



Report on:

The Review of the Northern Initiative

**Submitted for Consideration to
Patricia Preston, Director of Education**

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of Curriculum and Assessment

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Letter to the Director of Education

Dear Director Preston:

I am pleased to present this report for your consideration.

Pursuant to the mandate, I have heard from and talked with more than 600 people from across Georgina. They have shared many success stories and have identified issues they would like addressed. Based on what I have heard and read, I have included “proposed action items” which can serve to inform your decision-making and may form the basis for future recommendations.

This has been a comprehensive review - the community deserved nothing less. I was motivated every step of the way by the desire to capture and represent people’s opinions, ideas and needs as accurately and completely as possible. I hope they will feel that I have done so. They have provided tremendous insights on how the Board can achieve its Mission and realize its Vision more quickly, efficiently and effectively in Georgina.

After analyzing a wide range of data, I formed an opinion that the K-6 / 7-12 model was fundamentally sound with the foundation for success moving forward. Thereafter, the report documents certain issues and suggests action items. That is what reports like this do - focus on how good becomes great, how great becomes excellent. This does not deny or diminish the great work that is taking place in each of the four Georgina schools. Indeed, I would be remiss if I did not say that I have been impressed by the insight, honesty and commitment of every person I encountered - students, parents, teachers, support staff, administrators and the parish priest alike. They are proud of their schools and have hope for a promising future.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Luisa Coquim, my Administrative Assistant, for her support. Thanks also to Annette D’Addese and Lori Lisi for their work in leading the student workshops with Grade 6-8 students. Thank you to the Superintendents of Schools and the four Principals for their support over the last few months, not to mention their commitment to student success. I am also grateful for the support of many others in departments throughout the CEC, not the least of which is Marcelle McShine Quao (Education Researcher) and Graham Wang (Junior Programmer Analyst) for their help to find and make sense of the data.

Finally, I wish to thank you for giving me the opportunity to lead this review. I have met so many caring, dedicated, passionate people who share my enthusiasm for Catholic education.



Carlos Sousa
Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Assessment

Executive Summary

At the Regular Board Meeting of June 16, 2015, it was decided that there would be a review of “The Northern Initiative” to commence in September 2015 led by Carlos Sousa, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Assessment.

“The Northern Initiative” is the phrase used to describe the model that was established to meet the educational needs of Catholic families in Georgina. Starting in the 2002-2003 school year, Prince of Peace, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bernadette CES became Grade K-6 schools. Our Lady of the Lake CCS welcomed the Grade 7 and 8 students from all three schools in addition to students in the high school program. For the most part, this K-6 / 7-12 model has remained largely unchanged since its inception. This marks the first formal review.

This review involved consultation with parents, students, alumni, teachers, support staff, administrators and the parish priest to identify:

- successes and challenges of the present model from K-12;
- ideas and suggestions that would likely enhance and enrich the educational experience of students as they progress from grade-to-grade and transition to life after high school;
- preferences related to the timing of the Grade 12 graduation ceremony.

Since October 2015, more than 600 stakeholders provided their insights, opinions and suggestions. In addition to observations and the analysis of achievement data, there were four primary tools through which stakeholders provided input and feedback: interviews, surveys, focus groups and workshops.

This report summarizes findings and includes “proposed action items” which can serve to inform decision-making and future recommendations. Information is conveyed in three main sections: Part A provides background information, including a community profile; Part B provides the basis for a determination on the effectiveness of the K-6 / 7-12 model and then suggests a “way forward”; and, Part C addresses “specific issues” that stakeholders identified.

Analysis of the data (i.e., qualitative and quantitative) supports the conclusion that the program from K-12 in Georgina is fundamentally sound with the foundation for success moving forward:

- Notwithstanding the fact that there is an achievement gap between our Catholic schools in Georgina and the rest of the Board, our students in Georgina are at or approaching the provincial average in most areas and exceeding the average in some;
- When compared to their peers in all publicly-funded, English language schools in Georgina, our students are performing above the average for Georgina in almost every measure and often have the highest results for their respective communities;
- The “Event Graduation Rate” for Our Lady of the Lake CCS is in line with the Board’s;
- Retention rates for the Board’s Georgina schools are high, with a five year average for Grade 8-9 that exceeds the Board average;

- Parent and student satisfaction and confidence in the program is generally high;
- Students feel safe and welcomed and express satisfaction with their school's "culture".

Research shows the way forward from good-to-great-to-excellent is to "cultivate collaboration" in order to foster coherence. When there is coherence, people have a common understanding and shared values and goals. They are invested in a common journey. The first - and perhaps the most important "proposed action item" - is that the four Principals develop a plan to encourage and support high levels of collaboration within and between their school communities. The goal is to instill "collaborative habits of mind" that, in time, become "that's just how we do things around here - we work together as Catholic communities in Georgina to promote good outcomes for every student". The scale and scope of the collaboration should include principal's networks and parent networks between schools, not to mention teachers' professional networks within and between schools (including cross-panel collaboration). The goal is to achieve higher levels of student engagement, achievement, well-being, and faith development. Collaborative cultures become a vehicle to foster coherence from K-12.

Stakeholder groups mentioned some specific areas of concern. When something was identified repeatedly, it was considered a "specific issue" that warranted a closer examination:

The Transition Experience from Grade 6-7 - In particular, parents expressed the desire that more opportunities be provided for elementary students and their parents to be physically present at Our Lady of the Lake CCS - even as early as Grade 4.

The School-Parish Relationship - Many school-parish activities take place, however, the level of involvement by the parish priest differs from school-to-school. Notwithstanding these inconsistencies, the four principals and the priest look forward to collaborating more closely.

The School-Home Relationship - Historically, there have been low levels of parent involvement. Principals and Catholic School Councils should collaborate to develop a Georgina-wide strategy to foster higher levels of parent/family involvement and engagement. As well, mechanisms to honour "student voice" should be pursued from K-12, including SpeakUP grants for 7-12.

Equity - Parents, students, staff and administrators appreciate the limits that small school size and location place on attempts to ensure equality for Georgina. Having said this, they do expect equity - . In particular, stakeholders feel three issues place students in Georgina at a disadvantage relative to their peers in other YCDSB high schools:

- the number of elective courses offered in Grades 11-12;
- the availability of extra-curricular activities (e.g., sports, clubs and workshops) as limited by the reliance on busing and the condition of the field at Our Lady of the Lake CCS;
- the challenges that exist to provide students with experiential learning activities from K-12, including a Co-operative Education program.

Communication, Promotion and Marketing - Presently, there exists no vehicle to communicate as a "Family of Schools" in Georgina. The community would benefit from a comprehensive marketing campaign that promotes the benefits Catholic Education in Georgina, explains the facets and advantages of programming in all four schools (including the components of the Grade 7-8 program), and describes the ways in which there is K-12 alignment and coherence.

- With respect to investigating “preferences related to the timing of the Grade 12 graduation ceremony”, feedback is being analyzed with a view to report at a later date.



PART A

BACKGROUND

What is “The Northern Initiative”?

Catholic families in Georgina have been served by three elementary schools for many years - Prince of Peace, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bernadette Catholic Elementary Schools. Prior to September 2002, Sacred Heart Catholic High School (Newmarket) was the closest option for Georgina families who wanted a Catholic high school education for their children.

For many years, Catholic parents* in Georgina advocated for a Catholic high school “in our own community”. Their efforts succeeded when, at a meeting of the Board of Trustees on February 12, 2002, a motion was passed that approved the “Northern Initiative”. In September 2002, Our Lady of the Lake Catholic College School opened its doors.

“The Northern Initiative” is the phrase used to describe the model that was established to meet the educational needs of Catholic families in Georgina. It added a high school option and changed the traditional elementary school model. Prior to September 2002, the three Catholic elementary schools served student populations until the end of Grade 8. Starting in the 2002-2003 school year, Prince of Peace, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bernadette CES became Grade K-6 schools. In September 2002, Our Lady of the Lake CCS welcomed the Grade 7 and 8 students from all three schools in addition to students in the high school program.

“The Northern Initiative” is the phrase used to describe the model that was established to meet the educational needs of Catholic families in Georgina. It added a high school option and changed the traditional elementary school model.

Many support mechanisms were put in place to foster a sense of belonging and ensure the safety and well-being of Grade 7-8 students. As well, consultation had resulted in many program components being included in the Grade 7-8 program to foster student engagement and academic achievement. Provisions were also made to ensure that Grade 8 students would continue to have a graduation ceremony to celebrate the milestone of having completed their K-8 education.

The establishment of a K-6 / 7-12 education model in Georgina was, and is, referred to as the “Northern Initiative”. For the most part, the model has remained largely unchanged since its inception.

* In this report, parent(s) is used to refer to parent(s) and guardian(s).

I. Why Review “The Northern Initiative”?

A review of the Northern Initiative is necessary and timely given the following:

- The Board’s Multi Year Strategic Plan calls for more frequent and thorough program reviews to position YCDSB for continued success as one of the top-performing school boards in Ontario. The Northern Initiative has been in place since 2002. This marks the first formal review.
- In the years since 2002-2003, there have been many changes to Georgina’s demographics and population. Significant growth and shifts are projected in the years to come.
- The entire K-12 curriculum has been reviewed and revised since 2002-2003. Inquiry and critical thinking are now at the heart of learning in all subject areas. It is timely that these schools assess the extent to which they are adjusting and adapting in their pursuit of continuous improvement.
- It has never been more important - and more challenging - for students to make successful transitions to life after high school. We need to ensure that students develop healthy “habits of mind” that promote reflection, balance, resilience and well-being.
- The power and potential of technology to enrich teaching and learning has never been greater. The advent of new technologies and devices is radically, quickly, and constantly changing the educational landscape. We need to ensure that learning goals are driving technology-related decisions and uses.
- YCDSB has developed a new framework (i.e., the 6Cs) to help define teaching and learning in 21st century classrooms. From K-12, students will develop Critical Thinking & Problem Solving, Creativity & Innovation, Collaboration and Communication. They do so to develop a distinctly Catholic Character that guides and inform Catholic, global Citizenship.

