



**ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

REPORT

SUBJECT: ACCOMMODATION REVIEW
(ST. IGNATIUS CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND
ST. PAUL CATHOLIC SCHOOL) -
PROGRAMMING IMPLICATIONS REPORT

SUBMITTED TO: BOARD OF TRUSTEES

DATE OF MEETING: October 26, 2004

PREPARED BY: JIM CLARKE, Superintendent of Education

PRESENTED BY: JIM CLARKE, Superintendent of Education

SUBMITTED BY: MARGARET NELSON, Director of Education

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INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared for the Trustees of the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, who are studying the potential consolidation of St. Ignatius Catholic School and St. Paul Catholic School. Both schools have long and proud traditions of providing high quality Catholic education. However, a significant decline in enrollment now jeopardizes the depth of programming accessible to students and the range of instructional options available to the principal and teachers.

Both St. Ignatius and St. Paul Catholic Schools are considered very small elementary schools. This report will examine the programming implications for very small elementary schools, in the following categories:

- The Catholic Education Vision – Educating the Soul
- Enrolment and School Organization
- The School Principal
- School Supervision
- Volunteer Staff Activities
- Curriculum Implementation
- The Special Education Program
- The School Library
- The School Gymnasium
- The School Yard

Three terms that are used to ensure consistency in describing enrolment and school organizations are full time equivalent (FTE); pupil teacher ratio (PTR); and cohort. A student in junior kindergarten or kindergarten, who attends school half time, is recorded as 0.5 FTE. If there are eighteen (18) students in a teacher's classroom, the PTR is 18:1. A cohort is all of the students at a particular grade level. For example, the four (4) students currently in grade one (1) at St. Ignatius are the school's the grade one (1) cohort.

THE CATHOLIC EDUCATION VISION - EDUCATING THE SOUL

Catholic education emphasizes the importance of educating the whole person and developing a community of learners with a common mission. This mission includes the development of academic and physical skills similar to the secular (public) school system. However, in a Catholic school community this development of mind and body is set in the context of and animated by the growth and formation of the spiritual dimension of the student.

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It is also important to understand that the Catholic education approach does not segregate the processes of developing the mind, body and spirit. Rather, growth is accomplished in an integrated manner, so that every school subject can include a spiritual component. For example, when studying butterflies in science or pi in mathematics Catholic teachers can identify the handiwork as part of God's creation and offer praise to our Creator. In a similar way, the music program can be enhanced when students celebrate community events through song in praise of their Creator. The spiritual growth of our students occurs in all subjects and is much broader than the development of knowledge through religion and family life classes.

Father Andrew Dwyer, pastor at St. Ignatius and St. Paul churches, has developed a close working relationship with the students and staff in both schools. Presently, Father Andrew celebrates mass with each school community in the respective churches once a month. The school mass and paraliturgical schedules for the current year are shown in appendices One (1) and Two (2).

If St. Ignatius and St. Paul Catholic Schools are consolidated and if Father Andrew is able to continue his current time commitment, he could maintain the same level of liturgical support, plus have more time for classroom visits and other interactions with students.

ENROLMENT AND SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS

Both St. Ignatius and St. Paul Catholic Schools offer elementary programming in junior kindergarten to grade 8. Currently, St. Ignatius has an enrolment of 62.50 full time equivalent (FTE) students and an allocation of 4.50 classroom teachers, producing a PTR of 13.89:1. St. Paul has an enrolment of 99.50 full time equivalent (FTE) students and an allocation of 5.00 classroom teachers, producing a PTR of 19.90:1. For comparative purposes, the average PTR across the District is 24.0:1.

Since September 1999, St. Ignatius has declined in enrolment from 74.50 FTE to 62.50 FTE, a reduction of 12.00 FTE or 16.1%. The projected enrolment for St. Ignatius in 2009 is 55.50, a further decline of 7 pupils or 11.2%.

During the same five year period from 1999 to 2004, St. Paul has grown from 90.00 FTE to 99.50 FTE, an increase of 9.50 FTE or 10.6%. Over the next five year period from 2004 to 2009, the enrolment at St. Paul is expected to grow from 99.50 FTE to 117.50 FTE, an increase of 18.00 FTE or 18.1%.

