

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RENEWAL PROCESS: BELONGING

PURPOSE:

To provide trustees with an overview of the specific action steps related to Desired Outcomes and Strategic Commitments, in the “*Belonging*” category of the Board’s Strategic Planning and Renewal Plan, *Achieving, Believing, Belonging 2010 – 2015*.

BACKGROUND:

At the January 18, 2011 meeting of the Board, Trustees received a Staff Report which provided an update on the status of the Board’s Strategic Planning and Renewal Process - *Achieving, Believing, Belonging 2010 – 2015*. Trustees were presented with a set of Desired Outcomes and Strategic Commitments in each of these three (3) areas as well as one additional area called “*Creating Conditions for Success*” (see chart attached).

The starting point for the strategic plan is our Vision, which proclaims “*The Halton Catholic District School Board is a model learning community, widely recognized as distinctively Catholic, providing exceptional education, while nurturing the call to love and to serve.*” As an organization, we will best accomplish this Vision by focusing on achieving, believing and belonging. We will focus on **Achieving**, because as a publically funded school system, student achievement is our primary mandate. We will focus on **Believing**, because as a Catholic school Board, our mission is grounded in the gospel, our vision in the person of Jesus Christ who calls us to serve, and our particular mandate is to support and encourage our students to grow in their personal faith. We understand that involvement and engagement are important and so we will focus on **Belonging** because we define ourselves as a Catholic learning community, and true community both requires and creates a sense of belonging.

Although our three broad areas, Achieving, Believing, Belonging, will be presented and detailed separately, it is understood that all are connected, and interdependent. Of even greater significance, it is understood that our Catholic identity is the foundation upon which our faith-based education system is built, and as such, is embedded in all of the Board’s strategic directions and priorities.

On February 15, 2011, Trustees received the first in a series of four reports which provide an overview of specific action steps and initiatives which align with each Strategic Commitment. The first report focused on *Believing*.

This report will focus on *Belonging*.

WE FOCUS ON *Belonging*

OUR PRIORITY: Building Capacity with all Educational Partners

“As a Catholic learning community, we must focus on belonging.”

We understand that involvement and engagement are important and so we will focus on **Belonging** because we define ourselves as a Catholic learning community, and true community both requires and creates a sense of belonging.

HCDSB is committed to a vision of education in which involvement and engagement of community members is encouraged, bringing to life the partnership described by the Ontario Bishops to fully share the responsibility for Catholic Education, ensuring partners and participants feel a genuine sense of belonging.

Students will feel they belong, and will be most successful when they are fully engaged in authentic and relevant learning experiences that meet their abilities, interests, aspirations, and reflect student voice with respect to where, when, and how learning occurs.

Parents will feel they belong when it is clear that the partnership among parents, educators, and communities is recognized and valued by all. Study after study has shown that student achievement improves when parents play an active role in their children's education, and that good schools become even better schools when parents are involved. Parent engagement is reflected through formal partnerships among schools, school councils, Catholic Parent Involvement Committees, and the Board; through direct parental involvement, participation, and volunteerism with their school communities; and through parent interest and direct involvement with their children, throughout their school years.

Staff engage students in a nurturing and caring learning environment within the context of our Catholic values that attempts to increase student self-worth. In addition, staff engage each other, and commit to ongoing professional growth, in collaboration processes to enhance student learning and improve student achievement. Staff contributions are enhanced when they are actively engaged in their work, and when they feel their ideas are welcomed, their efforts are appreciated, and their contributions are recognized.

Our Catholic schools are integral to our local communities, and the value and contributions of Catholic schools within the community is reciprocal. Our schools belong, and our students achieve when they benefit from active and engaged partnership of community partners, local business, and public institutions. Our local communities benefit when our programs and services are tightly integrated within our local communities, our services and facilities are widely accessible to the communities we serve, and when our schools and students are actively engaged and widely recognized as involved with and contributing to the life of the community.