Given these realities, we need to ensure that the Catholic community in Georgina - school, home, and parish - is functioning and interacting in ways that best promote the achievement of our Mission and the realization of the Vision we have for our students.

2. The Multi-Year Strategic Plan and “Program Reviews”

Students at YCDSB have a range of needs, interests, abilities, hopes and dreams. Regardless of where they live, learn and worship, they want and need access to innovative programs that help them discover and develop their God-given gifts. Within strict budgetary parameters, YCDSB provides a wide and diverse range of programs and supports from K-12 to foster hope for a promising future and develop students' confidence and competence to make successful transitions from grade-to-grade and to life after high school.

The Multi Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) articulates who we are and what we hope to achieve. It informs and guides planning for school and system improvement. It identifies a:

- **Mission Statement:**

- **Vision Statement:**

Additionally, the MYSP names;

- **Core Values:**
and
- **Strategic Commitments:**
 - Integration of Our Catholic Faith
 - Continuous Improvement of Student Achievement
 - Engaging Our Communities
 - Effective Use of Our Resources

In the pursuit of our Mission and to realize our Vision, YCDSB has an obligation and duty to allocate system resources and assets effectively, efficiently and equitably. The Board must take great care to ensure that the nature and availability of programs and supports are rooted in its Core Values and that they reflect the Board’s Strategic Commitments.

Program reviews provide the lens through which the Board assesses alignment, coherence, and impact.

In addition to setting priorities and providing direction, the Board’s Multi Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) calls for more regular and thorough program reviews to position YCDSB for continued success as one of the top-performing school boards in Ontario. Program reviews are conducted to ensure that assets and resources are allocated and aligned to achieve the best possible outcomes for all Catholic school communities.

Program reviews provide the lens through which the Board assesses alignment, coherence, and impact. The fundamental question that frames all reviews - from which all other questions flow - is as follows:

From this perspective, the review of “The Northern Initiative” was an operational review to assess the extent to which the present model - and all its features and components - is helping or hindering progress towards realizing the Mission and achieving the Board’s Vision. More importantly, however, it was an organizational review that explored the scale, scope and nature of the interactions within and between schools. And it did so to assess the extent to which there is alignment and coherence from K-12. In other words, are we firing on all cylinders from K-12? Are our Georgina schools speaking with one voice? Are the stakeholders (i.e., parents, students,

teachers, support staff, administrators and the parish priest) working in silos or as members of a collaborative family of schools committed to fostering excellence, faith development and a successful outcome for every student? Embedded in this journey was an investigation of the extent to which the model - in practice - reflects the Board's Core Values and Strategic Commitments.

3. Terms of Reference

This review involved consultation with parents, students, alumni, teachers, support staff, administrators and the parish priest to identify:

- successes and challenges of the present model (K-12);
- ideas and suggestions that would likely enhance and enrich the educational experience of students as they progress from grade-to-grade and transition to life after high school, in three main areas:
 - transition experiences from Grade 6-7, 8-9, and from high school to life after high school;
 - scope and impact of the program in Grades K-6, 7-8, and 9-12;
 - supports to promote student achievement and well-being in Grades K-6, 7-8, and 9-12;
- preferences related to the timing of the Grade 12 graduation ceremony.

The deliverable is this report which, through the Director of Education, can be considered by the Board of Trustees.



The Review of “The Northern Initiative”

COMMUNITY PROFILE

I. Population and Demographics

The Regional Municipality of York is one of the fastest growing areas in North America. York Region stretches north from Toronto to Lake Simcoe and is comprised of nine municipalities: Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Vaughan, Whitchurch-Stouffville, and the Township of King. These municipalities are set apart by various characteristics, including: geography, economic development, population and demographics.



Situated on the south-east shore of Lake Simcoe, the Town of Georgina is the northernmost municipality in York Region. Geographically, Georgina is the largest municipality in the Region, albeit comprised of a number of lakefront communities and many small rural hamlets. Its three largest communities are Keswick, Sutton/Jackson’s Point and Pefferlaw. Georgina has a population of 43,517 (2011), which is predicted to grow to 70,300 by 2031.

Of York Region’s municipalities, Georgina has the highest proportion of residents indicating “English” as their mother tongue - 90.3%; the Regional average was 51.0% (2011).

MOTHER TONGUE	Town of Georgina		York Region	
Total Population	43,060	100%	1,026,635	100%
Single Responses	42,735	99.2%	995,170	96.9%
English	38,890	90.3%	523,690	51.0%
French	525	1.2%	8,310	0.8%
Non-Official Language	3,315	7.7%	463,175	45.1%

Keswick is, by far, the largest community in Georgina with a population of more than 25,000 and representing more than half of the municipality’s total population. Largely due to the expansion of Highway 404 to a point just south of Ravenshoe Road, future growth and development is expected in Georgina, with a focus in the Keswick area. Recent growth has and will continue to impact historic demographic, socio-economic and ethno-cultural patterns across the municipality. For a more detailed community profile, visit the town’s website at:

<https://www.georgina.ca/doing-business/community-profile>

For the _____, visit:

<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3519070&Geo2=CD&Code2=3519&Data=Count&SearchText=Georgina&SearchType=Begin&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>

II. Religious Affiliation

In terms of religious affiliation in Georgina, the most recent figures are available from the 2001 Census. The breakdown is as follows:

Protestant	45.7%
Roman Catholic	22.4%
Other Christian	3.3%
Jewish	0.3%
Non-Religious	28.3%

Source:

Statistics Canada. (2002). Georgina 2001 Community Profiles. released June 27, 2002. Last Modified: 2005-11-30. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 93F0053XIE

III. Churches in Georgina

The Catholic worshipping community in Georgina is served by two churches. Our Lady of the Lake Church is situated in uptown Keswick, adjacent to St. Thomas Aquinas CES. Our Lady of the Lake CCS and Prince of Peace CES are located 5.2 km south of the church. Immaculate Conception Church is located in Sutton adjacent to St. Bernadette CES. One priest ministers to the communities at both Our Lady of the Lake Church and Immaculate Conception Church.

IV. Publicly-Funded, English Language Education in Georgina

The English language community in Georgina is served by two publicly-funded education systems: the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) and the York Region District School Board (YRDSB). Both systems have schools in each of the Region's nine municipalities. Both are mandated to provide universally accessible education for all students. YCDSB delivers all programming through a distinctly Catholic lens, guided by Gospel Values and Catholic Virtues. Residents of Georgina have access to three (3) secondary and fourteen (14) elementary publicly-funded, English language schools, as follows:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	Downtown Keswick	Uptown Keswick	Sutton & Pefferlaw
York Catholic District School Board	➤ Prince of Peace CES	➤ St. Thomas Aquinas CEC	➤ St. Bernadette CEC
York Region District School Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Jersey PS ➤ Fairwood PS ➤ Lake Simcoe PS ➤ RL Graham PS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Deer Park PS ➤ Lakeside PS ➤ WJ Watson PS ➤ Keswick PS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Black River PS ➤ Sutton PS ➤ Morning Glory PS

SECONDARY SCHOOLS	Downtown Keswick	Uptown Keswick	Sutton & Pefferlaw
York Catholic District School Board	➤ Our Lady of the Lake Catholic College School		
York Region District School Board	➤ Keswick High School		➤ Sutton District High School

With respect to student enrollment across Georgina, there has been a steady and significant decline over the last decade. Using Grade 10, first-time eligible OSSLT data as a proxy for total enrollment, Georgina has experienced a 40% decline in secondary school enrollment from 2006-2007 to 2014-2015. Of the three publicly-funded, English language high schools in Georgina, Our Lady of the Lake CCS has had, by far, the smallest decline at 26% for the defined period.

Grade 10 Students: First Time Eligible	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	06/07 to 14/16
Our Lady of the Lake Catholic College School	112	125	117	142	134	95	105	104	83	- 26%
Keswick High School	416	358	324	322	312	309	252	267	229	- 45%
Sutton District High School	197	208	159	152	156	157	117	137	123	- 38%
Total No. Grade 10 Students in Georgina	725	691	600	616	602	561	474	508	435	- 40%
Market Share										
Our Lady of the Lake Catholic College School	15.5%	18.1%	19.5%	23.1%	22.3%	16.9%	22.2%	20.5%	19.1%	+ 3.6%

In terms of market share, Our Lady of the Lake CCS has experience slight declines from its high of 23.1% of Georgina’s Grade 10 high school students in 2009-2010 to 19.1% in 2014-2015. However, when compared to the 2006-2007 cohort, Our Lady of the Lake CCS has experienced an increase in market share of 3.6%.

