

HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Regular Meeting of the Board

Tuesday, February 3, 2009 – 8:00 p.m.
Board Room, 802 Drury Lane,
Burlington, ON

Members present: A. Danko R. Palmieri (Teleconference)
P. Houlahan B. Van de Vrande (Vice Chair)
A. Iantomasi E. Viana
J. Matters

Members excused: A.A. LeMay Father D. Wilhelm

Student Trustees: N. Bourque C. Restivo
P. Cockburn

Staff present: M. Pautler, Director of Education & Secretary of the Board
G. Corbacio S. Rossini
J. Langill J. Rowles
F. Mazzetti M. Tessari
P. McMahan C. Tobin
J. O'Hara

Also present: Mrs. Lusterio, Parent
Members of the School Boundary Review Committee, St. Elizabeth Seton and
St. Gabriel Catholic Elementary School
L. Stocco, Communications Officer, Communication Services

Recording Secretary: D. Ross

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

B. Van de Vrande, chaired the meeting in the absence of A.A. LeMay and welcomed guests to the Board Meeting.

1.1 **Opening Prayer**

The meeting opened at 8:05 p.m. with a prayer led by Adriana Rerecich, Chaplaincy Leader, Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School. Trustees were asked to remember in their prayers: Lorenzo Campanelli's wife, Anne, who underwent surgery; Father Peter Watters, former trustee and Chair of the Board who is currently ill; Oksana Dilay, Itinerant Special Education Resource Teacher, Learning Disabilities, Special Education Services, Catholic Education Centre who died on Tuesday, January 27, 2009; Dorothy Rodgers, mother of Andrea Cvetas, Education Assistant at Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School in Oakville who died on Thursday, January 29, 2009 and Bert Lockett, father of Lee McDonald, Junior Kindergarten Teacher at St. Brigid School, Georgetown, who died on Thursday, January 29, 2009.

1.2 **Motions Adopted in Camera**

J. Matters read the motion adopted in camera.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The following item was added to the agenda:

11.2 – Letter from J. Booth and T. Reader regarding Bullying Initiatives.

33/09

Moved by: E. Viana

Seconded by: R. Palmieri

RESOLVED, that the agenda be approved as amended.

CARRIED

3. **DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

4. PRESENTATIONS

4.1 School Boundary Review Interim Report for Milton # 4 and St. Peter Catholic Elementary Schools

G. Corbacio reviewed the make-up of the committee that is represented by Board staff members, parents from Our Lady of Victory, St. Peter, Holy Rosary and a parent from the gifted program at St. Anthony of Padua. He pointed out that an introductory meeting was held for parents in all affected areas prior to the process beginning and affirmed that the committee's only mandate is to consider the school attendance boundaries for the new Milton # 4, St. Peter, Holy Rosary and Our Lady Victory. The committee will gather input and comments from the St. Anthony community but will not make any recommendations in terms of whether or not the contained gifted program should be relocated. This will be re-affirmed at the next public meeting.

M. Langlois, parent at Our Lady of Victory, introduced members the committee and briefly elaborated on the committee's mandate. He reviewed the consultation process and confirmed that the Committee would be presenting the Interim Report and the school attendance implementation options at an Open House/Community Information Meeting on Thursday, February 5, 2009. Following the meeting, the Committee will review the feedback received and will prepare and submit a Final Report to trustees at the March 3rd Board Meeting. Delegations will have the opportunity to speak in favour or against the committee's proposed recommendation at the March 24th Board Meeting and the Board will be asked to vote on the recommended option(s) at that meeting.

In response to questions, staff provided information regarding the residential development trend in Milton, addressed the timelines for future Milton schools and identified areas that might be impacted by future boundary reviews.

P. Houlahan thanked staff for the recognition and acknowledgement of the sensitivity around the congregated gifted classroom but asked that any mention of the program be removed from the presentation. G. Corbacio explained why input from parents of students in the gifted program was necessary and assured trustees that the committee will not make recommendations in terms of any possible moves of the program or where to locate the program. The meetings are a vehicle for parents to make comments that will be included in the final report to trustees.

B. Van de Vrande expressed his appreciation to Mr. Langlois and members of the Committee for their work and commitment.

5. DELEGATIONS

5.1 Mrs. Lusterio, Parent

B. Van de Vrande, recognizing the nature of the delegation, welcomed Mrs. Lusterio and asked that her presentation be framed in a broader rather than personal context.

Mrs. Lusterio, a parent of children attending an Oakville Catholic Elementary School, discussed a personal situation involving her daughter and addressed the urgency to review and redefine legislation, codes of conduct and acceptable behavior for our schools with regards to all dimensions of bullying. She elaborated in great detail on some of the circumstances that has led her to take an active role in ensuring that adequate bullying prevention and intervention measures are available and implemented throughout the system.