OUR DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- Students are actively engaged as learners
- Parents are actively and purposefully engaged in their child's school
- Schools and communities reflect a culture that nurtures staff engagement within and between all employee groups
- Schools and communities reflect a culture that encourages students to respond to their world vocationally with an approach to life and work that is shaped by Gospel values
- Schools are integral to our communities

OUR 4 STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS:

1. We will strengthen Student Voice initiatives
2. We will encourage and promote Parent and Community Engagement
3. We will demonstrate our commitment to Equity and Inclusion
4. We will support Safe and Welcoming Schools

1. Student Voice

We will create, enhance, and promote opportunities for student leadership and engagement in school, board, parish, and community initiatives.

Current and Ongoing Initiatives:

- *Student Voice (General)*
 - Increase student use of main Board web page (student tab/page of website)
 - Increase the number of schools (from 7-17) participating in the *Me to We Take Action* program
 - Increase student participation on Board level committees, e.g. Policy Committee; Board Improvement Planning; Focus on Faith; Walk with Jesus; Youth Rally

- Establish a Student Advisory Committee to meet throughout the year
- *Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC)*
The mandate of the MSAC is to share ideas and provide advice to the Minister of Education on how to ensure Ontario's schools remain the best in the world. We have 2 students from our Board who provide input to the Minister on Student Councils and Aboriginal Education.
- *Student Trustees*
Continue to promote HCDSB Student Trustee participation in OSTA-AECO.
Specifically:
 - Maintain the Golden Horseshoe representative for the Catholic Board Council of OSTA-AECO
 - Maintain position of bilingual secretary of the executive council of OSTA-AECO
 - Maintain position of Chair of the Catholic Board Council's Equity and Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee
- *Student Senate*
Promote and encourage student involvement in the HCDSB student senate.
- *By Your SIDE Initiatives to ensure Student Voice on issues related to Equity and Inclusion.*
- *Student Vote*
Encourage involvement in Student Vote election initiatives that aim to engage students in democratic process.
- *ECO Schools*
Continue participation of students in the areas of:
 - Ecological literacy
 - Waste minimization
 - Energy conservation
 - School ground greening
- *Various Student Initiatives at the School Level which allow our students to put their faith into action to respond to the call to work for justice in their world.*

2011-2012:

- *Student Voice (General)*
 - Engage Student Voice and facilitate student forums to inform the development of Board framework for 21st Century Teaching and Learning.
 - Further opportunities for students to be active in their community by living their faith (e.g. Walk with Jesus, work in a senior home).
 - Further develop the student section of the Board's website
- *Ontario Catholic Youth Leadership Conference 2011-2012*
Provide leadership opportunities for students in the development of Catholic youth leadership in Catholic district school boards.
- *Develop Student Leadership Conference with Equity and Inclusive Education theme*
- *Facilitate and participate on Regional Student Forums*
- *Speak Up Projects*
Increase elementary and secondary school involvement in "Speak Up" Projects.
- *Me-to-We/Take Action Youth Leadership Training Program*
Increase elementary and secondary school involvement to enhance student leadership training programs.

- *Kingdom Project (Secondary Schools)*
Increase awareness in secondary schools of Kingdom Project.
- *Student Leaders Accessing Mentors (SLAM)*
Increase student involvement in SLAM to foster student engagement and academic success through peer level support.
- *Implement Action Steps to Access Student Voice and Supports – SIDE Spaces*
- *Develop Equity initiatives such as Equity Walks, and provide timely and specific feedback that will further school-wide equitable practices.*

2. Parent and Community Engagement

We will provide the supports and tools needed to connect parents to their child's school, involve them in the life of the school community, and to engage them fully in their child's education.

We will actively create and promote opportunities for community outreach and capacity building with all educational partners to improve student achievement and well-being.