V. Enrollment at YCDSB's Georgina Schools

The charts that follow provide current and projected enrollment numbers for the Board's four Georgina schools. Projections are prepared in a "hybrid" model that includes a grade (cohort) survival approach and a number of other data sources to validate projected school enrollments (e.g., development data, building permit/occupancy data, live birth data, population data, historical enrollment/retention data).

i. Elementary School Enrollment and Projections

School	Student Enrollment: 2015-2016										
	JK	SK	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	Capacity	Utilization
Prince of Peace CES	28	34	33	22	32	30	33	23	235	329	71%
St. Thomas Aquinas CES	31	36	37	26	22	29	36	22	239	415	61%
St. Bernadette CES	28	30	23	18	21	19	5	15	159	349	51%
TOTAL	87	100	93	66	75	78	74	60	633	1,093	58%

School	Enrollment Projections: 2015-2025											
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
Prince of Peace CES	235	232	227	225	219	220	210	207	204	201	208	
St. Thomas Aquinas CES	239	253	253	265	281	290	307	320	316	308	304	
St. Bernadette CES	159	179	204	206	207	207	210	209	201	192	184	
TOTAL	633	664	684	696	707	717	727	736	721	701	696	

ii. Secondary School Enrollment and Projections

Our Lady of the Lake CCS	Enrollment (By Grade): 2015-2016										
	7	8	9	10	11	12	7-12	Capacity	Utilization	7-8	9-12
TOTAL	76	74	109	95	85	106	545	916	60%	150	395

Our Lady of the Lake CCS	Enrollment Projections: 2015-2025											
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
Grades 7-8	150	146	148	169	175	168	167	175	171	161	156	
Grades 9-12	395	376	381	368	349	367	378	391	391	389	388	
TOTAL	545	522	529	537	524	535	545	566	562	550	544	

VI. Number of Families and Teachers: 2015-2016

School	Families	Classroom Teachers	Teacher Librarian	Core Resource
Prince of Peace CES	183	11	0.5	1.5
St. Thomas Aquinas CES	177	11	0.5	1.5
St. Bernadette CES	123	8	0.5	1.5
Our Lady of the Lake CCS	450	38	1.0	4.5
TOTAL	933	68	2.5	7.0



The Review of “The Northern Initiative”

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

In the past four months, we have engaged with more than 600 stakeholders, including parents, students, alumni, teachers, support staff, administrators (current and former), and the parish priest. The lead reviewer joined the staff at Our Lady of the Lake CCS for the school's Faith Day celebration on September 28, 2015 and attended the school's Grade 12 graduation ceremony on October 8, 2015. As well, the lead reviewer was in attendance as Grade 6 students from Prince of Peace, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bernadette CES came for an orientation and lunch at Our Lady of the Lake CCS on December 2, 2015.

These proposed action items are suggested after thoughtful consideration of the wide range of data (qualitative and quantitative) that was collected and analyzed.

In addition to observations and the analysis of achievement and other data, there were four primary tools/methods through which we reached out and gathered information for analysis: interviews, surveys, focus groups and workshops. The information and feedback has been voluminous, has informed thinking, and has served as the guidepost to focus the proposed action items. These proposed action items are suggested after thoughtful consideration of the wide range of data (qualitative and quantitative) that was collected and analyzed.

The data gathering phase began on September 2, 2015, lasted until December 16, 2015, and can be described as follows:

I. Phase I: Background Research (Sept 2 - Oct 18, 2015)

In this phase, a wide range of data was collected, organized and analyzed. The most notable sources were EQAO achievement data for all publicly-funded, English language schools in Georgina, going as far back as the 2005-2006 school year. The Board's Student Information System / Data Warehouse was another important source of data. From Maplewood we were able to gather course information, enrollment figures, retention rates and event graduation rates. The foregoing was instrumental to enable an opinion the the impact of the K-6 / 7-12 program. Additionally, data from Statistics Canada was examined, with a view to develop a community profile for the Town of Georgina.

II. Phase II: Community Input (Oct 19 - Dec 16, 2015)

The Board is committed to "Engaging Our Communities". At the heart of this strategic commitment is the desire to invite community input to inform Board and school decision-making and improvement planning. This phase began by raising awareness within the community; namely, clarifying the terms of reference and promoting the opportunities for input. Appendix I provides a summary of community input activities.

I. Raising Awareness

The Georgina community was made aware of opportunities for input via the Board's website at: <http://www.ycdsb.ca/northern-initiative/default.htm>. Centrally, links to this information were also placed on the homepage of the Board's Georgina schools. In addition, Principals sent synervice messages to households in their respective communities. Through the Board's Communication Department, YCDSB placed an insert in Church Bulletins and an advertisement in the community newspaper - . A Synervice email was sent from the lead reviewer to the entire Catholic parent community in Georgina. Lastly, a letter from the lead reviewer was distributed to all parents through their schools. The letter served to clarify the nature of the review and invite parent participation in the survey and focus groups.

II. "Conversations" with Parents, Administrators and Teachers

Before the formal community input phase began, "conversations" (as opposed to presentations) took place with principals, Catholic School Council members, and teachers from each of the four school communities. At each session, there were opportunities for "Questions & Answers".

III. Interviews & Questionnaires: Input From Principals

As the first source of community input, individual interviews were conducted with principals from each of the four Georgina schools. Present at all meetings was the Principal, the lead reviewer and an Administrative Assistant who acted as the recorder. These interviews provided principals with an opportunity to list and describe what they perceived to be the successes and challenges of the delivery model. In advance of the interview, principals completed an online "Questionnaire" where they listed existing school-based supports in three areas:

- Catholic faith development and parent involvement to promote student achievement and well-being;
- transition experiences, numeracy and literacy supports, and educational partnerships to promote student achievement
- student success team and student well-being (physical and mental)

IV. Focus Groups

A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which small, homogeneous groups of 8-12 people are asked to share their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes on a topic(s) or subject(s). The discussion is lead by a moderator who uses carefully crafted questions to stimulate the thinking and sharing of participants. For this review, the lead reviewer served as the moderator for all focus groups. The Administrative Assistant to the lead reviewer was in attendance for all focus groups and acted as the note-taker. Notes were recorded publicly on a Google SLIDES that was projected for all to see. Comments, insights and suggestions were recorded, with no attribution to the individual. Corrections were made in real-time to ensure accuracy. Each focus group lasted two hours.

Each focus group provided an opportunity for stakeholders to share their insights on the program enhancements that are likely to contribute most to improved outcomes for students as well as

offering opinions on the merits of various options for the Grade 8 and Grade 12 graduation ceremonies.

i. Focus Group With Current and Previous Administrators at Our Lady of the Lake Catholic College School

Current and former administrators at Our Lady of the Lake CCS were invited to participate in a focus group. They offered their insights, opinions, and suggestions on a variety of topics, including

- the school's most striking successes and most significant challenges to foster engagement, achievement and well-being from Grade 7-12.

ii. Focus Groups With Teachers

Three (3) focus groups were held with teachers. The first included three teachers from each of the elementary school, including the Grade 6 teacher from each school. A second focus group included teachers from Our Lady of the Lake CCS and focused on the Grade 7 and 8 program. Also involving teachers from Our Lady of the Lake CCS, the third focused on the Grade 9-12 program. Teachers offered their insights, opinions, and suggestions on a variety of topics, including the most striking successes and the most significant challenges with respect to:

- enabling successful transitions from Grade 6 to 7;
- ensuring the safety and well-being of students in Grades 7 and 8;
- promoting improved academic achievement in Grades 7 and 8;
- enabling successful transitions from Grade 8 to 9; and,
- enabling successful transitions from high school to life after high school.

iii. Focus Groups With Parents

Five (5) focus groups were held with parents. The first included three members of each school's Catholic School Council - the Chair and two others. The other four were school-specific. Parents offered their insights, opinions, and suggestions on a variety of topics, including:

- what parents want and expect from Catholic schools in Georgina;
- their greatest concerns with respect to the transition from Grade 6 to 7;
- the features of the Grade 7-8 program that contribute most to students' sense of belonging and safety;
- the features of the Grade 7-8 program that contribute most to higher levels of student achievement and well-being; and,
- areas and suggestions for improvement.

iv. Focus Groups With Alumni / Students

Three (3) focus groups were held to honour the value of "student voice". The first included alumni from Our Lady of the Lake CCS. The second and third were comprised of current Grade 9 and Grade 12 students, respectively. At these focus groups, alumni and students offered their insights, opinions, and suggestions on a variety of topics, including:

- the extent to which the Grade 7-8 program prepared them to make successful transitions to high school;
- the features of the Grade 7-8 program that contribute most to:
 - students' sense of belonging and safety;
 - higher levels of student achievement and well-being;
- activities in Grades 9-12 that contribute most to enabling successful transitions to life after high school;
- areas and suggestions for improvement, Grade 7-12; and,
- reasons cited by peers who transferred to another high school before graduating from Our Lady of the Lake CCS.

V. Workshops With Students

Four (4) workshops were held with students. Each was facilitated by the Co-ordinator of Elementary Programs and the Co-ordinator of Secondary Programs. The first three included all the Grade 6 students from each of the elementary schools. The last workshop included twenty-three (23) Grade 7 and 8 students from Our Lady of the Lake CCS. At these workshops, students offered their insights, opinions, and suggestions on a variety of topics, including:

- from Grade 6 students, their “Fears, Cheers and Unclears” about the upcoming transition to Grade 7;
- from Grade 7-8 students, their thoughts on whether to “Keep, Change, or Start” specific activities that are designed to enable successful transitions to Grade 7 and 9;
- from Grade 7-8 students, their thoughts on features of the Grade 7-8 program that contribute most to student engagement, achievement and well-being; and,
- from all participants, their views on what motivates them to learn and succeed.

VI. Surveys

Surveys are used to gather large amounts of quantitative data in an efficient way. Through the addition of open-ended questions, they can also be used to capture qualitative information. For the purposes of this review, surveys were developed for four audiences: parents (K-12), students (9-12), teachers and support staff (K-12) and Our Lady of the Lake CCS alumni. All were administered online, for a defined period. The administrative team at Our Lady of the Lake CCS worked with teachers to develop a schedule whereby every student had the opportunity to complete the survey during school hours.

Every survey provided an opportunity for respondents to identify successes and suggest areas for improvement. Respondents also had the opportunity to express their satisfaction with certain aspects of the model as well as their preference on the timing of the Grade 8 and 12 graduation ceremonies.

VII. Interview with the Parish Priest

There was a meeting with the parish priest to discuss the nature of the school-parish-home relationship. The parish priest had an opportunity to celebrate the successes and describe the challenges faced when trying to maintain strong relationships.

