

Happy New School Year to everyone, and a warm welcome to both new and returning students and families. Incredible to believe summer is officially over and that we are already one full month into the new school year.

Excitement is growing for all this year's upcoming work - a new strategic plan, review of our system's needs for programming at individual schools and continuing with Town Halls and community feedback.

As our website contains ever-changing and updated info for your benefit, also look for the upcoming flyers and communications regarding Strategic Planning input and times and dates for your local Town Halls. Your feedback is **essential** for us to hear **your voice**.

For those who wish to understand policy decisions, meeting minutes are posted on the website along with YouTube links of board meeting recordings.

As a Board we were thrilled that there was no labour disruption for our teachers and we remain hopeful that a centralized agreement will soon be reached with our CUPE and APSSP employee groups so that everyone is able to resume full services to our students. At Halton we are blessed to have dedicated and exemplary staff in all roles who are always ready to go that extra mile.

We are equally blessed with parents that take a genuine interest in the education of their children. Your volunteering keeps our schools moving forward. Please consider giving your child's school a few minutes of your time whichever way you may be able.

There's always a need for extra helping hands - and your child(ren) will see your commitment to their well-being.

Here are a few brief points you may find useful;

- The Ontario Ombudsman's office will take school board complaints, but it is imperative that you follow school board protocol processes PRIOR to contacting the Ombudsman so ensure you are fully informed of the process which can be found on the board or school website or through your principal(s).
- The Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association - [www.Ocsta.on.org](http://www.Ocsta.on.org) - is a good resource for our Catholic community. They are the body that acts for and serves all Ontario Catholic boards as a partner with the Ontario Bishops as well as the Institute for Catholic Education. As your area representative Director on the Board of Directors on OCSTA, it is my responsibility to communicate our local issues and bring news back to our Halton Board from OCSTA quarterly meetings. There is an enrolment link for all Catholics to ensure their individual voice is heard in support of Catholic education - I encourage you to visit their website and get enrolled as well as become familiar with their services
- In addition to our Board meetings, your C.P.I.C. (Catholic Parent Involvement Committee) and S.E.A.C. (Special Education Advisory Committee) meetings are open to the public and all their agendas/minutes are posted for your information.