Projected organizations for each school for the 2005-2006 school year are outlined in Appendix Three (3). Typically, larger schools have greater organizational flexibility and fewer combined classrooms. Appendix Three (3) also outlines a sample school

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organization for the 2005-2006 school year, if consolidation occurs. This organizational plan produces four (4) straight grade classes in grades 1-8 compared to no straight grade classes in those grades in the present organizations. Moreover, as St. Ignatius continues to decline in enrolment, the potential for triple, or even quadruple, grades will escalate.

Larger schools also provide more teachers and hence more organizational flexibility to respond to the needs of students. In very small schools, with many cohorts less than ten (10), students will be interacting with the same small group of peers year in and year out. When frictions develop, as they inevitably do, the principal and teachers in a very small school are extremely limited in the options for the re-distribution of student work groups.

In addition, very small schools present a much greater likelihood for a student to have the same teacher for multiple years. Having a greater variety of teachers is considered an educational advantage. Although students will be studying the same curriculum expectations regardless of the teacher, they will grow in different ways as they respond to the unique gifts, talents and strengths each teacher brings to the classroom.

THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Currently, St. Ignatius and St. Paul Catholic Schools share a principal. Lynn Moir has a very demanding assignment as she spreads her time between the two schools to ensure that both are providing safe and effective learning opportunities. However, many of her administrative duties such as school council preparation and follow-up, supervision planning, scheduling, budget management, and program implementation are duplicated. Moreover, if she is at one school and she is needed at the other, much valuable time is lost in travel. The consolidation of St. Ignatius and St. Paul Catholic Schools will allow the principal of the new facility to apply the time that is consumed by duplication and travel in the present dual school environment to educational leadership in one school.

SCHOOL SUPERVISION

The school principal is responsible for developing a supervision plan to ensure proper order and discipline in classrooms and on the playground. This plan includes a duty schedule specifically covering: before school; recesses; the lunch period; after school; and bus supervision. Supervision responsibilities are distributed in an equitable fashion by the principal to address student safety issues on the playground and at bus loading and unloading. In very small schools, teachers carry a much heavier supervision load. In a larger school organization, supervision responsibilities are spread over a larger number of staff. The consolidation of St. Ignatius and St. Paul schools will maintain supervision and safety standards, while reducing the expectations on individual teachers. This will have an indirect, positive impact on the learning environment since teachers will have more time for planning and preparation during the school day.

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VOLUNTEER STAFF ACTIVITIES

While classroom instruction is at the centre of school life, staff members voluntarily carry out activities in addition to their assigned duties. These tasks range from co-curricular activities, such as the coaching of school teams and the running of intramurals, to general school assignments such as the preparation of school masses and assemblies and serving on the school council. Summaries of the volunteer staff activities at St. Ignatius and St. Paul Catholic Schools for the present year are shown in Appendix Four (4) and Appendix Five (5) respectively. Consolidation will increase the pool of staff members to share these additional activities.

It also should be noted that smaller schools can often provide additional opportunities for students to participate in specific co-curricular activities such as school teams, since there is not as much competition for places. However, as the enrolment declines, it can often be difficult to attract sufficient pupils and some school teams or other co-curricular activities must be cancelled. Consolidation will contribute to the viability of co-curricular activities.

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The Ontario Curriculum is quite prescriptive, identifying specific learning expectations in each subject at each grade level. Appendix Six (6) summarizes the number of learning expectations at each elementary grade level of the Ontario Curriculum. In addition, contemporary classrooms emphasize considerable interaction among students in the learning process. Important academic and social skills are developed as students work together to implement projects, solve problems and develop understandings. In many respects, the teacher becomes a learning coach, guiding students individually and in small groups to implement personal educational goals and plans they have previously set with teacher and parent assistance.

Classrooms with combined grades are challenging for teachers and often distracting for students because the classroom curriculum must include essentially double (or even triple) the learning expectations of a single grade classroom. Although most educators have developed various organizational strategies and planning aids to effectively support curriculum implementation in combined grades, single grade classes remain the optimal learning environment for students to achieve the very specific learning expectations in provincial curriculum policy for each grade and subject. Consequently, when organizing an elementary school, administrators do everything possible to maximize the number of straight grades and to reduce the number of combined grade classes. When a combined grade class must be implemented, the principal tries to balance grade groupings as closely as possible to give the classroom teacher as much flexibility as possible in forming and re-forming work groups during the school year. When balance is not possible, because of

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the respective cohort sizes, six (6) students is generally considered the minimum number for an effective grade level group in a classroom with two grades.

