



## Highlights:

- A Message about Ash Wednesday
- Catholicity Day – An Inspirational Event!
- British Teachers Visit to KCDSB
- St. Louis Shines Bright from the West

We are a Roman Catholic school system dedicated to excellence in education, the Christian formation of youth, and strong partnerships with parents and the church.

Kenora Catholic District School Board (807)468-9851

## Message from our Director



Ash Wednesday is celebrated this year on February 25<sup>th</sup>. It is a time that embarks upon 40 days of reflection and sacrifice in anticipation of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For a Catholic school system Lent is a central focus of our school year; a time to engage in sacrifice and anticipation.

What I appreciate about Catholic schools is our ability as a faith community to acknowledge the sacrifices of others who lived in anticipation of enhanced educational opportunities for others. This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the time when extended funding was granted to Catholic schools in Ontario by the then government of Premier William Davis. The extension of funding ended many years of anticipation.

On this twenty-fifth anniversary year of extended funding we applaud those who made the sacrifice so that we may continue to offer a quality, inclusive, faith-based education today.

As you enter this Lenten season may you reflect on the value our schools bring to your experience at Kenora Catholic – whether you are a parent, student or staff member. May we continue to plant the seeds for Catholic education today and into tomorrow.

## Catholicity Day - An Inspirational Event!



On Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> the Kenora Catholic District School Board did something unprecedented. We closed each of our schools and our board office and had a day of professional development focused on Catholicity where everyone, in each and every role, system wide, was asked to attend and participate.

It was an extraordinary day spent together as a team dedicated to sharpening our awareness of what precious gift we have in Catholic Education. It provided the opportunity to dialogue as we seek new ways to respond to the challenges in sustaining and nurturing our distinctive identity, vision and mission for excellence in education within a Christian environment.

The quality of the speakers was quite evident throughout the day with our keynote speakers Sister Joan Cronin. The Executive Director of the Institute of Catholic Education (ICE) who spoke on "Re-imagining Catholic Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" and Michael Reist, a secondary school teacher from Dufferin-Peel CDSB, who spoke on "Character Education from a Catholic Perspective". The breakout workshops were hosted by two keynote speakers as well as Msgr. Pat Stilla from Thunder Bay, Sister Mary Coswin from St. Benedict's Monastery in Manitoba, and Mariette Martineau from Kenora. Each of our speakers really provided us with much food for thought to think and reflect upon. The information was very thought-provoking and resonated long after the workshop had ended for the day.

A common message that was carried through the day was the importance and the challenge for each of us to model gospel values and virtues in our daily lives, thus empowering our students to be role models for the future. It's not enough to just talk about Catholic education but we need to make ourselves living, breathing models of our vision as disciples of Jesus Christ, being transformed and enabled to transform the world through the power of the Holy Spirit.

A special thank you to our Director of Education Phyllis Eikre, the guest speakers, everyone who participated, the organizational support from the Steering and Extended Committees, Principal Paul White and the STA staff for their wonderful hospitality in hosting the event, the custodial staff for making the school shine, Maria Silva and Marion McKay for decorating the gym with art and writing samples from the schools and the secretaries for their administrative support as well as the many unsung heroes whose helpfulness made the day run smoothly. As well as Sister Maria Ciccarelli who demonstrated champion leadership skills in making this event such a huge success.

As one person wrote on the evaluation: "I believe that in these challenging days for Catholic education in Ontario, it is of extreme importance that we work together as a Catholic system – including teaching and non-teaching staff, priests and parish pastoral workers – if we want to succeed."



## British Teacher's Visit



On Tuesday February 17<sup>th</sup> we had the pleasure of hosting a visit and tour with 9 extraordinary teachers from Suffolk in the UK. The teachers represented various schools within their education authority.

The group of British visitors traveled all the way to Canada to visit a small handful of schools in Northwestern Ontario as an opportunity for professional development and information exchange. The visit was arranged between the UK Education Authority and our Ministry of Education.



We understand that our British visitors were also visiting the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board, Rainy River District School Board and Northwest Catholic District School Board while on their school tour in the north.

The focus of their interest while visiting with the Kenora Catholic District School Board was on our Character Education Program as well as learning about our strategies to increase speaking and listening skills in the elementary school grades.

Trudy Cederwall opened the day by providing a presentation on Student Success. The visitors then split into two groups and went on a whirlwind tour of St. Thomas Aquinas High School with Kelly Sundmark, Pope John Paul II with Andy Graham and École Ste-Marguerite Bourgeoys led by Carlos Silva. Sister Maria Ciccarella closed the day with a presentation on Catholic Education and how we weave Religious education throughout the fabric of our system. Although Mary Cunningham could not be present for the visit due to business travel her presence was still felt and appreciated in the gift bags she prepared for each of the visitors. They were particularly impressed when they opened their bag and discovered a photo album with pictures of they day already inside.



It was very interesting to learn some of the many differences between the UK Education Authority and the Ministry of Education. One of our visitors shared with us that because we bus our children to our schools, our schools would be considered very rural compared to their schools. They also have no orange busses. They were amazed to see our orange Excel Coach Lines busses and even wanted to pose for a picture in front of one of our busses. They said they've only seen buses like that in the big block buster movies.

During lunch, the group of teachers all ran to the window to look out at the back area, where the new annex is currently being built to watch the two deer that were passing through. They were absolutely amazed and delighted to see our wildlife and they took many pictures.

At the end of the day Steve Turp shared a heart felt thank you for a wonderful and educational day spent within our schools. He explained that his group was so appreciative of the hospitality and welcome they felt during their visit. He shared with us that during one of his tours he encountered a small boy who said how happy it made him feel to go to Pinecrest District Home for the aged to distribute Valentine's day cards and share their time with people that needed companionship. Steve said that hearing the sincerity in the child's voice made him feel emotional and that is what it's all about.



## ST. Louis Shines Bright from the West

At our Regular Board meeting on Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, Clyde Orr and teachers Michelle Robertson and Glenda Long provided the trustees with a detailed presentation on St. Louis' Critical Learning Pathways program. Michelle and Glenda are the Leading Student Achievement teachers at St. Louis School for the program.

The teachers explained that the primary grades "Big Idea" is Accepting and Belonging while the junior grade's "Big Idea" is Making a Difference. The intention of the CLP is to try to improve student comprehension on the materials they read. The teachers want to see the students have the ability to form their own opinion and find the main idea or theme in a story instead of just summarizing the story. You could feel the excitement and passion in the room while the teachers explained that they are finding the students are much more engaged and the program really evokes critical thinking. They explained that it's a team effort throughout the school.

Principal Clyde Orr provided a PowerPoint presentation on St. Louis school with a focus on the visible signs of Catholicity that are displayed and present throughout the school. Clyde explained that every classroom has a crucifix of Christ present and there are many other visible displays throughout the school. Including this mural displayed proudly in the entrance. Clyde also highlighted all the special activities the school has hosted in recent months. There is a lot of pride evident in that school.



St. Louis you continue to shine brighter than ever.