VII. Debrief Meetings

We engaged in “debrief” meetings with all four principals. These meetings took place at the conclusion of the focus group phase and provided an opportunity for principals to hear “the big ideas”, themes and topics that had emerged. It was also an opportunity for principals to clarify and provide more input.



PART B

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS: K-12

ASSESSING PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS: K-12

As a Catholic educational system, each student and staff member is called by God to reach his/her full potential and to work to build the Reign of God on earth. Every student is called to develop in wisdom and knowledge and to discern his/her own vocation from God. Teachers and support staff are called to be beacons of hope and to inspire confidence and competence in their students. And, as a community of Catholic educators, we are all called and committed to the success and well-being of all our students. If the Board is to achieve its Missions and realize the Vision it has for its students, we need to ensure that programs and supports are delivered and aligned to be effective and efficient in the pursuit of student success.

“Excellence” is one of the Board’s Core Values. In the context of this review, excellence refers to many things - not the least of which is “Program Excellence”. In this regard, the first undertaking of this review was to make a determination of the effectiveness and impact of the K-6 / 7-12 model in Georgina. To reach an opinion, many factors and data sets were investigated, including:

- Student Achievement Data (Current and Longitudinal)
- Event Graduation Rates
- Retention Rates
- Parent and Student Satisfaction Levels
- School Climate Surveys Results

I. Students Achievement

Before the community input phase began, an analysis was made of a wide range of achievement and other data - current and longitudinal. The goal was to make a determination on the impact of the program. In other words, on the basis of objective and statistical data, can it be reasonably concluded that the model fundamentally sound? Does it have the foundation for success moving forward? Was it producing “good results” for the Catholic community in Georgina?

It is important to note from the outset that the analytical methodology was rooted in comparison of “apples to apples”. In other words, conclusions with respect to the impact of the program were made on the basis of how well our Catholic students performed on standardized tests (over time) relative to their peers in all publicly-funded, English language schools in Georgina. The primary data source to inform a determination was the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO).

EQAO is an independent agency that creates and administers large-scale, standardized assessments to measure Ontario students’ achievement in reading, writing and math at key stages of their education - Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10. In addition to providing results to each student who writes an assessment, the agency also provides schools and school boards with detailed reports about their students’ achievement. This data is used to improve school programming and classroom

instruction. EQAO data - current and historic - for all publicly-funded schools in Ontario is available on its website.

On the basis of EQAO data, the education delivery model as available to the Catholic community in Georgina (i.e., K-6 / 7-12) can be reasonably said to be fundamentally sound, with the foundation for success moving forward. The pattern of student achievement that emerged can be summarized as follows:

Notwithstanding the fact that there is an achievement gap between our Catholic schools in Georgina and the rest of the Board, our students in Georgina are at or approaching the provincial average in most areas and exceeding the average in some.

When compared to their peers in all publicly-funded, English language schools in Georgina, our students are performing above the average for Georgina in almost every measure, and, in many measures, our schools have the highest results for their respective communities.

Following is a deeper explanation.

a) Prince of Peace Catholic Elementary School

In all EQAO Grade 3 measures - Reading, Writing and Mathematics - the performance of students at Prince of Peace CES from 2005-2014 exceeds the average for all publicly-funded, English language elementary schools in Georgina. For that same period, when compared to the results from all five publicly-funded, English language schools in Downtown Keswick, students from Prince of Peace CES place second or third on all Grade 3 measures.

In all EQAO Grade 6 measures - Reading, Writing and Mathematics - the performance of students at Prince of Peace CES from 2005-2014 exceeds the average for all publicly-funded, English language elementary schools in Georgina. For that same period, when compared to the results from all five publicly-funded, English language schools in Downtown Keswick, students from Prince of Peace CES place first on all Grade 6 measures.

b) St. Bernadette Catholic Elementary School

In all EQAO Grade 3 measures - Reading, Writing and Mathematics - the performance of students at St. Bernadette CES from 2005-2014 is below the average for all publicly-funded, English language elementary schools in Georgina. For that same period, when compared to the results from all four publicly-funded, English language schools in Sutton and surrounding communities, students from St. Bernadette CES place fourth on all Grade 3 measures.

In all EQAO Grade 6 measures - Reading, Writing and Mathematics - the performance of students at St. Bernadette CES from 2005-2014 exceeds the average for all publicly-funded, English language elementary schools in Georgina. For that same period, when compared to the results from all four publicly-funded, English language schools in Sutton and surrounding communities, students from St. Bernadette CES place first on all Grade 6 measures.

Grade 3 - Writing

% of ALL Students At/Above the Provincial Standard	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Average 2005-2014
YCDSB	78%	79%	79%	81%	82%	82%	85%	85%	88%	82%
Provincial Average	64%	64%	66%	68%	70%	73%	76%	77%	78%	71%
St. Thomas Aquinas CEC	48%	68%	58%	67%	64%	63%	80%	95%	85%	70%
Prince of Peace CES	61%	59%	40%	65%	54%	53%	65%	84%	71%	61%
Georgina Average	49%	53%	50%	58%	56%	57%	64%	69%	73%	59%
St. Bernadette CEC	21%	25%	60%	65%	48%	50%	36%	31%	75%	46%

Grade 3 - Reading

% of ALL Students At/Above the Provincial Standard	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Average 2005-2014
YCDSB	71%	71%	72%	70%	67%	71%	70%	72%	75%	71%
Provincial Average	62%	62%	61%	61%	62%	65%	66%	68%	70%	64%
St. Thomas Aquinas CEC	74%	60%	52%	61%	38%	48%	67%	77%	91%	63%
Prince of Peace CES	61%	57%	42%	59%	40%	53%	52%	68%	50%	54%
Georgina Average	49%	49%	49%	50%	50%	50%	53%	57%	63%	52%
St. Bernadette CEC	25%	50%	50%	47%	31%	40%	43%	19%	88%	44%

Grade 3 - Mathematics

% of ALL Students At/Above the Provincial Standard	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Average 2005-2014
YCDSB	77%	79%	78%	79%	78%	73%	74%	72%	72%	76%
Provincial Average	68%	69%	68%	70%	71%	69%	68%	67%	67%	69%
St. Thomas Aquinas CEC	55%	65%	52%	69%	56%	59%	67%	73%	94%	66%
Prince of Peace CES	66%	72%	52%	65%	57%	50%	48%	56%	61%	59%
Georgina Average	59%	55%	58%	61%	60%	54%	52%	55%	58%	57%
St. Bernadette CEC	42%	50%	40%	65%	52%	50%	57%	6%	62%	47%

Grade 6 - Reading

% of ALL Students At/Above the Provincial Standard	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Average 2005-2014
YCDSB	74%	74%	74%	75%	77%	79%	80%	81%	85%	78%
St. Thomas Aquinas CEC	75%	61%	71%	67%	79%	60%	82%	90%	93%	75%
Provincial Average	64%	64%	66%	69%	72%	74%	75%	77%	79%	71%
St. Bernadette CEC	42%	73%	67%	78%	60%	79%	92%	80%	100%	66%
Prince of Peace CES	69%	57%	67%	56%	57%	57%	76%	60%	64%	63%
Georgina Average	52%	50%	56%	62%	64%	60%	70%	68%	72%	61%

Grade 6 - Writing

% of ALL Students At/Above the Provincial Standard	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Average 2005-2014
YCDSB	76%	74%	79%	77%	81%	82%	84%	87%	86%	81%
Provincial Average	61%	61%	67%	67%	70%	73%	74%	76%	78%	70%
St. Bernadette CEC	31%	50%	40%	61%	80%	79%	92%	80%	100%	68%
Prince of Peace CES	61%	57%	71%	62%	57%	55%	82%	66%	70%	65%
St. Thomas Aquinas CEC	64%	48%	57%	64%	62%	54%	71%	69%	82%	63%
Georgina Average	44%	41%	53%	56%	57%	62%	63%	59%	67%	56%

GRADE 6 - Mathematics

% of ALL Students At/Above the Provincial Standard	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Average 2005-2014
YCDSB	73%	71%	73%	70%	68%	65%	65%	62%	63%	68%
St. Thomas Aquinas CEC	68%	50%	48%	47%	60%	49%	63%	67%	96%	61%
Provincial Average	61%	59%	61%	63%	61%	58%	58%	57%	54%	59%
St. Bernadette CEC	81%	62%	40%	50%	40%	64%	33%	52%	25%	50%
Prince of Peace CES	63%	32%	49%	47%	45%	10%	50%	37%	42%	42%
Georgina Average	49%	39%	45%	48%	45%	42%	37%	37%	33%	42%

c) St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Elementary School

In all EQAO Grade 3 measures - Reading, Writing and Mathematics - the performance of students at St. Thomas Aquinas CES from 2005-2014 exceeds the average for all publicly-funded, English language elementary schools in Georgina. For that same period, when compared to the results from all five publicly-funded, English language schools in Uptown Keswick, students from St. Thomas Aquinas CES place first in two and second in one of the Grade 3 measures.

In all EQAO Grade 6 measures - Reading, Writing and Mathematics - the performance of students at St. Thomas Aquinas CES from 2005-2014 exceeds the average for all publicly-funded, English language elementary schools in Georgina. For that same period, when compared to the results from all five publicly-funded, English language schools in Uptown Keswick, students from St. Thomas Aquinas CES place first on one Grade 6 measure and second on two.

d) Our Lady of the Lake CCS - Mathematics (Grade 9)

The Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics tests the math skills students are expected to have learned by the end of Grade 9. Different versions of the test are administered in the academic and the applied math courses. Students in first-semester math courses take the test during a two-week testing window in January; students in second-semester math courses take the test during a two-week testing window in June.