When a cohort falls below ten (10), principals and teachers lose the flexibility to adjust student groupings from year to year and the school's capacity to implement effective small group instruction is reduced dramatically.

It also should be noted that implementing an up-to-date curriculum, appropriately challenging and responsive to the needs of individual learners, is a very demanding task. In response, teachers work together under the direction of the principal to plan cooperatively, share expertise and pool learning resources. The opportunities for these kinds of collaborative interactions grow significantly as the number of teaching colleagues in the school increases.

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Board's approach to responding to the needs of special needs students is to have those students participate as fully as possible in the activities of their age-appropriate classroom in their home school, with the children from their own community. Each special needs student has an Individual Educational Plan and access to the specialized support needed to implement the plan.

When a cohort falls below ten (10), it becomes more difficult for the principal and teachers to provide varied integration opportunities for special needs students.

THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

A school library serves as a resource centre, giving students and teachers access to books and other instructional materials to support classroom learning. St. Paul Catholic School has a full size elementary library resource centre, while the library at St. Ignatius is significantly smaller. In the larger facility, more materials are accessible to students and teachers. Moreover, the consolidation of St. Ignatius and St. Paul Catholic Schools will combine the library holdings, thereby increasing the variety of resources available to students and teachers.

THE SCHOOL GYMNASIUM

The gymnasium is an important part of a school for physical education classes, interschool and intramural sports, assemblies, liturgical celebrations, concerts, dramatic productions and community meetings. Both gymnasiums do not meet current standards for elementary schools and need to be upgraded. St. Paul's gymnasium does have a stage, significant for assorted student and professional productions.

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THE SCHOOL YARD

The school yard also plays a major role in student life, providing a supervised area for physical activity before school and during recesses and, when the weather allows, for physical education classes, team activities and special events. The school yards at both St. Paul and St. Ignatius schools are of about the same size – 4.2 acres. However, the St. Ignatius yard is divided in two by Walnut Street – an added supervision challenge.

CONCLUSION

St. Ignatius and St. Paul Catholic Schools are distinguished and longstanding providers of highly effective Catholic education. Unfortunately, low enrollment limits educational opportunities for students and instructional options for staff.

Single grade classes remain the optimal learning environment for guiding students to achieve the specific learning expectations identified for every grade and subject. If St. Ignatius and St. Paul Catholic Schools are consolidated, half of the students in the school could be placed in straight grade classes - an organization not possible beyond kindergarten in either school for quite some time.

Moreover, when the number of students in a cohort falls below ten (10), the quality of the educational experience is compromised. There are simply not enough students to implement the kind of interactive learning environment envisioned for the contemporary classroom.

In summation, in my professional judgment, the consolidation of St. Ignatius and St. Paul Catholic Schools will produce a more effective learning environment for students.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the St. Clair Catholic District School Board receive the report: *Accommodation Review (St. Ignatius Catholic School and St. Paul Catholic School) – Programming Implications Report, October 26, 2004 for information.*

ST. IGNATIUS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

MASS SCHEDULE

2004 - 2005

MASS TIMES WILL BE – 9:30 A.M.

| MONTH | DATE | THEME | TEACHER |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------|
| September | Friday, September 10 | New Beginnings | Joey |
| October | Friday, October 1 | Thanksgiving | Marg |
| November | Friday, November 1 | Remembrance Day/Peace | Kim |
| December | Friday, December 3 | Advent/Immaculate Conception | Clare |
| Advent Celebrations | Weekly During Advent | Waiting for Christ to Arrive | Lynn |
| January | Friday, January 7 | Epiphany | Kim |
| February | Wednesday, February 9 | Ash Wednesday | Pam |
| April | Friday, April 1 | Stewardship | Juliana |
| May | Friday, May 6 | May Crowning | Joey |
| June | Friday, June 3 | St. Ignatius Day | Pam |

ST. PAUL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

MASS SCHEDULE

2004 – 2005

MASS TIMES WILL BE – 9:45 A.M.