Current and Ongoing Initiatives:

- *Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (CPIC)*
 - *CPIC provides training and tools for Catholic School Councils*
 - *Formalize a constitution for CPIC, as per Ministry requirements.*
- *Catholic School Council of Chairs*
 - *Provide ongoing reports to Catholic School Council of Chairs on Equity and Inclusive Education initiatives and training.*
- *Catholic Parent Conference*
This conference is an annual event in the Fall. The conference is coordinated by parents and is aimed at engaging families in their child's learning and school to ultimately improve student achievement.
- *Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee*
This committee meets monthly to discuss issues in aboriginal education. Focus has been on Voluntary Confidential Self Identification.
- *Big Brothers/Big Sisters*
The Board's partnership with Big Brothers/Big Sisters provides our students with access to their services including several mentoring programs.
- *Halton Food for Thought*
Student nutrition programs provided in 23 of our schools.
- *Cultural Proficiency Committee*
- *Create partnerships with universities to offer satellite programs (St. Michael's Masters of Art and Masters of Catholic Leadership, and York University Cohort of Catholic Candidates).*
- *Partnership with Halton Multicultural Council*

2011-2012:

- *Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (CPIC)*
 - *Develop board policy and procedure as appropriate*
 - *Increase parent engagement through the use of Board technology (parent tab/page on Board website/Synre system)*
- *Catholic Values Training*

This training will be provided for outside agencies working within our Board.
- *Partnership with Our Kids Network*

Form an Our Kids Network Committee to more fully engage community partners.
- *Implement strategies for Succession and Talent Development Planning*
 - *Exploring Leadership*
 - *In Leadership Positions*
- *Strike a Communication Committee that examines and determines strategies that highlight, promote, and celebrate contributions Catholic schools make to the community (graduates, social justice projects, etc.)*

3. Equity and Inclusion

We will develop, implement, and monitor an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy that supports an environment that models language and practices reflecting a Catholic world view.

Current and Ongoing Initiatives:

- *Training of school teams on Equity and Inclusion Policy with emphasis on Religious Accommodation and Sexual Orientation protocols.*
- *Support Restorative Justice Initiative and align with Equity and Inclusive Education policy expectations*
- *Develop and publish list of Catholic support agencies and other related support agencies to address Equity and Inclusive Education requirements*
- *Initiate and develop Cultural Proficiency avenues at Board and school levels*
- *Support the schools' review of classroom strategies that promote school-wide equity and inclusive education policies and practices.*
- *Provide specific training on Equity and Inclusive Education for principals and the E&I team.*
- *Ensure schools meet Equity and Inclusive Education requirements.*
- *Encourage and support students in their efforts to promote social justice, equity, antiracism, and antidiscrimination in schools and classrooms.*

2011-2012:

- *In-service community partners, support agencies with Catholic values training*
- *Review all Board policies and procedures to ensure compliance with Equity and Inclusive Education policy.*

- *Develop database of information that establishes the diversity of communities based on self-identification*
- *Identify under-represented groups in all Board departments and facilitate their participation in Board activities*
- *Review student assessment and evaluation policies and practices to identify and address systemic bias that may exist in the way students' work is assessed and evaluated in order to reduce the achievement gap.*
- *Activate our Catholic Education foundation to support equitable opportunities for all students*
- *Align aboriginal self-identification strategy, multicultural and community liaison portfolio with this strategy.*
- *Promote grade team planning and use of Critical Instructional Pathways; including teacher moderated marking to ensure a collaborative approach to student assessment.*
- *Ensure consistent monitoring of the growth of students who are on Individual Education Plans and/or are English Language Learners to ensure that the specific needs of students are addressed through the accuracy of programming based on best practices in assessment; all needed accommodations must be in place to assist the student in accessing the curriculum.*
- *Provide Religious Accommodation for students and staff, where reasonable and consistent with the Human Rights Code*
- *Implement strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents, and the community, so that diverse groups and the broader community have better Board-level representation and greater access to Board initiatives.*
- *Provide antiracism and antidiscrimination training that examines power and privilege, including training in prevention and early intervention strategies.*
- *Review HR practices to ensure that we are meeting Equity and Inclusive Education requirements*
- *Encourage and support students in their efforts to promote social justice, equity, antiracism, and antidiscrimination in schools and classrooms.*

4. Safe and Welcoming Schools

We will provide training prevention and support to students and staff to ensure a safe and orderly learning and work environment.