As illustrated on the chart that follows, the performance of students on the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics (APPLIED) at Our Lady of the Lake CCS from 2005-2015 approaches the provincial average - 37.1% and 39.9.3% respectively. Additionally, the performance of this group of students exceeds that of the average of the three publicly-funded, English language high schools in Georgina (35.8%) for the same period. Our Lady of the Lake CCS had the highest success rate among all three publicly-funded, English language high schools in Georgina four of the ten years for which data is available.

% of All Students in APPLIED Math At or Above the Provincial Standard	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	Average 2005- 2015
YCDSB	46%	41%	37%	43%	47%	45%	48%	46%	52%	46%	45.1%
Provincial Average	35%	35%	34%	38%	40%	42%	44%	44%	47%	NA*	39.9%
Our Lady of the Lake CCS	66%	33%	45%	33%	18%	55%	38%	25%	29%	19%	37.1%
Georgina Average	41%	43%	41%	33%	27%	42%	33%	29%	37%	33%	35.8%

As illustrated on the chart that follows, the performance of students on the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics (ACADEMIC) at Our Lady of the Lake CCS from 2005-2015 approaches the provincial average - 78.3% and 79.1% respectively. Additionally, the performance of this group of students

exceeds that of the average of the three publicly-funded, English language high schools in Georgina (66.5%) for the same period. And finally, Our Lady of the Lake CCS had the highest success rate among all three publicly-funded, English language high schools in Georgina nine of the ten years for which data is available.

% of All Students in ACADEMIC Math At or Above the Provincial Standard	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	Average 2005- 2015
YCDSB	77%	77%	82%	82%	89%	89%	88%	89%	86%	89%	84.8%
Provincial Average	71%	71%	75%	77%	82%	83%	84%	84%	85%	NA*	79.1%
Our Lady of the Lake CCS	72%	85%	86%	78%	84%	84%	72%	79%	65%	78%	78.3%
Georgina Average	59%	66%	71%	66%	71%	78%	56%	64%	64%	69%	66.5%

* The 2014-2015 school year was unique in that not all students participated in the provincial assessments because of labour action in the English-language public school system. As a result, no provincial-level information was shared.

e) Our Lady of the Lake CCS - OSSLT (Grade 10)

The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) measures whether or not students are meeting the minimum standard for literacy across all subjects up to the end of Grade 9. Successful completion of the literacy test is one of the requirements to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. All students across the province write this test on the same date, usually in late March each year.

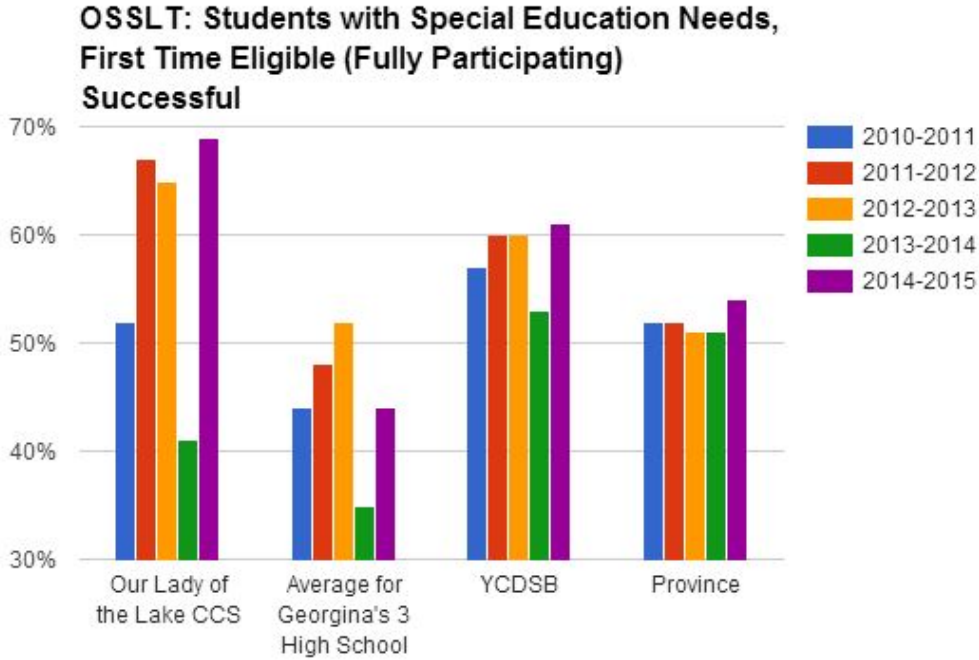
As illustrated on the chart that follows, the performance of students on the OSSLT at Our Lady of the Lake CCS from 2006-2015 exceeds the provincial average - 84.3% and 82.3% respectively. Additionally, the performance of students from Our Lady of the Lake CCS

exceeds the average for all three publicly-funded, English language high schools in Georgina - 84.3% and 74.2% respectively. Our Lady of the Lake CCS had the highest success rate on the OSSLT among all three publicly-funded, English language high schools in Georgina all nine years for which data is available.

Our Lady of the Lake CCS had the highest success rate on the OSSLT among all three publicly-funded, English language high schools in Georgina all nine years for which data is available.

OSSLT: FIRST TIME ELIGIBLE - SUCCESSFUL										
% of Fully Participating - Successful	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	Average 2006-2015
YCDSB	89%	90%	91%	88%	88%	89%	89%	87%	88%	88.8%
Our Lady of the Lake	87%	87%	89%	89%	79%	85%	85%	80%	78%	84.3%
Provincial Average	84%	84%	85%	84%	83%	82%	82%	83%	82%	83.2%
Georgina Average	78.3%	78.7%	76.3%	74.3%	72.0%	73.7%	72.0%	73.3%	69.3%	74.2%

As a subset of the data above, an analysis of the achievement levels of students with special needs reveals an interesting pattern.



From 2010-2015, 59% of “Students with Special Education Needs” at Our Lady of the Lake CCS met or exceeded the provincial literacy standard. Their success rate surpassed the YCDSB average for the same period (58%) as well as the provincial average for the same period (52%). Additionally, “Students with Special Education Needs” at Our Lady of the Lake CCS had the highest success rate of all three publicly-funded, English language high schools in Georgina. The achievement of these students far surpassed the average for all three of Georgina’s publicly-funded, English language school (45%).

II. Event Graduation Rate

Graduation is an important milestones in every student's life. Graduation rates are measures that school and system leaders use to track success and plan for improvement. Generally speaking, there are two methods of calculating the "Grad Rate": the "Event Graduation Rate" and the "Cohort Graduation Rate".

In the "event" graduation method, the graduation rate is calculated by identifying the number of students who graduate (numerator) and dividing by the number who were eligible to graduate in that year (denominator). The answer is expressed as a percentage - the higher the better - with 100% as the maximum.

The "Cohort Graduation Rate" is more difficult to calculate. In this method, the graduation rate is calculated by identifying the number of students who started in Grade 9 in a given year and a given school. The progress of individual students (and the cohort) is then monitored until the graduating year for that cohort. Individual school boards do not have the ability to calculate school-by-school "Cohort Graduation Rates" because it would require them to track the progress of students who leave their schools and continue their studies in some other school outside their board. Only the Ministry of Education can access Ontario Education Numbers (OENs) as unique identifiers for students and track the progress of the cohort in any school in Ontario.

For the 2014-2015 schools year, Our Lady of the Lake CCS had an event graduation rate of 91.8% as compared to the overall Board rate of 91.2%.

For the purposes of this report, the "Event Graduation Rate" is being used to inform an opinion on the impact of the program in Georgina. The available data shows that the event graduation rate for Our Lady of the Lake CCS is high. Furthermore, it has increased from a low in 2007-2008 of 70.9% to a high in 2014-2015 of 91.8%. It is also worth noting that the number of students who require more than four years to meet their graduation requirements has steadily decreased from a high of 15 in 2006-2007 to a low 2 in the 2014-2015 school year. This is indicative of higher course pass rates and the availability of programs and supports - academic, behavioural and emotional - to enable student success.

Analysis suggests that the event graduation rate for Our Lady of the Lake CCS is in line with the Board's overall graduation rate. For the 2014-2015 schools year, Our Lady of the Lake CCS had an event graduation rate of 91.8% as compared to the overall board rate of 91.2%. The average of the last five years for Our Lady of the Lake CCS is 86.0%. Again, this compares to the overall Board average of 88.2%.

Following are the enrollment and graduation figures for Our Lady of the Lake CCS and the Board (excluding Our Lady of the Lake CCS).

School Year	Our Lady of the Lake Catholic College School								
	Grade 12			Grade 12+ *			TOTAL 12 / 12+		
	Total	OSSD		Total	OSSD		Total	OSSD	
2006-2007	94	74	78.7%	15	6	40.0%	109	80	73.4%
2007-2008	94	67	71.3%	16	11	68.8%	110	78	70.9%
2008-2009	95	85	89.5%	15	9	60.0%	110	94	85.5%
2009-2010	123	104	84.6%	9	6	66.7%	132	110	83.3%
2010-2011	113	94	83.2%	5	3	60.0%	118	97	82.2%
2011-2012	127	114	89.8%	4	4	100.0%	131	118	90.1%
2012-2013	115	92	80.0%	5	5	100.0%	120	97	80.8%
2013-2014	82	69	84.1%	5	5	100.0%	87	74	85.1%
2014-2015	108	99	91.7%	2	2	100.0%	110	101	91.8%

School Year	YCDSB (Excluding Our Lady of the Lake CCS)								
	Grade 12			Grade 12+ *			TOTAL 12 / 12+		
	Total	OSSD		Total	OSSD		Total	OSSD	
2006-2007	3868	3072	79.4%	766	153	20.0%	4634	3225	69.6%
2007-2008	3984	3404	85.4%	371	239	64.4%	4355	3643	83.7%
2008-2009	4009	3463	86.4%	344	247	71.8%	4353	3710	85.2%
2009-2010	4323	3779	87.4%	304	217	71.4%	4627	3996	86.4%
2010-2011	4464	3728	83.5%	267	193	72.3%	4731	3921	82.9%
2011-2012	4641	4030	86.8%	294	196	66.7%	4935	4226	85.6%
2012-2013	4449	4031	90.6%	224	161	71.9%	4673	4192	89.7%
2013-2014	4453	4116	92.4%	203	141	69.5%	4656	4257	91.4%
2014-2015	4558	4195	92.0%	194	137	70.6%	4752	4332	91.2%

Note: "Grade 12+" includes students who have enrolled as Grade 12 students for 2 or more school years.

