



Helping Your Child to Succeed at School



Dan Parr
Director of Education

A Message from the Director of Education

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The mission of the St. Clair Catholic District School Board is:

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.*

The mission statement, along with its accompanying *Strategic Plan* is posted in all of our schools, classrooms and meeting

rooms for all to see.

In this edition of *Helping Your Child to Succeed at School*, it is my pleasure to introduce to you the team of leaders, who are responsible for leading us toward greater achievement of our first two core priorities — living our faith and promoting educational achievement and innovation.

Superintendents of Education Laura Callaghan, Deb Crawford and Scott Johnson work closely with our principals and teachers to help our students to achieve their best.

Also in the pages of this newsletter, you will meet our new *System Chaplaincy Leader* and our *Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead*. Margaret Palmer works closely with the superintendents to bring our Catholic faith into every aspect of learning; and Christine Preece works to develop student wellbeing through strong and healthy minds and bodies.

Your commitment to Catholic education is a witness to your children that you consider our faith to be a precious gift, which must be taught, learned and lived. Thank you!

Prayers of Faith for the Family

A Prayer for Parents

God of all creation — Your breath gave life to all humanity. Breathe into us Your love and guidance so that we may parent with wisdom and compassion. Gift us with Your strength and courage so that we may proclaim Your presence through our words and actions. Enlighten us with words of truth and comfort as they are needed and bring us patience and humility as we lead our family along this journey. Help us pass on to our children a faith that matters with You as the centre and foundation for our family. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for Children and Teens

God of youth — Your hope and promise abound in and through the young church. Bless and hold our children close. Give them eyes that see Your presence each day; ears that hear Your words of everlasting life; lips that speak Your truth; and hands that reach out to all in need. May each step they take lead them closer to knowing You more deeply. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for the Family

Lord of life — bless and sustain our family. Hold us close, keep us connected and protect us from all evil. Gift us with love and patience for one another. Help us reconcile that which divides us and celebrate all that unites us as one family, where You live and reign now, and forever. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Senior Academic Leaders

Working with Principals and Teachers to Help Our Students Achieve Their Very Best



*Laura Callaghan
Superintendent of Education*



*Deb Crawford
Superintendent of Education*



*Scott Johnson
Superintendent of Education*

Each of you has been blessed with one of God's wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others. So use your gifts well.

1 Peter 4:10

As members of the Senior Team, we are called to serve our students, families, staff and the community. We believe that each Catholic school, as a part of the larger Catholic community, must proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through excellence in educational achievement and innovation in service to the greater good.

Engaging students in rich and challenging 21st century learning opportunities, which are relevant in today's digital and global world, ensures that every student will achieve academic success. Rooted in this vision, our schools foster the search for knowledge as a lifelong spiritual and academic journey. We will support the achievement of strong critical thinking and skills in literacy and numeracy. Students will have access to technologies and tools that enhance and support their learning, with opportunities to make connections within and beyond the classroom walls. Our staff and students value diversity and embrace equitable opportunities for all. We will work with our students to build the knowledge and skills associated with positive wellbeing to become healthy, active and engaged citizens.

Our students are supported in the development of knowledge and skills as well as values, attitudes and actions identified in the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations within an inclusive learning environment. Nurtured by our faith and a solid foundation of academic achievement, students will be well-prepared for the future. As we embrace the distinctive expectations for Catholic graduates, we recognize that parents have the first responsibility for the education and Christian formation of their children. Our schools are here to support families and parishes celebrate and live their faith, as we nurture the relationships between the school, family, church and community.

Thank you for entrusting your children to our care. We look forward to serving your family as your partner in Catholic education.

Our System Chaplaincy Leader

Bringing Our Catholic Faith into All Aspects of Student Learning



Margaret Palmer
System Chaplaincy Leader

Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving
the Lord, not people...

Ephesians 6:7

I was speaking with a friend after the funeral of her mom. She said, "Everyone gathered at Mom's house. You always felt welcome; her home was always open and you never had to call first."

