

<b>Faith and Program Committee</b>
<b>May 27, 2013</b>
<b><i>Forming Our Catholic Vision for Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</i></b>
<b>Strategic Goals: Catholicity / Parish-Home-School / Learning Environment / Physical Environment / Community Engagement</b>

*In an age which seems more fearful of the future,  
we are directed to give an account of the hope that is within us. 1 Peter 3:15.*

## **BACKGROUND**

As a Catholic school system rooted in faith, hope and love, we are guided by the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board's System Direction, Catholic Board Learning Plan, and Catholic Board Corporate Plan.

We find ourselves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the only constant is the ever-changing world around us. As a Catholic educational system, we are called to embrace the new world realities while upholding the importance of religion, gospel values and inculturation that our faith provides. The world in which we live is vastly more complex. Globalization, the economic crisis, environmental challenges, technological advances and increasing cultural diversity have altered the landscape of our world. It is our moral imperative to prepare our students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century in which they live.

On May 30, 2012 Dufferin-Peel administrators, both secondary and elementary, superintendents and senior executives had the opportunity to explore more deeply, learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At this congress, they worked collaboratively in various mixed groupings. The administrators explored 'the why', 'the what', and 'the how' of learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the context of our shared Catholic faith.

A series of questions were posed to participants throughout the course of the congress. Based on the discussion of the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes required for our students to achieve success, a series of ten recommendations evolved.

These recommendations were then shared with various stakeholders throughout the system for feedback and input. Sharing with system partners occurred as follows:

- Trustees, November 2012 and February 2013
- Teaching and Support staff, November 2012
- Adult and Continuing Education, December 2012
- SEAC December 2012, CCCSC January 2013
- Corporate, January 2013
- Student Voice Council, January 2013
- Elementary and Secondary Students, February 2013

The attached is a summary of the participants' input and feedback and proposed recommendations that will move us forward as a faith and learning community.

## DISCUSSION

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is necessary to connect academic skills and the quest for knowledge to the core spiritual needs of our students in order to deepen their faith, foster their relationship with Christ and care for all God's creation. Why 21<sup>st</sup> century learning? Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is fundamental to who we are as Catholics living in this moment in time. Aligned to the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, our students are formed in the image of Christ and are called to be Christ to one another.

From our collective co-construction of recommendations, evidence of practice and next steps for leading and learning, the members of the Dufferin-Peel community, understand "the why" of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning, the pressing need for change and the call for action. Rooted in our faith, it is our moral imperative to ensure that our system, in what we do and how we do it, meets the needs of all of our learners.

*We must embrace 21st century learning, because our world has changed and therefore we must change to ensure the future success of our students: academically, socially, (emotionally), economically and spiritually.*

Don Tapscott

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT THE REPORT, FORMING OUR CATHOLIC VISION FOR LEARNING IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, BE RECEIVED.**
2. **THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEARNING IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY IN THE ATTACHED BE APPROVED.**

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Date: May 22, 2013

# FORMING OUR CATHOLIC VISION FOR LEARNING IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board



# Forming Our Catholic Vision for Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board

*In an age which seems more fearful of the future,  
we are directed to give an account of the hope that is within us. 1 Peter 3:15.*

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board is rooted in faith, hope and love. We are guided by the Board's System Direction, Catholic Board Learning Plan, and Catholic Board Corporate Plan. As a Catholic educational system, we are called to embrace the new world realities while upholding the importance of religion, gospel values and inculturation that our faith provides. The world in which we live is vastly more complex. Globalization, the economic crisis, environmental challenges, technological advances and increasing cultural diversity have altered the landscape of our world. It is our moral imperative to prepare our students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century in which they live.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is necessary to connect academic skills and the quest for knowledge to the core spiritual needs of our students in order to deepen their faith, foster their relationship with Christ and care for all God's creation. Why 21<sup>st</sup> century learning? Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is fundamental to who we are as Catholics living in this moment in time. Aligned to the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, our students are formed in the image of Christ and are called to be Christ to one another.

The skills, knowledge and dispositions of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners are complex and varied. A thorough understanding and grasp of processes, skills and learning strategies across disciplines incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century content, global perspectives, learning skills, resources and technologies essential to students' future success. Core subjects and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills will prepare students for an increasingly complex world.

Over the last year, Dufferin-Peel administrators, both secondary and elementary, superintendents and senior executives had the opportunity to explore, more deeply, learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The administrators collaboratively explored 'the why', 'the what', and 'the how' of learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the context of our shared Catholic faith.

Based on the discussion of the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes required for our students to achieve success, a series of ten recommendations evolved. These recommendations were then shared with various stakeholders throughout the system for feedback and input.