| MONTH | DATE | THEME | TEACHER |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| September | Wednesday, September 15 | New Beginnings | Jason |
| October | Wednesday, October 13 | Thanksgiving | Gina |
| November | Wednesday, November 10 | Remembrance Day/Peace | Greg |
| December | Wednesday, December 8 | Advent/Immaculate Conception | Becky |
| Advent Celebrations | Weekly During Advent | Waiting for Christ to Arrive | Lynn |
| January | TBD | Epiphany | Greg |
| February | Wednesday, February 9 | Ash Wednesday | Jason |
| April | TBD | Spring/Earth Day | Gina |
| May | TBD | May Crowning | Becky |
| June | TBD | Year End | School Council |

2005-06 SCHOOL ORGANIZATION USING TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATION

ST. IGNATIUS CATHOLIC SCHOOL, BOTHWELL

| #Rooms | JK | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Total | Teacher FTE |
|--------|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|-------|-------------|
| 1 | 5 | 5 | | | | | | | | | 10 | 0.50 |
| 2 | | | 7 | 4 | | | | | | | 11 | 1.00 |
| 3 | | | | | 7 | 9 | | | | | 16 | 1.00 |
| | | | | | | | 10 | 6 | | | 16 | 1.00 |
| | | | | | | | | | 8 | 5 | 13 | 1.00 |
| | 5 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 66 | TOTAL |
| | JK | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Total | 4.50 |

F.T.E. Enrolment: 61.00
 # Classroom Teachers: 4.50
 P.T.R. 13.56

ST. PAUL CATHOLIC SCHOOL, THAMESVILLE

| #Rooms | JK | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Total | Teacher FTE |
|--------|----|----|----|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|-------|-------------|
| 1A | 13 | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 0.50 |
| 1B | | 17 | | | | | | | | | 17 | 0.50 |
| 2 | | | 13 | 12 | | | | | | | 25 | 1.00 |
| 3 | | | | | 9 | 11 | | | | | 20 | 1.00 |
| 4 | | | | | | | 9 | 15 | | | 24 | 1.00 |
| 5 | | | | | | | | | 7 | 12 | 19 | 1.00 |
| | 13 | 17 | 13 | 12 | 9 | 11 | 9 | 15 | 7 | 12 | 118 | TOTAL |
| | JK | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Total | 5.00 |

F.T.E. Enrolment: 103.00
 # Classroom Teachers: 5.00
 P.T.R. 20.60

ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS - CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

| #Rooms | JK | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Total | Teacher FTE |
|--------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|-------------|
| 1A | 9 | 11 | | | | | | | | | 20 | 0.50 |
| 1B | 9 | 11 | | | | | | | | | 20 | 0.50 |
| 2 | | | 20 | | | | | | | | 20 | 1.00 |
| 3 | | | | 16 | | | | | | | 16 | 1.00 |
| 4 | | | | | 16 | | | | | | 16 | 1.00 |
| 5 | | | | | | 20 | | | | | 20 | 1.00 |
| 6 | | | | | | | 19 | 6 | | | 25 | 1.00 |
| 7 | | | | | | | | 15 | 8 | | 23 | 1.00 |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | 7 | 17 | 24 | 1.00 |
| | 18 | 22 | 20 | 16 | 16 | 20 | 19 | 21 | 15 | 17 | 184 | TOTAL |
| | JK | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Total | 8.00 |

F.T.E. Enrolment: 164.00
 # Classroom Teachers: 8.00
 P.T.R. 20.50

St. Ignatius Catholic School
VOLUNTARY STAFF ACTIVITIES
 2004 – 2005

| School Based Management Initiatives | |
|--|---------------|
| Web Site Manager | Janet |
| Relational Report Card | Joey |
| Breakfast Snack Program | Mary |
| School Improvement Team | All Staff |
| Teacher in Charge | Various Staff |

| Athletic Activities | |
|---|------------------|
| Varsity Sports (numbers will determine make-up of teams) | |
| Badminton | Marg/Pam |
| Cross Country | Kim/Patti |
| Sr. Volleyball (G) | Juliana |
| Sr. Volleyball (B) | Joey |
| Sr. Basketball (G) | Louise |
| Free Throw | Louise |
| Track/Field Day/Activity Day | Joey/Kim/Pam |
| Intramural | Joey/Lynn/Louise |
| Play Day | Pam |
| Student Council | Joey |

