



**DURHAM CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
Learning and Living in Faith

Memorandum

To: Board of Trustees
From: Gerard Winn, Director of Education
Date: September 23, 2024
Subject: **Director's Report**

Please find below my report for the September 23, 2024, Regular Board Meeting.

Recognition

- I would like to extend my appreciation to our Facilities Services and Custodial staff for their work over the summer months in getting our schools and facilities ready for the new school year. My sincere thanks to our Adult and Continuing Education staff, summer school staff, and educators who provided ongoing learning opportunities for students of all ages over the past couple of months. In addition, I extend a special note of gratitude to our central system staff including our Human Resource Services, Information Communications Technology (ICT), Business and Payroll, Communication Services, and Durham Student Transportation Services, for their ongoing efforts in supporting our system and school start-up.
- We are delighted to introduce the Beacons of Hope recognition program. Beacons of Hope is connected to the [2024-2025 Spiritual Theme, *Living in Hope*](#), and will recognize two elementary students, two secondary students, and two staff members each month. Throughout the year, themes have been assigned based on the [Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations \(OCSGE\)](#) and Catholic virtues. The selected nominees will be recognized at the monthly Board Meeting for a special award presentation, and will also be featured in the DCDSB News, school websites, and DCDSB social media. Families, students, and staff are welcome to nominate a DCDSB student or staff member that exemplifies and embodies the theme for the month. To submit a nomination and for more information, [please visit our website](#).
- I would like to recognize the Anti-Black Racism and Black Excellence Advisory Committee for their work in establishing the DCDSB Black Student Excellence Awards. The DCDSB Black Student Excellence Awards will honour Grade 11 and Grade 12 students who self-identify as Black and have demonstrated leadership and/or commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion efforts. Two

students from each DCDSB secondary school may be nominated in each school year. Nominees will be honoured during an awards ceremony and will receive a certificate and a letter of recognition. The Anti-Black Racism and Black Excellence Committee will select one overall award winner to receive the Distinguished Black Student Excellence Award. The award recipient will receive a \$500 bursary, a glass award trophy, and a letter of recognition. For more information on the DCDSB Black Student Excellence Awards, [please visit our website](#).

- Safe and Accepting Schools Week took place at DCDSB from September 15-21, 2024. This was the first of our safety and well-being focused weeks at DCDSB as we strive to create positive school climates where all members of the school community feel safe and accepted. During Safe and Accepting Schools Week, our schools focused on school safety and scheduled various emergency response drills. Each day during the week focused on a theme that corresponds with our spiritual theme, *Living in Hope*.
 - Day 1: Human dignity – we are all created in God's image and worthy of love.
 - Day 2: Caring for creation is caring for each other.
 - Day 3: Responding to the poverty of loneliness.
 - Day 4: Solidarity – we are in this together.
 - Day 5: Peacemaking – restoring relationships.

To learn more about Safe and Accepting schools, please visit dcdsb.ca/SafeAndAcceptingSchools.

Upcoming Events

- On Wednesday, September 25 we will join others across the province to celebrate Franco-Ontarian Day, a time we celebrate the numerous cultural, social and economic contributions of the Francophone community to our country. I look forward to attending Father Leo J. Austin Catholic Secondary School to raise the Franco-Ontarian flag during their celebration du Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes.
- Monday, September 30 is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. On this day of solemn reflection, we honour the children who never returned home from residential schools, and offer thoughts and prayers to the survivors, their families, and all those impacted by this painful history. Acknowledging the history and the truth of the ongoing impacts of residential schools is essential to the reconciliation process. We recognize that this is a time for our Durham Catholic learning community to renew our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. Staff and students demonstrate commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by learning about the impacts of colonization, collaborating with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit community and partners, and utilizing holistic approaches to student success. By engaging staff, students, and families in deepening their learning about residential schools, Treaties, as well as the ongoing contributions of Indigenous knowledge, culture, and perspective, DCDSB prioritizes Indigenous Education across the system.

- Applications for the admission to the [Regional Arts & Media Program](#) (AMP) for the 2024-2025 school year open at the end of the month. The Regional Arts & Media Program is located at All Saints Catholic Secondary School in Whitby, and offers specialized instruction in Dance, Media Arts, Instrumental Music, Performing Arts (Drama/Vocal Music), and Visual Arts. Current Grade 6 and Grade 8 students can visit amp.dcdsb.ca for information and to apply for a September 2025 start.
- On Monday, October 7, 2024, we are hosting the System Wide Commissioning Mass beginning at 4:30 p.m. at St. Mary of the People Parish in Oshawa. Father Francisco Fernandez Siles, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Whitby and our new Bishop's delegate to the board, will be presiding. I look forward to this annual event which honours new staff to DCDSB.

GW/eb