The key learning skills and concepts that emerged during the discussions of various focus groups identified the following 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, competencies and dispositions:

... *"Each one called by name"*  
(Isaiah 43:1)

## **Caritas in Veritate**

Charity in Truth – Love: caritas is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace. Charity, in fact, “rejoices in the truth” (1 Cor 13:6). In Pope Benedict XVI’s encyclical Caritas in Veritate he further notes that “love in truth – is a great challenge for the Church in a world that is becoming progressively and pervasively globalized.” As Catholic educators, we must rise to the challenge and be:

- Discerning believers committed to prayer and scripture.
- Caring family and community members.
- Economic stewards in service with and for others for the development of a just and compassionate society.

## **Citizenship**

*In a world marked by poverty, oppression and war, we are commanded to work for justice and peace (This Moment of Promise). We must be citizens called to action as:*

- Responsible leaders who contribute to the common good.
- Promote awareness and solidarity with all God’s people.
- Respect and affirm cross-cultural awareness and interdependence.
- Exercise environmental stewardship and care for all God’s creation.

## **Communication**

- Listening, reflecting and responding critically in light of gospel values.
- Oral compassionate communication.
- Written expression using a variety of mediums (digital, arts, social media, technology).
- Developing and using responsible social networking and communication skills.

## **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**

- Creating, inquiring, designing and managing projects and innovation.
- Thinking reflectively and creatively to evaluate situations and solving problems.
- Making responsible decisions in light of Gospel values with an informed moral conscience.

## **Collaboration**

*The vision of the human journey is best understood within the context of relationship. It is accomplished in communion and in solidarity with all human beings (OCSGE).*

- Working in teams: co-planning, co-teaching, co-learning, co-constructing.
- Relational connectivity: learning with and from others.
- Contributing to others’ learning: a shared and open to learning stance.

## **Creativity and Innovation**

- Demonstrates resiliency, flexibility and adaptability.
- Productivity and accountability: finding meaning, dignity, fulfillment and vocation that contributes to the common good.
- Initiative, self-direction and life-long learning.

Based on the research, discussion and discernment as a living faith and learning community, a series of recommendations emerged. These recommendations support the necessary skills, knowledge and dispositions required for our students to achieve success and be fully alive in Christ.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEARNING IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY:**

### **Recommendation 1:**

**There is a need and a sense of urgency to challenge the status quo and to embrace the new paradigm of learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. All students must have the opportunity to learn the new skills required to remain competitive in an ever-changing global market while living out the principles of our Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. We need to focus on the well-being of the whole child while engaging them. The focus must be on student-directed learning that promotes creativity and innovation in a meaningful and relevant way.**

### **Recommendation 2:**

**Learning spaces should reflect a Catholic presence through their design and allow for the expression of faith in a variety of ways. Both faith and diversity should be reflected in these spaces.**

### **Recommendation 3:**

**In order to embrace and integrate learning in the 21st century, we need to re-examine the design of learning environments and spaces by including the outdoors and exploring alternative settings. Learning environments should be warm and inviting, functional, purposeful and responsive to instructional needs.**

### **Recommendation 4:**

**Inquiry-based learning is key to the collaboration process where we become co-learners with our students. Teaching/Learning requires strategies that embrace and integrate new technologies and new literacies while raising awareness of global issues through the use of a variety of resources.**

### **Recommendation 5:**

**Effective teaching continuously focuses on relevant and current context in order to increase engagement, creativity and innovation. Collaborative relationships fostered through public practice, such as professional learning communities, support teachers in the implementation of best practices.**

**Recommendation 6:**

**Student engagement is increased through the use of varied instructional strategies that are experiential, authentic, relevant, and collaborative. Assessment and evaluation are differentiated and include critical thinking with a focus on assessment *as* learning and assessment *for* learning.**

**Recommendation 7:**

**Leadership must have a clear focus on the ‘why’ of the organization. Leadership must use authentic data and sources to form a clear and collaborative vision that motivates teachers and encourages professional goals that meet the demands of learning in the 21st century.**

**Recommendation 8:**

**Leadership practices and structures need to change to support learning in the 21st century. Leadership practices support staff to ensure that they have the skills to facilitate the change needed.**

**Recommendation 9:**

**Digital literacy is an essential component of learning in the 21st century. Wireless technology must be made available to provide opportunities for e-learning, webinars, teleconference, blended learning and integrated technology. Policies that allow technology to be used in schools in a responsible manner must be revisited ensuring the globalization of information and accessibility. Thoughtful allocation of budget is essential in order to foster the appropriate use of technology.**

**Recommendation 10:**

**Students need to be provided with relevant, authentic and meaningful opportunities to learn and live out the values of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.**

From our collective co-construction of recommendations, evidence of practice and next steps for leading and learning (*Appendix A*), we the members of the Dufferin-Peel community, understand the why of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, the pressing need for change and the call for action. Rooted in our faith, it is our moral imperative to ensure that our system, in what we do and how we do it, meets the needs of all of our learners.