In her concluding remarks, Mrs. Lusterio presented a number of intervention strategies and recommended several approaches including: accountability of the school, parents and children; acceptable codes of conduct; discipline; developing self esteem; supervision in school yard and providing children with a sense of empathy. She will forward a comprehensive plan that she has personally developed. Mrs. Lusterio asked for trustees support and welcomed the opportunity to participate in restructuring existing intervention protocols.

B. Van de Vrande thanked Mrs. Lusterio for raising a very important issue and indicated that the Board looks forward to receiving information that she will be providing.

6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**6.1 **Regular Board Meeting – January 20, 2009**

34/09

Moved by: E. Viana
 Seconded by: J. Matters

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the January 20, 2009 Regular Board Meeting be approved as amended.

R. Palmieri asked that the minutes, under section 4.1 be amended to read March 24, 2009 rather than March 24, 2008. The minutes will be amended accordingly.

The Vice-Chair called for a vote and the motion **CARRIED**.

7. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**7.1 **Summary of Outstanding Items from Previous Meetings**

35/09

Moved by: E. Viana
 Seconded by: A. Danko

RESOLVED, that the summary of outstanding items from previous meetings be received as information. **CARRIED**

8. **ACTION ITEMS**8.1 **Response to the Delegation**

The Vice Chair indicated that the Board will respond formally to the delegation's presentation and looked forward to receiving the information that she will be providing.

When asked if trustees could be provided with a summary of how the school and school board responded to this incident, J. Langill expressed a concern with releasing information that could be considered a breach of confidentiality but acknowledged that a response containing general comments would be prepared by staff, a copy of which would be forwarded to trustees.

8.2 **Appointment of SEAC Member: Learning Disabilities Association of Halton**

S. Rossini spoke to the report and the appointment of Mr. McDermott as representative of the Learning Disabilities Association of Halton, replacing M. Hastings.

36/09

Moved by: P. Houlahan
 Seconded by: J. Matters

RESOLVED, that the trustees of the Halton Catholic District School Board **CARRIED**

9. **STAFF REPORTS**9.1 **Response to Grade 4 Religious Assessment**

R. MacDonald spoke to the report and elaborated on the Board's Religious and Family Life program delivery model and related assessment and referenced several samples of student assessment used by the Board. He compared our Board's assessment format to the Grade 4 testing administered by the Toronto District School Board that focuses on knowledge and facts. He briefly elaborated on a number of the problems with the Toronto Catholic District School Board's (TCDSB) roll out, implementation and participation of the testing and commented on the fact that the TCDSB does not provide marks in Religion.

M. Pautler acknowledged that the proposed testing might allow an opportunity to review the program if it was not yielding the results that are desirable. However, our Board's Religion and Family Life program is within the framework of the approved Religion Curriculum developed by the Bishops and, on that basis, there is no flexibility to make program adjustments to the Curriculum regardless of the data obtained from the testing.

Discussion that followed focused on the Toronto Catholic District School Board's rationale for providing anecdotal comments rather than a numeric mark for its Religion and Family program as well as the merits of the Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education (ACRE) testing formulated by the National Catholic Education Association.

M. Pautler indicated that he's not in a position to comment on what might have been the Toronto Catholic District School Board's rationale for using anecdotal comments rather than a numeric mark but noted that one of the challenges in providing marks is that it is offered as an indication of students' achievement in terms of the body of knowledge and the specific skills that constitute part of the curriculum and not intended as an assessment of the student's faith development and formation process. He further noted that the Toronto Catholic District School Board is not alone in its practice of providing anecdotal comments.

A. Danko commented that the ACRE test is not about measuring individual student achievement but more of a collective measurement of the program itself. Recognizing that our system is different from the US, J. Matters commented that our goals are the same and involves imparting the knowledge and experience of the Catholic faith to our students while entrusted in our care during the formative educational years. R. Palmieri commented that the Board's assessment is a subjective evaluation but indicated that she would support an assessment tool similar to EQAO testing to objectively test Religious Literacy. A. Danko further noted that the testing is not to evaluate schools, teachers or students but to determine if we're fulfilling our broad mandate to catechize and evangelize students in an effective way.

R. MacDonald commented on the ACRE test and indicated that it is most often used where there is a lack of resources or support mechanism and would not be as useful in our circumstance because the Board has an approved program developed by the Bishops of Ontario, including supporting resources. M. Pautler elaborated on the key distinctions between the American system and the Canadian system. He reiterated that staff's initial assessment of the TCDSB format of the test or the ACRE test from the USA is not to condemn it but staff's view is that the test is narrow in its focus and would primarily seek to assess one component piece of a fairly broad curriculum delivered by a classroom teacher. He questioned whether there was value attached to the amount of time and energy in terms of the learning given our limited options in terms of how to respond to any information that would flow from the results.

M. Pautler agreed that the instrument used to assess the effectiveness of the program, the approach and the strategies to measure the degree of validity or reliability of the knowledge and skills that students are acquiring are important and what the Board adopts must honour and address the broad range of learning and skills we try to encourage in our students. He agreed to bring forward a revised iteration of the report in a few weeks for Board consideration.

