues to be accessible online on our web site for easy access by members of our school communities. Keeping our policies in line with the latest expectations and Ministry directives is a constant task with amendments being made to the following this year:

- ✓ Acceptable Use of IT
 - ✓ Performance Evaluation of Non-Teaching Staff
 - ✓ Catholic School Councils - Allocation
 - ✓ Reporting Abuse - Student/Staff Guidelines
 - ✓ Anaphylaxis
 - ✓ Suspension and Expulsion of Students
 - ✓ The Conduct of Business for Meetings of the Board
- New policies were also introduced in the areas of Electronic Meetings and Faith Leadership.

CANINE PROTOCOL

Along with our co-terminous boards, we have developed a canine protocol with municipal and provincial police services operating in our district as part of a proactive program designed to assist our local school officials in their endeavors to eliminate illicit drugs from our schools. The protocol allows for school officials to access an investigative tool through the police and, by working in partnership with the police, establish a school climate conducive to preventing and combating students' drug use and abuse.