III. Retention Rates

Data suggests that retention rates for the Board's Georgina schools are very good. Specifically, retention rates from Grade 6-7 have averaged 90.7% in the last five years. The average of retention rates from Grade 8-9 for the last five years is 87.9% for Our Lady of the Lake CCS (all students) and 82.4% for the Board (excluding Our Lady of the Lake CCS).

The chart that follows shows retention rates from Grades 6-7 and 6-9 as well as for all students from Grade 8-9 for Our Lady of the Lake CCS and the Board.

Retention rates measure the number of students who stay with a board or school between two points in time; for example, enrollment numbers from one grade to another ...

Grade by-grade retention rates are available in Appendix II. The data is organized by school; that is, the school that students came from before starting Grade 7 at Our Lady of the Lake CCS.

Grade 6 Cohort School Year	OLLH Retention Rates		Grade 8-9 Retention Rates	
	Grade 6-7	Grade 6-9 *	OLLH (All Students)	YCDSB (Excluding OLLH)
2003 - 2004	83.1%	76.1%	86.6%	83.9%
2004 - 2005	78.9%	71.1%	84.1%	83.7%
2005 - 2006	87.2%	84.8%	88.8%	83.5%
2006 - 2007	88.6%	84.1%	94.5%	83.2%
2007 - 2008	89.4%	82.7%	93.8%	82.2%
2008 - 2009	94.9%	90.8%	91.3%	82.2%
2009 - 2010	90.1%	80.2%	89.3%	82.7%
2010 - 2011	89.0%	74.7%	81.3%	82.9%
2011 - 2012	88.6%	84.1%	83.5%	83.3%
2012 - 2013	91.3%	86.4%	93.2%	81.6%
2013 - 2014	91.0%	NA	95.0%	80.2%
2014 - 2015	93.5%	NA	86.6%	83.9%

* Includes students who started at OLLH in Grade 7 and left to enrol in another YCDSB school.

IV. Parent and Student Satisfaction Levels

Another measure of program effectiveness is the degree to which parents, students and staff are confident that the program prepares students for upcoming transitions. In the case of the Board's Georgina schools, this refers to the transition from Grade 6 at an elementary school to Grade 7 at Our Lady of the Lake CCS. In their respective surveys, parents, students and staff were asked to express their degree of satisfaction with the overall program. The results follow:

To what extent do you think the Grade K-6 program provides students with the skills and confidence to make a successful transition to Our Lady of the Lake CCS?	To a Considerable or Great Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Little Extent
Parents	58%	31%	11%
Students	47%	35%	18%
Staff	63%	26%	11%

To what extent do you think the Grade 7-12 program provides students with the skills and confidence to make a successful transition to life after high school?	To a Considerable or Great Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Little Extent
Parents	66%	21%	13%
Students	55%	28%	17%
Staff	94%	6%	0%

Parent confidence is high; 89 % of them believe that the elementary schools provide students with the skills and confidence for success in Grade 7 at Our Lady of the Lake CCS to a moderate/considerable/great extent. With respect to providing students with the skills and confidence to ensure successful transitions to life after high school, 87% believe that Our Lady of the Lake CCS does this to a moderate/to/considerable/great extent.

When students were asked the same questions, they responded as follows: 82% believe that the elementary schools provide students with the skills and confidence for success in Grade 7 to a moderate/considerable/great extent; and, 83% believe that students’ experiences at Our Lady of the Lake CCS provide them with the skills and confidence to make successful transitions to life after high school.

In focus groups, parents and students were asked “What words best describe what you value in our Catholic schools?” Their answers sent a clear message that there was a high degree of satisfaction. Parents mentioned words like: Faith, Caring, Compassionate, Acceptance, and Fairness. The words that came up most often were (in order of frequency):

- Community
- Support
- Respect

V. School Climate Surveys: Students - 2015

Schools need to be safe and welcoming places. Students who feel safe and accepted in their schools are more likely to feel supported and succeed academically. In support of the Board's Safe Schools & Equity and Inclusive Education policies, each school in the Board conducted "School Climate Surveys" for students in the spring of 2015. The surveys were completed anonymously online and provided students with an opportunity to express their beliefs about the "culture of the school", including how safe and welcomed they felt. Students also provided their insights on what they thought would positively contribute to a safe, caring and inclusive school. Some of the results from the spring 2015 administration of the "School Climate Surveys" help to inform an opinion on program effectiveness.

At Our Lady of the Lake CCS, students in Grades 7, 9, 10, and 11 participated in the survey. They were asked to complete the sentence starter "At my school, I feel ...". Following is how they answered as an expression of the extent to which the statement is "Always or Sometimes True":

- Listened to - 68%
- Like part of a community - 69%
- It is a good place to be - 82%
- I am safe - 91%
- I am accepted by others - 86%
- I am challenged to do my best - 80%
- The work I do in class makes me think - 81%
- I am expected to do good work - 92%
- Adults at my school treat me with respect - 78%
- Adults at my school care about me - 81%
- Adults at my school believe I can learn - 94%
- A caring adult at my school listens to me - 84%

When the same students were asked to complete another sentence starter, "My school ...", they said,

- Is a good place to learn - 86%
- Sets high expectations for all students - 79%
- Helps students when they need it - 81%

These sentiments were echoed in student focus groups. Often times, students from Our Lady of the Lake CCS invoked words like community, family and support to describe "how things are around here". One exchange at the focus group with Grade 12 students was particularly memorable. One student shared her belief that "our teachers care about us". As a follow-up question designed to explore the statement, all students were asked to consider the following scenario: "If you were walking down the hall and people could notice that you were sad, how many teachers can you list in your head who know you well enough and care about you to stop and ask 'Is everything OK'". In a world where one "caring adult" is seen as meaningful, a student said "I can list five just off the top of my head".

Grade 4 and 6 students at Prince of Peace, St. Bernadette and St. Thomas Aquinas CES also took part in the 2015 administration of the School Climate Survey. One survey question asked them to complete the following sentence starter: “When I am at school ...”. Following is how they answered as an expression of the extent to which the statement is “Always or Sometimes True”.

“When I am at school ...”	Prince of Peace CES	St. Bernadette CES	St. Thomas Aquinas CES
I feel I belong	87%	89%	100%
I am safe	98%	95%	96%
Students at my school treat me with respect	89%	85%	96%
I have lots of friends	85%	95%	90%
I enjoy learning	85%	84%	96%
I feel like a like this school	91%	89%	98%

VI. Overall Program Effectiveness

It is reasonable to conclude from a thoughtful analysis of the data (quantitative and qualitative) that the program from K-12 in the Board’s Georgina schools is fundamentally sound with the foundation for success moving forward:

- Notwithstanding the fact that there is an achievement gap between our Catholic schools in Georgina and the rest of the Board, our students in Georgina are at or approaching the provincial average in most areas and exceeding the average in some.
- When compared to their peers in all publicly-funded, English language schools in Georgina, our students are performing above the average for Georgina in almost every measure; in many measures, our schools have the highest results for their respective communities.
- The “Event Graduation Rate” for Our Lady of the Lake CCS is in line with the Board’s overall rate.
- Retention rates for the Board’s Georgina schools are high, with a five year average for Grade 8-9 that exceeds the Board average.
- Parent and student satisfaction and confidence in the program is generally high.
- Students in all four schools feel safe and welcomed and express satisfaction with the school’s “culture”.

MOVING FORWARD: FOSTERING COHERENCE FROM K-12

Every focus group started with an explanation of “mindsets”. Researcher Carol Dweck () describes mindsets as the lens through which we see ourselves and others in the world. They are shaped by our beliefs, values and experiences and, in turn, shape our actions and interpretations.

In her research, Dweck concluded that people tend to view the world through one of two mindsets:

- A “fixed mindset” assumes that things like someone’s character, intelligence, and creative ability are basically set at birth and cannot be changed in any meaningful way over time.
- A “growth mindset” subscribes to the “work in progress” view of people; that is, things like people’s character, intelligence and creative ability can and do change in meaningful ways throughout their lives as a result of reflection, effort and perseverance.

As it was explained to parents, students and teachers, it is not just people who apply these lens to make sense of the world; organizations adopt these mindsets as well.

**... with reflection, effort and perseverance,
good schools can become great schools and
great schools can become excellent schools.**

The Board’s call for more regular program reviews - and this review in particular - is clear evidence of the belief in (and commitment to) growth mindsets - thus the emergence of “Continuous Improvement of Student Achievement” as one of the Board’s four Strategic Commitments. Likewise, it was this “growth mindset” that served as the philosophical underpinning for this review. This stance suggests that with reflection, effort and perseverance, good schools can become great schools and great schools can become excellent schools. From that starting point, this review was very interested in identifying the ways and extent to which school communities collaborated in the pursuit of student success. From the research that is most respected, we were interested in identifying ways to improve; that is, how to move to the next level most efficiently and effectively no matter the current conditions. In the previous section of this report, it was stated that it could be reasonably concluded that “the program from K-12 in the Board’s Georgina schools is fundamentally sound, with the foundation for success moving forward”. We can now extend that to say, “and there are areas for improvement and ways to go about that journey quickly and effectively”.