Current and Ongoing Initiatives:

- *Put in place prevention and early intervention strategies to address inappropriate student behavior.*
- *Provide training for administrators and teachers to increase their ability to support students.*
- *Engage parents and other community partners.*
- *Provide programs and supports for students who have been suspended or expelled to facilitate their successful return to school.*

- *In-service stakeholder groups on revisions to Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools Policy and Procedure and Equity and Inclusive Education Policy*
- *Progressive Discipline*
Continue to explore whole school approaches – interventions, supports and consequences (Bullying Prevention, School Surveys, Building Healthy Relationships, Religious/Virtues Education, and Restorative Practices)
- *In-service and compliance training for schools on requirements of Food & Beverage Initiative*
- *Provide support for marginalized and harassed students*
- *Initiate and/or expand proactive programs to decrease the number of suspensions and expulsions*
- *Ensure that establish Board procedure will enable students and staff to report incidents of harassment and discrimination safely and to have confidence that they will receive a timely and appropriate response in accordance with the requirements of Bill 157.*

2011-2012:

- *Develop database to track incidents of recorded bullying*
- *Designate a Superintendent responsible for Safe Schools, Alternate and Continuing Education*
- *Develop and implement an expulsion program (elementary and secondary)*
- *Expand physical plant and augment resources and staff for CHANGE/NEW HOPE programs*
- *Refine and further develop the New Hopes program (elementary and secondary), and address a range of interventions and supports for short term and long term suspensions*
- *Train administrators on relevant procedures – Conducting an Investigation, Police Protocol, Emergency Codes, Conducting a Threat Assessment, Cyber Bullying*
- *Ensure the use of progressive discipline including peer mediation and restorative justice.*
- *Explore other interventions/supports in the community to support students to make better choices*
- *Ensure that school codes of conduct reflect the needs of the diverse Catholic community served by the school and are developed with the active consultation and involvement of students, staff, parents, and a representative cross-section of community members.*
- *Communicate programs/provide information to all partners*
- *Develop a process for building on existing partnerships, and explore new partnerships with other Community Agencies*
- *Use of School Climate Surveys – cyclical analysis with Safe School Teams and connect to the SIP*
- *Tools for Tolerance*
Continue to develop the partnership to move towards Board-wide implementation at the secondary school level
- *Engage Student Trustees in the discussion and issues – school and system wide*
- *Provide opportunities for student leadership roles (e.g. peer mediation, mentorship, ambassadors, etc.)*
- *Collect and analyze data to assist in the implementation needs assessment*

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS WILL BE DEMONSTRATED WHEN:

- Curriculum materials, digital tools, and resources reflect the needs, interests, and demographics of the student population.
- Students have a voice in the process of identifying what helps their learning and well-being and the learning and well-being of others.
- Student input is actively and regularly sought with regard to school climate, curriculum delivery, and program needs (e.g. Halton Youth Surveys).
- School programs incorporate students' stated priorities and reflect the diversity, needs and interests of the school population
 - Processes to ensure student input are clearly articulated and students' stated priorities are evident in the school (e.g. a student advisory council which is reflective of the diversity of the student population)
 - A process is in place to inform students about co-curricular activities/programs and to actively encourage their participation.
- Students are partners in conversations about school improvement
 - Students engage with the support of their teachers in *Speak Up* or other student-led projects designed to improve their learning environment
 - Students are aware of the goals in the School Improvement Plan
- Explicit strategies are in place to enable students to demonstrate strong citizenship skills such as leadership, teamwork, and advocacy
- The teaching and learning environment is inclusive and reflects individual student strengths, needs and learning preferences
 - Equity and diversity practices align with Board and Ministry policy
 - Student leadership positions are filled by a diverse group representative of the school population
- Staff and students adapt Action Steps for student support in association with By Your S.I.D.E. Program
- Increase in staff who report being treated as valued and respected employees
- Increase in staff who report school/department regularly provided learning opportunities for professional development
- Increase in parents reporting high levels of home-school connection
- Increase in parent participation in school activities
- Increase in students who report high level of school engagement
- Increase in community partnership at the school level
- Increase in community partnerships at the system level

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