Based on our consultations and discernment gathered from the various stakeholder groups, several broad themes and understandings have emerged that will guide our planning and practice going forward. The themes are as follows:

- Faith nurturing and development.
- Global /local issues and stewardship within a Catholic view.
- Infusion of faith in our learning spaces.
- Sacred spaces that promote active reflection and prayer.
- Student-led learning, higher order thinking and collaborative inquiry.
- Relevant real-world contexts and/or experiential learning.
- Varied evidence-based strategies for instruction and assessments.
- Creative design of flexible learning spaces responsive to student needs.
- Student voice and engagement.
- Collaborative professional learning and instructional leadership.
- Technological and digital literacy.
- Community, parish and parent engagement.
- Evidence-informed decision-making.

Although we have explored some possibilities for what we need our schools to do, the possibilities are endless. This is just the beginning of what might happen in education. Yes, we certainly are in uncertain times but the one thing we know is that we owe it to our students, ourselves and the future to explore what might be. In Don Tapscott's words, *"if we are going to re-civilize our failing institutions, the way we prepare our children for citizenship in the digital age is critical"*. It is about knowledge, how we construct and acquire it, interact with it and how we share and create communities of practice. We need to collaborate not just with peers but with people all over the world (Tapscott). In doing so, we will advance knowledge, share our talents and gifts and make changes that serve the greater common good. This is, after all, what we are called to do and to be as faith-filled Catholic believers living in this moment of time and promise.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,  
an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.  
We may never see the end results,  
but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders,  
ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.

*Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero*

... *"Each one called by name"*  
*(Isaiah 43:1)*

# System Feedback and Reflections

	RECOMMENDATION	EVIDENCE OF	FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS
1	<i>All students must have the opportunity to learn the new skills required to remain competitive in an ever-changing global market while living out the principles of our Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. We need to focus on the well-being of the whole child while engaging them.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three part Math lesson – focus on skill development.</li> <li>• Integrated use of technology – i.e. SMART technology.</li> <li>• Student centred approach.</li> <li>• FDK play based learning.</li> <li>• Differentiated instruction/creative instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater emphasis on higher-order skill development.</li> <li>• Increased and equal opportunity for access and use of technology through wireless technology.</li> <li>• Greater understanding of students' needs.</li> <li>• Increase in creative instruction, teacher collaboration and planning.</li> <li>• Enhanced professional learning opportunities.</li> </ul>
2	<i>Learning spaces should reflect a Catholic presence through their design and allow for the expression of faith in a variety of ways. Both faith and diversity should be reflected in these spaces.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prayer centres and Catholic symbols.</li> <li>• Outdoor reflection space.</li> <li>• Living out of Virtues.</li> <li>• Focus on faith development at all levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create sacred space.</li> <li>• Increase focus on diversity.</li> <li>• Improve outdoor learning space.</li> <li>• Encourage greater student involvement in faith activities (masses, liturgies, virtues, etc.).</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for faith expression through technology (i.e. digital prayer, use of Catholic media and websites, etc.).</li> </ul>
3	<i>In order to embrace and integrate learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we need to re-examine the design of learning environments and spaces by including the outdoors and exploring alternative settings. Learning environments should be warm and inviting, functional, purposeful and responsive to instructional needs.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of technology i.e. SMART technology, computers, projection units.</li> <li>• Design and use of rooms and furniture i.e. guided reading tables, tables versus desks.</li> <li>• Outdoor learning.</li> <li>• Display of student work.</li> <li>• Flexible learning spaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater access and availability of a variety of technology through wireless capabilities and PEDs.</li> <li>• Create more outdoor learning spaces to increase connection between classroom and environment (where “God’s glory is revealed in the natural world”).</li> <li>• Improve design of furniture for flexibility.</li> <li>• More creative classroom/school designs.</li> <li>• Increase interactive learning i.e. more exploration, hands on, inquiry based.</li> </ul>
4	<i>Inquiry-based learning is key to the collaboration process where we become co-learners with our students. Teaching/Learning requires strategies that embrace and integrate new technologies and new literacies while raising awareness of global issues through the use of a variety of resources.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of technology.</li> <li>• Evidence-based strategies.</li> <li>• School-wide inquiry focus.</li> <li>• Collaborative team approach.</li> <li>• Cross-curricular learning.</li> <li>• Student engagement through relevant curriculum and group learning.</li> <li>• Professional learning communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater access to current technology.</li> <li>• Time for staff collaboration.</li> <li>• More professional learning related to technology and student inquiry.</li> <li>• Making learning student-centred and more relevant i.e. classroom and extra-curricular connections.</li> <li>• Greater involvement in global social-justice issues.</li> </ul>
5	<i>Effective teaching continuously focuses on relevant and current context in order to increase engagement, creativity and innovation. Collaborative relationships such as professional learning communities, support teachers in the implementation of best practices.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of collaborative team approach.</li> <li>• Professional learning communities that examine and incorporate research based practice.</li> <li>• Use of various evidence-based strategies.</li> <li>• Incorporation of technology to increase student engagement.</li> <li>• Provision of real-world context and connection to learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More time for staff collaboration, planning and sharing.</li> <li>• Greater access and use of technology for all students.</li> <li>• Enhanced and/or improved teacher professional development through co-learning and co-teaching.</li> </ul>