Each of the four Catholic school communities in Georgian appreciates the need to raise achievement levels in all three academic areas - Reading, Writing and Mathematics - and across all divisions. Furthermore, they know it is important to raise the bar for everyone as they work to close the achievement gap that exists between the Board’s Georgina schools and those in the rest of the Board. They know, too, the influence that differentiated instructional and assessment practices have on student achievement. They know that student engagement, achievement and

well-being can be greatly enhanced with the use of digital tools and technologies. And so, the “what” about moving forward is not in question. For that matter, the “why” is not in question nor is the “when”; respectively, the answers to these questions are “because this impacts greatly on student’s life chances and life choices”, and “now”. Following is a suggested, general framework for the way forward that focuses on the questions of “who” and “how”. The short answer is: all parents, students, teachers, support staff, administrators and the parish priest working together to foster coherence within and across schools throughout Georgina. The long answer follows.

Cultivating Collaboration to Foster Coherence

Researcher John Hattie () has had a powerful influence on people’s understanding of “what makes the greatest difference” in efforts to improve outcomes for students. In his groundbreaking work, he conducted over 800 “meta-analyses” of meta analyses. One meta analysis alone summarizes the results of many studies on the same topic. In total, his research looked at over 180,000 studies relating to the influences on achievement. It represents the largest-ever collection of evidence-based research into what actually works in schools to improve learning.

Hattie concluded that the nature of the student-teacher relationship has a very significant impact on student learning (i.e., its “effect size” was 0.72 when anything over 0.4 is regarded as significant). He also found that practices like the following -

- had a significant, positive impact on student learning:

When teachers ...	So that students ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide clear learning goals • develop challenging success criteria • utilize a range of learning strategies • know when students are not progressing • provide feedback • visibly learn themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand learning goals • are challenged by success criteria • develop a range of learning strategies • know when they are not progressing • seek feedback • visibly teach themselves

We have also learned from Hattie () that schools can move from good-to-great and great-to-excellent by engaging in the following:

- Create a climate that all are responsible for the progress of the students
- Use information openly and intelligently
- Use research-based evidence
- Collaborate to improve learning
- Develop expert teachers

Many, like Steven Covey in , have extolled the virtues and power of collaboration and “synergy” for decades. According to Covey, synergy is the habit of “creative co-operation”. It is teamwork, open-mindedness and the adventure of finding new solutions to old problems. It is based on the principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It is a process whereby people bring all their professional experience and expertise to the table. Together, they can produce far better results than they could individually. These same understandings inform how teachers and schools can approach their improvement challenges.

... synergy is the habit of “creative co-operation”. It is teamwork, open-mindedness and the adventure of finding new solutions to old problems. It is based on the principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Michael Fullan is one of the most prodigious and pre-eminent writers on the topic of school improvement. In , he and co-author Joanne Quinn make a strong, evidence-based case for “cultivating collaborative cultures” as one of the most important “right drivers” for school and system improvement. They write:

- “The approach at every level is to create communities of learners who develop common language, knowledge, skills and commitment by building vertical and horizontal learning opportunities.” (p. 58)
- “Principals are the key to change. They work with peers as learning partners to build the skills needed to support capacity building at the school level.” (p. 59)

What We Heard

To be clear from the outset, there was evidence of teacher collaboration in every school. In the high school, one department has collaborated to develop a continuum of learning. Together, the teachers in this department developed their understanding of curriculum expectations from course-to-course and grade-to-grade. They engaged in “curriculum mapping” activities with a view to develop a “continuum” that illustrates how success in one course underpins success in the next, and the one after that. These teachers have also engaged in “moderated marking” to ensure that they have consistently high standards from class-to-class within the department.

There were examples of collaboration in the elementary schools as well. In one elementary school, teachers have a shared commitment to helping students develop learning, life and self-regulation skills through the “Second Steps” program across the junior division. In another school, the three ECEs have developed a practice whereby they meet regularly to share and plan. In the third elementary school, the primary division teachers have decided - on their own - to come together for a joint lunch every two weeks where they share ideas, discuss challenges and problems of practice, and debrief lessons. And, teachers from all three of the elementary schools have taken part in targeted math support initiatives over the years alongside their colleagues from Area 1: Prime CIL-M and PINSO to name some.

These examples, however, represented “pockets” within the schools. Furthermore, to the extent that there is systemic collaboration to foster coherence (i.e., a “culture” of collaboration), it was not readily visible ... but it is necessary to foster coherence.

Alignment refers to how things line up in support of goals. Coherence, on the other hand, “consists of the shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work” (Fullan/Quinn, p.1). Coherence refers to what is in people’s minds and actions - as individuals and as groups. When there is coherence, people have a common understanding; they have shared values and goals and they speak the same school improvement language. They are invested in a common journey.

When there is coherence, people have a common understanding; they have shared values and goals and they speak the same school improvement language. They are invested in a common journey.

To the extent that there is coherence among the four Georgian schools, it can be improved. The metaphor that comes to mind to best describe how these school relate to one another is that of four islands, joined together (occasionally) by bridges. This is not surprising given the many demands that are thrust upon teachers and administrators to meet class- and school-specific needs, and it is more likely the norm in Families of Schools throughout the Board than the exception. However, in the interest of enhancing student engagement, achievement, well-being and faith development in Georgina, the way forward must involve closer working relationships between the four school communities.

A section to come later in this report documents examples of how small school size plays a limiting role. But, with respect to enabling collaboration and fostering coherence among and across schools, small school size is a key advantage in Georgina. Simply put, this family of schools consists for one secondary and three elementary schools, not 15 or 20. The elementary schools have fewer than 12 teachers each. Collaboration anywhere is always possible; small school size in Georgina makes it immensely manageable.

Small school size also makes collaboration necessary. In the vast majority of cases, each of the three Catholic elementary schools in Georgina has only one teacher per grade (or split class). In fact, beyond Grade 1, no school has more than one teacher per grade or split class. This makes

co-planning very difficult since so many of the teacher’s planning considerations are grade-specific. For these teachers, their grade-specific peers are actually in other schools.

Administrators and teachers were asked whether or not they would like more opportunities for collaboration. To a person, everyone said, “Yes”. They were open to every model and format that was suggested. For example, principals welcomed the idea of scheduled dates for the four to come together - with and without their Superintendents - to discuss and form shared interests. They welcomed the opportunity to engage with one another - and each school’s improvement planning team - as they develop their school improvement plans. They welcomed the idea of coming together at regular intervals to meet with the parish priest to plan and celebrate. They welcomed the idea of working together to implement new technology-based initiatives like blended learning through Desire2Learn (D2L), Google Apps for Education and ePortfolio. They willingly identified and offered their “expert teachers” to help spread good ideas and practices throughout the Board’s Georgina schools. Later in this report, there will be proposed action items that call for the principals to come together to engage in specific work (e.g., the development of a comprehensive, Georgina-wide communications plan and collateral material).

Similarly, teachers said they welcomed opportunities to develop their talents alongside their peers from other Georgina schools. As schools seek to raise the bar for everyone and close the achievement gap, they understand that the journey will be more efficient, effective and enjoyable if they establish teachers’ professional networks (including cross-panel collaboration). As each elementary school community explores the use of robotics to help students develop as collaborative, creative, critical thinkers, they see the possibilities and potential of working together and involving the high school in that journey. As they try to help students develop resilience and optimism, they see value in working together from K-12 to investigate evidence-based programs and engage in joint implementation. As they help students develop “reflective habits of mind (i.e., metacognition), they appreciate the power of using a common language from K-12. The goal is to encourage “collaborative habits of mind” that, in time, become “that’s just how we do things around here - we work together as Catholic communities in Georgina to promote good outcomes for every student”. With technology, collaboration within and across schools is much easier today than at any time in the past. Collaboration, bolstered by devices and software, fosters high levels of efficiency, effectiveness, teacher efficacy - and coherence.

The goal is to encourage “collaborative habits of mind” that, in time, become “that’s just how we do things around here - we work together as Catholic communities in Georgina to promote good outcomes for every student”.

This level of Georgina-wide collaboration should also extend to the parent community. Although it was not part of any formal discussion in the parent focus groups, other conversations suggest that co-planning between the schools’ parent groups would be possible and welcomed. Parents could develop and submit joint funding applications (e.g., PRO Grants) on behalf of all four communities. They could work with school leaders to select a relevant theme for the year (e.g., Fostering Resilience in Children and Youth) and develop a comprehensive, Georgina-wide plan to support, involve and engage the parent

community. In the pursuit of a successful outcome for every student, collaboration between and among all stakeholder becomes a vehicle to foster coherence from K-12.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

That, together with their Superintendents of Schools, the Principals of the Georgina schools develop a plan to encourage and support high levels of collaboration within and between their school communities.

That the Board supports these efforts to foster coherence from K-12 by providing differentiated support to the Georgina Family of Schools, including teacher release.



PART C

SPECIFIC ISSUES



The Review of “The Northern Initiative”

THE GRADE 7-8 PROGRAM

I. The Transition From Grade 6 - 7

The transition from one culture (or location) to another is an important point along every student's educational journey. There are significant transition points along every student's journey:

- Home to Kindergarten
- Primary division to the junior division
- Junior division to the intermediate division
- Grade 8 to Grade 9
- Grade 10 to Grade 11 when "destination-based" courses start
- Grade 12 to life after high school.

For many - particularly for those who are experiencing challenges - these transition points can be "stumbling points".

For many students in Ontario, the most significant transition points exists when they move from an elementary school setting to a high school setting and again from the high school setting to life after high school. The majority of students experience the elementary-to-secondary school transition from Grade 8-9. For students in Georgina's Catholic schools, that is not the case: they navigate their way to a "high school" setting when they start attending Our Lady of the Lake CCS in Grade 7. Notwithstanding the fact that they are still engaged in intermediate (i.e., Grade 7-8) studies, students (and parents) know they are no longer in an elementary school setting.

