



From Your Catholic School Trustee

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Welcome back! To new students and parents welcome to your new school. It is our hope that you will feel very welcomed at your school and will know that you can ask questions of your teachers, administrators or administrative assistants. We are so pleased that you have chosen a Catholic school for your child's education. My children were educated in Catholic schools and so I know the remarkable benefits of a Catholic education.

To our new secondary students, I do hope that you will take the opportunity to join teams and clubs which I know will enhance your education at your school. Your four years will fly by so make each day count. Secondary parents are welcome to attend school council meetings and school events.

For those of you who are new to our schools, I would like to provide some information to help you understand Dufferin-Peel and our structures. First, as your elected Catholic trustee, knowing my communities is so crucial to my part in the decision making process at the Board of Trustees' table. There is a long tradition in Dufferin-Peel of trustees being very knowledgeable about their communities and advocating for their students. And that happens because we visit our schools and speak to parents, students and staff.

As I visit school council meetings, I share important information with parents so that they are informed of the issues, pressures and great things happening in our Catholic schools today. I encourage you to attend your Catholic School Council meetings and in fact, put your name forward to be a voting member of your council. You will find information in your school office. I will endeavour to update you on information important to you by way of this newsletter.

Trustees are elected in the municipal elections every four years. There are eleven Dufferin-Peel Trustees. In total we serve 150 schools (124 elementary and 26 secondary). A new elementary school opened in Brampton and another one will open in January in Caledon to bring that number to 152. We have 11,000 employees and we are one of the largest employers in the region. We bus 20,000 students every day. We serve 81, 217 students in Mississauga, Brampton, Bolton, Caledon, Orangeville and Dufferin County. We will confirm our enrolment count in October. We work with 46 churches and missions and are blessed to have so many priests who work with our schools as partners. We are 100% Eco Schools certified. We have one of the highest graduation rates in Ontario and our students have exceeded provincial expectations in EQAO test scores in most areas.

This year our operating budget is \$1.0 billion. We are totally funded by the Ministry of Education in what are referred to as Grants for Student Needs or GSN's which are based on a per

pupil amount. More will be explained in future newsletters. We do have shortfalls in our funding especially in the area of Special Education. Dufferin-Peel continues to have a strong commitment to our students who are diverse learners and so we move funding from other un-sweatered budget lines to support the shortfall. We will see what the new government provides in terms of the funding formula.

Many parents ask us about busing and why we do not have busing for certain programs. We simply do not have the funding. If we had it we would be delighted to bus more students especially in our programs like French Immersion and Regional Schools. But we want to continue to offer these amazing programs and so we do. Busing is provided through a consortium for Peel and Dufferin-Peel. All busing is managed by STOPR. We continue to support courtesy busing which is decided upon in October once all the eligible riders are settled in. More information can be found on our Dufferin-Peel web site at [www.dpccsb.org](http://www.dpccsb.org).

I am so proud to be Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Board trustee and despite the many challenges, our schools provide quality educational opportunities in a Catholic environment for all of our students. Much thanks to our Catholic School Councils who have a long tradition of supporting student achievement. Again, please try to attend your Catholic School Council meetings as you will learn firsthand about all the great things happening in your children's schools.

Your trustees are working on the Dufferin-Peel's Multi- Year Strategic Plan. Many parents have had an opportunity to give input into that plan. Our work continues. I wish you all the best for this school year. Please do not hesitate to call if you have questions or concerns.

All the best and may God bless you always.

Sincerely,

*Thomas Thomas, Trustee, Wards 5*