| General Activities | |
|--|--------------------|
| Mission Drive | Joey |
| Advent Activities | Lynn |
| May Crowning | Joey |
| Remembrance Day | Kim |
| Lent | Pam |
| School Masses & Paraliturgies | Various Staff |
| Christmas Choir | Marg |
| Christmas Concert/Activity Night | All Staff |
| School Council Representative Teaching and Non-Teaching | Shared by Staff |
| Education Week | All Staff |
| Science Fair | Joey |
| Awards/Good News | Louise/Marg |
| Student Council | Joey |
| Environmental/Re-cycling | Louise |
| Public Speaking | Juliana/Joey |
| Computer Teacher Representative | Joey |
| United Way | Lynn |
| Staff Room | All Staff |
| Health/Safety | Louise |
| OECTA | Kim |
| Newspaper | Mary |
| Year Book | Joey |
| Canteen Volunteers | Mary and 1 student |
| Social | Kim/Pam |
| Memory Book | Kim |

St. Paul Catholic School
VOLUNTARY STAFF ACTIVITIES
2004 – 2005

| School Base Management Initiatives | |
|---|--------------------|
| Web Site Manager | Angela (lead) Greg |
| Relational Report Card Co-ordinator | Greg |
| Breakfast Program | School Council |
| School Improvement Team | All Staff |
| Teacher in Charge | Various Staff |

| Athletic Activities | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Varsity Sports | |
| Badminton | Gina and Marg |
| Cross Country | Suzanne and Chris |
| Sr. Volleyball (B) | Gina |
| Jr. Volleyball (G) | Gina |
| Sr. Volleyball (B) | Jason |
| Sr. Basketball (B) | Louise |
| Free Throw | Lynn |
| Track/Field Day/Activity Day | Lynn, Jason, Becky |
| Intramural | Lynn, Holly, Danielle, Jason, Gina |
| Play Day | Becky |

| General Activities | |
|--|----------------------|
| Mission Drive – Penny Drive for Community Living | Jason |
| Advent Activities | Lynn |
| May Crowning | Becky |
| Remembrance Day | Greg |
| Holy Thursday Soup Day | Gina |
| School Masses & Paraliturgies | Various Staff |
| Christmas Concert/Activity Night | All Staff |
| School Council Representative | Gina/Chris |
| Education Week Co-ordinator | Suzanne |
| Science Fair | Greg |
| Awards/Good News | Louise/Marg |
| Student Council | Jason/Sharron |
| Environmental/Re-cycling | Louise |
| Public Speaking | Sharron |
| Computer Staff Rep | Angela |
| Zehrs Tapes/Labels | School Council/Chris |
| United Way | Lynn/Gina |
| Staff Room | All Staff |
| Health/Safety | Greg |
| OECTA | Becky |
| Christmas Dinner & Harvest Party | School Council |
| Year Book | Lynn/Gina |
| Canteen Volunteers | Grade Seven & Eight |
| Social | Greg/Gina |
| Memory Books | Danielle |
| Charities – Jump Rope | Jason |

The Ontario Curriculum Learning Expectations by Subject and Grade

| Grade | Language Arts | French as a Second Language | Mathematics | Science & Technology | Social Studies | History & Geography | Personal & Social Development | Health & Physical Education | The Arts | Total |
|-------|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|-------|
| K | 32 | 8 | 27 | 21 | | | 41 | | 35 | 156 |
| 1 | 60 | 17 | 107 | 107 | 50 | | | 38 | 61 | 423 |
| 2 | 65 | 19 | 112 | 110 | 48 | | | 41 | 67 | 443 |
| 3 | 66 | 32 | 106 | 112 | 51 | | | 39 | 62 | 436 |
| 4 | 70 | 34 | 120 | 125 | 62 | | | 36 | 70 | 517 |
| 5 | 66 | 33 | 125 | 121 | 48 | | | 40 | 69 | 502 |
| 6 | 66 | 30 | 126 | 129 | 48 | | | 34 | 71 | 504 |
| 7 | 70 | 33 | 109 | 131 | | 121 | | 42 | 78 | 584 |
| 8 | 67 | 30 | 122 | 150 | | 114 | | 41 | 66 | 590 |
| Total | 562 | 160 | 954 | 1006 | 307 | 235 | 41 | 311 | 579 | 4155 |