



## Highlights:

- Grants for Student Needs – annual funding program
- A Celebration of Catholic Education May 3 - 8
- Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with Mary Cunningham
- Farewell Cathy Sweeney and System Wide Art Contest

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



On March 27<sup>th</sup> the Ministry of Education released information on the Grants for Student Needs (GSN). The GSN is the annual funding program provided by the Ministry of Education to school boards to support educational programs and services, staff and school facilities.

We are pleased that the GSN was released early enough this year so we can plan and budget around the figures. The Ministry of Education has funding formulas based on enrollment data. We are anticipating our board specific funding information later in April which will really tell us what kind of budget we are working with for the 2009/10 school year.

This years' GSN is conservative and cautious given the competitive economy we are facing today, however, we are pleased that the Ministry of Education will continue to provide funding for raising the bar and closing the gap in literacy and numeracy. I'm also pleased to learn that the Ministry of Education is recognizing the increased costs in utilities to run our schools. As well as the increased fuel costs in school transportation.

Given the current economic climate, this announcement could have been worse for our board. We are pleased that the Ministry of Education is committed to supporting the Provincial Framework Agreement that outlines the financial requirements for our staff under the collective agreements.

## Catholic Education Week – May 3 - 8

Each year the Ministry of Education designates a week to celebrate education in Ontario. During the same week the Catholic Education community celebrates Catholic Education Week which highlights the distinctive contribution that Catholic schools make to our students, our community and our province.

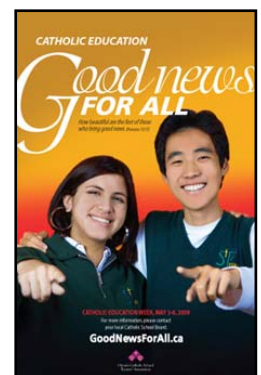
Catholic Education Week is a unique opportunity to celebrate the excellent work of our Catholic schools in the integration of Gospel values into every facet of the school's life and curriculum. This year our celebration takes place the week of May 3 – 8, 2009 and the theme is "Catholic Education: Good News for All".

Catholic Education Week will begin on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> with a System Retreat at Andy Lake Resort led by Retreat Director, Father Patrick Fitzpatrick C.S.Sp. The Theme is *Renewed in the Spirit*.

At each of the Sunday Eucharistic liturgies in each of our three parishes there will be a message presented from either a Principal or delegate about Catholic Education Week. Also at the Sunday Eucharistic liturgies of April 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> and May 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> there will be a special **Prayer of the Faithful**.

Pope John Paul II and St. Thomas Aquinas schools will be providing **Music Ministry** at Notre Dame Church on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at the 9:00 a.m. Mass and Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at the 11:00 a.m. Mass respectively.

There will also be a special brochure inserted in all parish bulletins that will contain information on the theme and school events for Catholic Education week.



## Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



At the Regular Board meeting on March 24<sup>th</sup> Mary Cunningham, Curriculum Coordinator made a presentation to the trustees about a new generation of students: "21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners". Mary explained in today's schools teachers are preparing students for jobs that don't even exist yet. We need to be thinking of life in an entirely different way. Our students are living in a world where knowledge is turned over at a rate of every two years.

Right now in today's economy, our graduates will have between 10 and 14 jobs before they are the age of 38 years old and 1 in every 8 marriages will have met online.

How do we prepare our students for a different kind of world? Mary explained that we need kids to be collaborative, creative, problem solvers and help them to be able to take a situation and look at it in new and creative ways. Probably in ways we've never thought of ourselves. Our Kenora Catholic District School Board is doing some of this right now, not everywhere but in some areas and in some of our teaching habits.

Mary went on to explain some of the innovative and creative teaching techniques that are being implemented in our classrooms every single day. The Oral Language Project and Professional Learning Communities in all our schools are increasing our focus on literacy and numeracy. We are now able to use our EQAO data to really hone in and make lasting changes. When you have a small school board this kind of data is a very powerful tool to create lasting, positive changes. Another really powerful tool being used right now is the Critical Learning Pathway process where we bring a small group of teachers together and have laser sharp focus over a 6 week period on a cluster of expectations to see if we can make a positive impact on our students. We are seeing huge improvements for student learning and teachers feeling empowered. We are building strong literacy and numeracy skills for our students.

Mary explained that in the past 3 years our board has been working with NOEL and the work is very exciting. We've found that we are able to do a lot more than we ever thought we could and some of the things we thought to be true about our Aboriginal students just aren't so. Our situation is way better than we ever thought. Particularly in our oral language tests. We test a students' acquisition of knowledge and our Aboriginal students can score at the highest level. Early literacy is very exciting and the more efforts we put into the JK/SK, the more we are seeing the gaps closing.

Leona McEwan from the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat Branch of the Ministry of Education was on hand at the meeting as well. She explained to the group that some of the work being done at the Kenora Catholic District School Board is so exciting that it just gives her goose bumps to talk about it. The face of education is changing and we have to make sure our kids are ready for it. They will be the agent for change. Leona commended the group on the great work. It's paying off ten fold.



## Farewell Cathy Sweeney

June 26<sup>th</sup> will mark the retirement of Cathy Sweeney. Although Cathy has been teaching since 1969, she has been employed with the Kenora Catholic School Board since 1988 in various capacities. During her career Cathy has taught at Mount Carmel School, Our Lady of the Valley School, École Ste-Marguerite Bourgeoys and St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

As I retire, forty years later, I now truly understand the meaning of "life-long learning" I always knew I wanted to be a teacher and for that goal I will forever be grateful. I believe you have to be passionate about your calling or you will never be satisfied or truly happy. Some might say I am passionate.....from the start I have been involved with the Teachers' Federation. In my second year of teaching I joined the negotiating team and I have never had a year since when I wasn't involved with what is now referred to as the "union". I cherish this experience. Becoming the Unit President was never one of my goals but after ten years it has been a wonderful experience, just as wonderful as the years in the classroom.

Over my career I have worked with remarkable people from our board: trustees, administrators, Priests, parish workers, teachers, support staff, students and parents. Everyone I have worked with in my career has provided enrichment to my life.

I feel I can count each and everyone as a true friend. For that I thank you all! I wish you all the best for the years to come, as you face new and changing times in education. I truly believe that our small board is blessed with Christians with the biggest hearts. Merci, Miigwech and Thank You.



## System Wide Art Contest – Closes May 25th

We are hosting a System Wide Art Contest before the close of the school year this year. We are asking all of our teachers system wide to have your students create their masterpieces and send them directly to Trina Henley at the board office. The theme of the contest is *Celebrating our Catholicity*. The theme was left wide open intentionally to allow for creative freedom for our budding artists. Artwork can be anything from a favorite bible story, religious event to what does God look like through your eyes. We are asking that each piece of artwork be laid out landscape on paper that is 8 ½ x 11 or reasonably close to that size. Also each piece of artwork requires an *Artwork Identification Card* so that it can be judged in the appropriate age group. A package of information has been forward to each school's Principal. If you would like a copy of the package please contact Trina Henley. Thank you so much for your cooperation and support.