My friend's mom devoted her life to the Gospel value of hospitality; that was how she lived out her faith. Hospitality was her 'charism,' or gift, given by God, so that she could influence others and serve the world.

The Catholic faith surrounds each lesson, regardless of the subject area, and so it impacts the experience and development of both the students and the staff in our Catholic schools. Here are some of the values we hold dear:

- Helping each person to name and develop their God-given gifts and charisms so we can become happy, caring contributors;
- Aiming to live like Jesus so we might become prayerful, purposeful, forgiving and fully alive people, who practice our faith, read Holy Scripture and improve the world around us;
- Recognizing that each family and classroom strives to live the Christian lifestyle, so that we might become a witness to the world that Christ is alive;
- Making wise decisions regarding everyday actions and words, so that what we do and say matches what we profess to believe.

As the System Chaplaincy Leader, it is my role to affirm these values as they already exist in our system and to foster greater awareness and development of them, as needed. I will provide daily prayers for the schools, newsletters, staff retreats, school council retreats, system-wide faith experiences, parish/school/family collaborations and student experiences, like the Grade 8 faith days. Also, if a school council or principal identifies a particular faith need in a school community, I am more than happy to collaborate.

I come from a variety of personal and professional experiences that have taught me that I can bloom where I am planted and transplanted. I look forward to the blessings and good work ahead.



Our Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead

Promoting Positive Mental Health in Our Catholic Schools



Christine Preece
Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead

**I can do all things through Christ,
who strengthens me.**

Philippians 4:13

Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing is a main area of focus for the Ministry of Education's *School Mental Health ASIST* strategy. Health and education are directly linked to learning outcomes. Every school board has been given the position of a Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead to support the objectives of the ministry's mandate.

It will be my role to focus on the promotion of mental wellness; educate our school community members about the differences between mental health and mental illness; provide supports for evidence-based practices; reduce stigma; support students in need; and help navigate our students and families through the various systems if a crisis does occur. It is my intent to coordinate a system approach to mental health and wellbeing through the implementation of many activities. I will create a new wellbeing website for parents, students and staff, in addition to parent newsletters, staff training, student engagement opportunities, parent engagement opportunities and curricular supports. These initiatives will take a strength-based approach, using common positive language, which helps all of us to focus on our children's positives, not their negatives.

If ever you have a question about your child's mental wellness, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Catholic Education Centre.

Helping Our Children to Feel Good About Themselves

Today's families, especially our children, are under tremendous stress. It comes from many factors. It is important to help our children build confidence and learn to believe in themselves. A child's belief in his own abilities comes from practicing skills to become better at certain tasks. Helping your child to do things on her own and learn how to make mistakes is one of the best ways you can help your child grow. Let him know when at first he does not succeed to try again. You can build confidence in your child by focusing on her strengths, not her weaknesses. Recognize when he has done well. Praise honestly and help her learn how to reach her goals. As well, help your child become a caring person for others and encourage him in the development of faith in his life. Support her work at school for it is her pathway to a great life. Getting an education means a greater chance of obtaining a good job.

Watch These 2-3 Minute Videos to Learn More About Growing Healthy Children

Why Your Happiness Matters http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/gg_live/parenting_videos/video/why_your_happiness_matters/

Dealing with Misbehaviours http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/gg_live/parenting_videos/video/how_to_deal_with_misbehavior/

Impact of Media on Child Development <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joQUfSGom94&list=PLXYSd3E5ACSibc8T-8cbosQO-eBl2Qmf0>

Addressing Cyberbullying <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7U46wCr8NY&list=PLXYSd3E5ACSibc8T-8cbosQO-eBl2Qmf0&index=2>

Promoting Mental Wellness <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXJ-E7PuHJU&list=PLXYSd3E5ACSisQJkOx1MU-SHmoDW4HxTJ&index=2>