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(Isaiah 43:1)

# System Feedback and Reflections

6	<p><i>Student engagement is increased through the use of varied instructional strategies that are experiential, authentic, relevant, and collaborative. Assessment and evaluation are differentiated and include critical thinking with a focus on assessment as learning and assessment for learning.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence-based strategies.</li> <li>• Differentiated instruction.</li> <li>• Student group-learning and collaboration and student inquiry.</li> <li>• Support of higher order skill development, student metacognition.</li> <li>• Integration of technology and curriculum with pedagogy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater access to technology.</li> <li>• More student led interest based learning.</li> <li>• Ensuring a variety of ways to demonstrate learning.</li> <li>• More educator collaboration.</li> <li>• Ensuring the use of a variety of instructional approaches.</li> </ul>
7	<p><i>Leadership must have a clear focus on the ‘why’ of the organization. Leadership must use authentic data and sources to form a clear and collaborative vision that motivates teachers and encourages professional goals that meet the demands of learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educator collaboration.</li> <li>• Professional learning.</li> <li>• Use of student data.</li> <li>• Use of technology.</li> <li>• Professional learning community and networking sessions.</li> <li>• Accountability and transparency.</li> <li>• Parent involvement/engagement</li> <li>• Student leadership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater collaboration across system, coming together.</li> <li>• More professional development.</li> <li>• Greater access to updated technology.</li> <li>• Change in assessment practices.</li> <li>• More student inquiry and student leadership.</li> <li>• Greater focus on the ‘why ‘as a Catholic system.</li> </ul>
8	<p><i>Leadership practices and structures need to change to support learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Leadership practices support staff to ensure that they have the skills to facilitate the change needed.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in professional learning.</li> <li>• Implementation of technology.</li> <li>• Student faith-nurturing, youth-faith ambassadors.</li> <li>• Collaborative inquiry to improve student learning.</li> <li>• Parent teacher/educator communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with more professional learning with a focus on developing people.</li> <li>• More parental engagement – communication.</li> <li>• Access to technology for everyone i.e. allow for PED, BYOD.</li> <li>• Greater collaboration.</li> </ul>
9	<p><i>Digital literacy is an essential component of learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Wireless technology must be made available to provide opportunities for e-learning, webinars, teleconference, blended learning and integrated technology. Policies that allow technology to be used in schools in a responsible manner must be revisited ensuring the globalization of information and accessibility. Thoughtful allocation of budget is essential in order to foster the appropriate use of technology.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology use.</li> <li>• School websites/e-Newsletters.</li> <li>• Online help for students.</li> <li>• Blended learning /e-learning.</li> <li>• Access to the web.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater and equal access to technology with a focus on the “least among us”.</li> <li>• Increase professional learning.</li> <li>• Better access to the web through wireless technology.</li> <li>• Allow students to use their own devices – PEDs.</li> <li>• Increased system capacity for e-learning/blended learning.</li> </ul>
10	<p><i>Students need to be provided with relevant, authentic and meaningful opportunities to learn and live out the values of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith nurturing and development.</li> <li>• Virtues assemblies and programs.</li> <li>• Community service and involvement.</li> <li>• Social justice outreach.</li> <li>• Environmental awareness/Eco-Schools.</li> <li>• Support for all students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster increased opportunities for student spirituality, Catholicity.</li> <li>• Stronger connection between school, parish, home and community.</li> <li>• Greater focus on social justice and current events</li> <li>• Community involvement/service.</li> <li>• More student leadership, initiative and voice.</li> </ul>

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Programs and services in Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board are each  
Rooted in our Catholic worldview and inspired to support ...

... *“Each one called by name”*  
*(Isaiah 43:1)*