

The Trustee Report

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Computers in the Classroom	2
On-Line Homework Help	2
Municipal Election Year	2
Principal Appointment	3
School Information Finder	3
Best Start Literacy Hub	4

Full Day Kindergarten

The province is proceeding with the implementation of full day programming for children in kindergarten. Unfortunately, given current economic pressure, the province, will take up to five years before fully implementing the program. Next year, some 15% of kindergarten classrooms in this Board will be full time. The Board is applying five criteria (availability of space, community need, minimizing impact on existing child care; student achievement and readiness to implement) to identify the schools that will house these programs next year. Last year's work by the Board's Early Years & Child Care Committee generated a great deal of data related to these criteria. Consequently, those schools being recommended to the Ministry of Education to offer the program will be identified through a process of objective analysis and decision making not political horse trading.



In the interim, the DDSB continues to explore partnership and funding that will allow the extension of programs to support

parents and young children. The opening of one such program, the Best Start Learning Hub at Beaverton Public School is shown above.

Ride Times for Students

The Durham District School Board now requires regular reports from its transportation service accounting for every student having a bus ride longer than 60 minutes. Currently, 275 students have a bus ride

longer than an hour. This is 31 students fewer than last year. In Brock, routes were redesigned in an effort to reduce student ride time. More than half of the students with these longer bus rides are enrolled in specialized

programs, such as French Immersion, gifted or special education requiring that the student travel outside the home school community. The Board will continue to monitor this situation.

“We must change the culture of education and infuse it with the same technologies for learning that our students use for living.”

David Goldsmith

Trustee - Lambton Kent
District School Board

Computers in the Classroom

I worry that today's computer literate students are too often asked to check their knowledge at the classroom door. In my role as trustee, I have the opportunity of promoting my belief that technology should be used much more extensively as a means to support student learning.

In a recent visit with the Director of Education to Uxbridge Secondary School, I was thrilled to see a number of exciting and innovative applications of technology in the

classrooms. Senior science classes saw students using computer probes to analyze and understand various physical and chemical phenomena. Yearbook staff shared and edited their work on line. Data from global positioning tools was being applied by geography students. It was most heartening to see the innovative instructional practices.

I was privileged to join a group of eight school trustees recruited from across the province by the

Ontario Public School Board Association to prepare a discussion paper intended to stimulate the more effective use of technology in our classrooms. The paper entitled, *What If? Technology in the 21st Century Classroom* is now published and will hopefully be used to stimulate improved instructional practice. The paper is publicly accessible at: <http://www.opsba.org/files/WhatIf.pdf>.

On-Line Homework Help for Math Students

Speaking of the use of technology, the Durham District School Board has registered all of its grade 7 - 10 math students with individual account access to the Independent

Learning Centre's on-line math tutoring. Through this link our students are able to get assistance Sunday through Thursday, 5:30 - 9:30 from Ontario

certified teachers. This school board leads the province in the use of this service for students. Visit: <https://homeworkhelp.ilc.org/secure/login.php>

Municipal Election Year

2010 is an election year for municipal politicians. It is difficult to believe that three years have passed since my election as the Uxbridge / Brock trustee on the Durham District School Board. In seeking this position, I made a commitment to open

communication. I promised to be accessible, to promote the open sharing of information related to the work of the school board and to explore strategies that would encourage greater dialogue about our public schools. I have

enjoyed the trustee role. In determining whether to seek a second term, I hope to gather feedback regarding the public perception of my contribution. Your opinion regarding the possibility of my continuing in the role as your school trustee is welcomed.

The Appointment & Transfer of Principals

Since the opening of the school year, both Brock and Uxbridge have seen changes in school principals. In November, the Board appointed Kathleen Sivell as principal of Brock High School and in January, Eva Matthews was appointed principal at Scott Central.

Parents have questioned the need and appropriateness of these mid-year changes.

The history of Ontario school law provides the reason that principal changes are now more likely during the school year. Early in 1998, the government of Mike Harris passed Bill 160, legislation that replaced the Teachers Collective Negotiations Act. This legislation placed the management of teachers' collective agreements under the provisions of the Ontario Labor Relations Act, eliminating individual teaching contracts that had

allowed teachers and principals to leave only at the end of December and the end of the school year.

Subsequently, short lists of qualified candidates are maintained by the Board to ensure a state of readiness should a resignation be forthcoming. To ensure best practice, the Board is currently conducting a procedural review related to the recruitment, selection, appointment and placement of school administrators.



The School Information Finder

The school information finder (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/sift>) is a data source maintained by the Ontario Ministry of Education intended to provide comparative information about school communities. The use of this information is intended to allow school communities with similar profiles to compare their

students' achievement and more importantly to share best practice. However, an examination of the data reported for the school communities in Brock raises significant questions about the accuracy of the data reported. Having personally raised this as a concern with the Minister, Kathleen Wynne, she has responded, "We recognize that this

method of data collection and presentation may not accurately represent all communities. Ministry staff are working to refine the presentation of data on the site." The Durham District School Board supports this concern and has invited the Minister to attend a meeting to examine possible improvements.

"With the support of our dedicated staff, volunteers and school communities, we continue to provide our students with the best possible education today - for tomorrow."

Martyn Beckett

Director- Durham District School Board

Joe Allin
S120 Durham Rd. 13
R.R. #1
Sunderland, ON L0C 1H0

Phone (705) 357- 3679
1-866-890-2227

Fax (705) 357-1283

allin_joe@durham.edu.on.ca



I'm on the Web!

<http://www.joeallin.ca>

Parent & Family Best Start Literacy Hub

Parents from our northern communities are encouraged to bring their children and join in the “Play to Learn” program held at **Beaverton Public School** every Tuesday's from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

This Literacy Hub will also be offering an exciting free Suzuki Music program for Brock children (0-6) and parents / caregivers. Classes will run every Monday morning from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. starting on *February 22 through to May 31, 2010*. This 12 week program will allow parents and children to join together in activities involving songs, rhymes, playing musical instruments, movement and literature. The curriculum fosters and develops language, literacy, numeracy, musicianship, physical co-ordination, small and gross motor-skills, emotional and social skills. **Please register by phone 905-862-2750 extension 310.**