By show of hands, trustees supported the request for an iteration of the report to include information regarding the ACRE test and response to questions framed by trustees.

9.2 **Update the Board on the status of the Halton Student Transportation Services**

P. McMahon provided an update status on Halton Student Transportation Services (HSTS) and the initiatives to prepare for the Ministry of Education's Effectiveness and Efficiency (E & E) review scheduled in May or June 2009 that will give a rating and the potential funding associated with it. He elaborated on the three initiatives that the consortium is undertaking in an effort to prepare for the E & E review: harmonizing the Board's respective transportation policies; establishing a pilot RFP for the provision of transportation services; and creating a separate legal entity. Within the Harmonized Transportation Policy, P. McMahon identified five areas being considered: walking distance for grades 9 to 12; transportation for French Immersion students; distance to bus stops; JK/SK home to school distance criteria; and safety criteria. He briefly elaborated on the cost implications. An action report outlining the amendments required to the Board's Transportation Policy II-24, will be presented at the next Board meeting.

Discussion that followed focused on options including the use of public transit in Burlington, and Oakville for secondary schools. K. Lacroix indicated that the Directors of Transit for Burlington and Oakville are considering piloting some areas for 2009-2010 where public transit is available and on limited bases, based on the availability of seats. However, the pilot will be based on

existing routes since Transit does not have the funding to purchase equipment.

M. Pautler acknowledged that this matter has also been discussed at the CAO meetings.

B. Van de Vrande further noted that a meeting has been held at a political level with direction from mayors to their staff to look at this very seriously but in a new paradigm. In addition,

D. Renzella noted that the transit authorities do have the opportunity to submit proposals under the pilot RFP.

In response to a question regarding the possibility of setting up magnet schools in areas of declining environment for the French Immersion program, D. Renzella indicated that the cost reflected in the report relates to the existing schools and it would at the Board's discretion to determine if it wants to change the delivery model and identify schools and geographic locations rather than looking at community demand or need type basis. The French Immersion Program and the policy will have to be revised if changes are made to the delivery model.

With respect to bringing forward the transportation exemption in Georgetown, P. McMahon indicated that we would need to have the changes made well in advance of the E & E review. Communities should be informed as early as possible to make best use of buses and routes. It was also noted that communities should also be informed as early as possible of the changes in walking distances.

B. Van de Vrande thanked members of HCDSB and consortium staff for the presentation.

9.3 Budget Estimates

P. McMahon addressed the report and referenced the letters from the Minister and the Deputy Minister that set the tone for the current budget process. The Ministry expects to release the Grants for Student Needs in March. B. Van de Vrande encouraged trustees and members of senior staff to review in detail the budget objectives in light of the visioning exercises.

10. INFORMATION

10.1 Update from Student Trustees

C. Restivo reported that the next student senate meeting is on Tuesday, February 6 at Holy Trinity and will focus on organizing the upcoming Halton Youth Leadership Symposium, tentatively scheduled for May 12, 2009. She also indicated that all three Student Trustees would be attending the OSTA Board Council Conference held in Ottawa the weekend of February 20th.

10.2 Approved Educational Field Trips

10.3 OCSTA – AGM

Trustees intending on attending the OCSTA AGM Conference on May 3rd were asked to inform D. Ross.

37/09

Moved by: E. Viana

Seconded by: P. Houlahan

RESOLVED, that the information items 10.1 to 10.3 be received.

CARRIED

11. CORRESPONDENCE

11.1 Ted Chudleigh, MPP

The letter from Mr. Chudleigh acknowledges the visits that trustees are encouraged to hold with local MPPs and MPs.

11.1 Letter from J. Booth and T. Reader regarding Bullying Initiatives

B. Van de Vrande introduced the writers of the correspondence, J. Booth and T. Reader who took the initiative of undertaking some research on anti-bullying initiatives by addressing the merits of the Pink Day and encouraging their respective school communities to participate. J. Langill, on behalf of School Services, expressed support for the initiative and indicated that staff will follow-up with the schools. The Halton Public School Board is also endorsing this initiative.

12. **OPEN QUESTION PERIOD**
There was no question period.

13. **IN CAMERA**
There was no in-camera session.

14. **RESOLUTION re ABSENTEES**
The Vice-Chair indicated that A.A. LeMay was on vacation and that Father D. Wilhelm was away due to illness.

# 38/09	<i>Moved by: E. Viana</i> <i>Seconded by: R. Palmieri</i>
RESOLVED, that A.A. LeMay and Father D. Wilhelm be excused.	CARRIED

15. **ADJOURNMENT/CLOSING PRAYER**

# 39/09	<i>Moved by: E. Viana</i> <i>Seconded by: P. Houlahan</i>
RESOLVED, that the meeting adjourn.	CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 10:21 p.m. with a closing prayer led by G. Corbacio.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

APPROVED:

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Secretary of the Board

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Chair