



ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Lighting the Way ~ Rejoicing in Our Journey

September 28, 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am writing today to inform you that at last night's Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees a decision was made to begin a pupil accommodation review of our Chatham schools. This includes the Catholic school communities of Our Lady of Fatima, St. Vincent, St. Agnes, Monsignor Uyen, St. Joseph, St. Ursula and Georges P. Vanier.

The purpose of the pupil accommodation review is to address the issue of excess pupil spaces and out-dated, aging school facilities, which were identified in the Board's *Capital Plan 2016-2021*, released in February 2016.

The pupil accommodation review is a public consultation, which will be led by a Pupil Accommodation Review Committee. The committee's membership will include a parent representative and the principal from each school community, in addition to community representatives, and will be chaired by Superintendent of Education Deb Crawford.

We believe this pupil accommodation review provides a tremendous opportunity for our students and families in Chatham. Of Chatham's seven Catholic elementary schools, almost all have under-enrolment challenges, both now and for the future. In addition, although all of our buildings are adequate and well-maintained, some are old and tired. This review is a chance to provide better facilities for all of the families attending our Chatham schools. However, in order to do so, we must present the Ministry of Education with a strong business case, which emphasizes efficiency, economy and long-term sustainability. This will likely mean consolidating school communities through a combination of closing some buildings, renovating others and constructing one or more new facilities. There are many possibilities.

Some of these options have been set out in the *Initial Staff Report*, which was presented to the Board of Trustees last night. It is the task of the Pupil Accommodation Review Committee to provide feedback on the Initial Staff Report. A final report will be presented to Trustees in March 2017. The decision regarding the future of Chatham schools rests with Trustees; however, any decision will ultimately require funding approval from the ministry, after a business case is developed and submitted.

The Board will also be organizing an opportunity for the Pupil Accommodation Review Committee and other members of the school communities, including you, to travel to Sarnia to visit two new Catholic elementary schools, which were opened in September 2010, following a successful pupil accommodation review there.

You will receive information about the public meetings once dates and locations are confirmed. These will be communicated to you in advance through letters, school newsletters and the Board's website and Facebook page.

The Board is committed to providing you with all of the information you will need, as together we work through this important process. The website will be an important source for information and the latest updates will be posted there, including public meeting dates, meeting notes, staff reports and background information. Be sure to visit it often at www.st-clair.net

Again, I want to say what a tremendous opportunity this is for us to do something historic in Chatham, which will improve the learning environment and educational opportunities, not only for your children, but for Catholic students for generations to come. I look forward to beginning this journey with you!

Sincerely,



Dan Parr
Director of Education



Our Mission

Walking together in Christ's light with parish and family, we are called to build a safe and inclusive Catholic learning community and to serve as partners in the formation of life-long learners by:

- *Living our faith,*
- *Promoting educational achievement and innovation;*
- *Fostering stewardship, leadership and social justice.*