... the Board's "Programs and Pathways" goal expresses the need to help students develop the skills and confidence to make informed education, career and life decisions in order to foster successful transitions from grade-to-grade, panel-to-panel and throughout their lives.

The Board recognizes the need to help students experience successful transitions. Accordingly, the Board's "Programs and Pathways" goal expresses the need to help students develop the skills and confidence to make informed education, career and life decisions in order to foster successful transitions from grade-to-grade, panel-to-panel and throughout their lives.

What We Heard

In workshops with Grade 6 students at each elementary school, students were asked to list and explain their "FEARS, CHEERS and UNCLEARs": their CHEERS were "what you look forward to"; FEARS were "what you may be worried or anxious about"; and, UNCLEARs were "what you are wondering about". Students' top three "CHEERS" were:

CHEERS - "What are you looking forward to?"

Prince of Peace CES	St. Thomas Aquinas CES	St. Bernadette CES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunity to join clubs and sports • having a cafeteria • learning new subjects (e.g., music, food and nutrition, computers, drama, physical education) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making new friends • opportunity to join clubs and sports • lockers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making new friends • opportunity to join clubs and sports • learning new subjects (e.g., music, food and nutrition, computers, drama, art, science)

Their top three FEARS were:

FEARS - "What are you worried or anxious about?"		
Prince of Peace CES	St. Thomas Aquinas CES	St. Bernadette CES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remembering my locker combo • age difference between students • getting bullied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • getting lost • remembering my locker combo • getting bullied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • getting bullied • remembering my locker combo • age difference between students

In focus groups, parents were asked what what concerned them most about the transition from Grade 6 to 7. Many said "Nothing". For this group, they looked forward to the having their children taught by subject-specialist teachers. They welcomed the opportunity for new discoveries, maturation and graduated independence for their children. Some parents said they felt anxious at first but had come to feel comfortable and confident in the program. They said they heard stories from friends and neighbours that allayed their fears. In the survey, one parent said, "I do not feel this transition is well communicated to the parents, I feel strongly that this information (about the Grade 7-8 program) should be available to all from the time of enrolment on a website."

Not every parent supports the idea of their child attending in "a high school setting" for Grade 7-8. In particular, parents from Sutton and surrounding areas expressed concerns citing distance, maturity and safety concerns. In focus groups, some parents said they had concerns over things like: "exposure to older kids", "high school routine may be too strict", "kids may be intimidated" and "the bus ride is too long". In the survey, one parent wrote, "I really disagree with the grade 7 and 8 students attending at the high school. I feel the age gap is too great, and that the younger grades will be exposed to too much, too early". Commenting on the transportation schedule as it exists for students from the easternmost point of the catchment (i.e., Pefferlaw, Udora), one parent wrote, "I am not sure that it is reasonable to expect them at this age to add 2 hours a day

travel time to and from school”. Still other parents were concerned about the potential for “bullying on the bus”.

In their survey, parents were asked whether or not they agreed with the following statement: “I am satisfied with the support provided to my child for the transition from Grade 6-7”. 34% answered that they were, 12% that they were not and 54% said they did not know. Parents were also asked whether or not they agreed with this statement - “I am satisfied with the support provided to my child for the transition from Grade 8-9”. 67% answered that they were, 6% that they were not and 27% said they did not know. Many parents and students believed that the Grade 7-8 program - in its totality - fostered successful transition experiences from Grade 8-9. One parent captured this sentiment well when she said that her daughter’s transition from Grade 8-9 was “uneventful” because she already knew the building, the teachers, the students and the routine.

As one way to foster seamless and successful transitions and allay fears, every stakeholder group suggested that there be more opportunities for elementary students and their parents to be at Our Lady of the Lake CCS well before the Grade 6 orientation - even as early as Grade 4-5.

As one way to foster seamless and successful transitions and allay fears, every stakeholder group suggested that there be more opportunities for elementary students and their parents to be at Our Lady of the Lake CCS well before the Grade 6 orientation - even as early as Grade 4-5. Another parent called for multiple school visits and “have OLL students visit the elementary kids for a question session”. Many parents felt that familiarity will contribute to enabling successful transitions.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

That the Principals of the Georgina schools collaborate to review existing Grade 6-7 transition practices with a view to offer more transition experiences for students and parents, including some prior to Grade 6.

That the Board explore possibilities to shorten the travel time from the easternmost parts of Georgina to Our Lady of the Lake CCS.

II. THE GRADE 7 - 8 PROGRAM

Our Lady of the Lake CCS is the only school in the Board that has Grade 7-8 students in the same building - and taught by the same teachers - as the Grade 9-12 program. This presents some unique challenges and many opportunities.

With intentionality, the Grade 7-8 program has many built-in features that . Among these are the following:

Facility

- All lockers for Grade 7-8 students are in the same hallway, separate from the Grade 9-12 students;
- All classes for Grade 7-8 students are in the main building (i.e., none are in the port-a-pac).

Structure

- Students in Grade 7-8 are not permitted off-site for lunch;
- There are lunchtime supervisor and two teachers for the Grade 7-8 lunch;
- Grade 7-8 students have the same homeroom teacher for the entire year;
- There is “open access” to all councils for Grade 7-8 students;
- Grade 7-8 student council representatives sit on President’s Council;
- There are monthly student service meetings for students deemed “at risk”.

Support Services: Grade 7-8 students have access to:

- the school’s full-time School Support Worker;
- the school’s Psychology Associate;
- Guidance Counsellors;
- support from the school’s Chaplain;
- a dedicated special education “core room” for support.

Senior Student Mentors: A student mentor program exists for intermediate students in which:

- senior mentors are “hand-picked” and supported;
- an orientation meeting takes place at the start of the school year;
- monthly mentor/mentee meetings take place with the Grade 7 students;
- senior mentors have their lockers in the same hallway as the Grade 7-8 students.

Bullying Prevention Program

- The school has an “Anti-Bullying Committee” that focuses on ensuring safe learning environments for all, especially Grade 7-8 students;
- All students take an “anti-bullying pledge” and sign a mural;
- Students participate in a “Pink T-shirt Day” to raise awareness of the school’s program and commitment to anti-bullying;
- There are “social networking” presentation to Grade 7s at their orientation;
- There are opening semester assemblies where administrators review the board/school anti-bullying policy, including outlining consequences if student(s) are found to be bullying others.

With purposefulness, the Grade 7-8 program also has built-in features that . Among these are the following:

- Grade 7-8 students are taught by subject-specialist teachers;
- Where appropriate, classes are held in specialist facilities (e.g., science classes are held in science labs);
- Grade 7-8 students have access to focused arts courses (e.g., drama, instrumental music);
- Grade 7-8 students have access to a robust technology program:
 - Grade 7 students participate in a computer technology program;
 - Grade 8 students participate in a design/culinary technology program.

What We Heard

In a focus group, Grade 9 students were asked to prioritize the relative importance of various supports with respect to their impact on enhancing students’ intellectual engagement and achievement. The features cited most often as being the most important were:

- Grade 7-8 students are taught by subject-specialist teachers in specialist facilities;
- Students have access to Guidance, Chaplaincy and regular Student Support Services;
- Students have access to a technology program (e.g., Grade 7 Computer Technology, Grade 8 Design/Culinary Technology)

In their survey, all Grade 9-10 students participated in a similar prioritizing activity. Following are the results:

Our Lady of the Lake CCS - STUDENTS	Little / No Importance	Mid - High Importance
Grade 7-8 students are taught by subject-specialist teachers in specialist facilities (e.g., Science labs)	25%	75%
Students have access to focused arts courses in Grades 7 and 8 (e.g., instrumental music two years earlier)	59%	41%
Students have access to Guidance, Chaplaincy and regular Student Support Services	37%	63%
Students have access to a technology program (e.g., Grade 7 Computer technology, Grade 8 Design/Culinary Technology)	35%	65%
Students have access to a strong in-house peer mentor program with senior students	47%	53%

This topic was also discussed at every parent focus group. There was widespread belief that subject specialist teachers were the most significant contributor to student achievement in the Grade 7-8 program. One parent put it plainly and simply when he said, “All the other benefits and advantages flow from the fact that you have subject specialist teachers in Grade 7 and 8”.

Through a survey, the larger parent community at Our Lady of the Lake CCS provided insight:

Our Lady of the Lake CCS - PARENTS	Little / No Importance	Mid - High Importance
Grade 7-8 students are taught by subject-specialist teachers in specialist facilities (e.g., Science labs)	28%	72%
Students have access to focused arts courses in Grades 7 and 8 (e.g., instrumental music two years earlier)	45%	55%
Students have access to Guidance, Chaplaincy and regular Student Support Services	43%	57%
Students have access to a technology program (e.g., Grade 7 Computer technology, Grade 8 Design/Culinary Technology)	29%	71%
Students have access to a strong in-house peer mentor program with senior students	58%	42%

When parents and students were asked what they believed was the most significant contributor to students' sense of belonging and safety, two features came up most often: the student mentor program and support services (i.e., access by the Grade 7-8 students to a school support worker, guidance counsellors, chaplaincy and special education support). With respect to the mentor program, an alumnus shared at a focus group that she was still in contact with her mentor - almost a decade later.

“All the other benefits and advantages flow from the fact that you have subject specialist teachers in Grade 7 and 8.”

We also conducted a workshop with 23 grade 7 and 8 students. They participated in a series of reflective activities that were designed to elicit feedback on the impact of various program components. One activity asked students to list what they would KEEP, CHANGE and START in the Grade 7-8 program. Following are the top three items:

KEEP	CHANGE	START
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mentors • civvies day • buy-ins (i.e., teacher-student games) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need more sports and activities for Grade 7-8 • more clubs for Grade 7 and 8s • change uniforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more activities and sports for Grade 7-8 students • more civvies days • longer recess

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

See: “Equity - Experiential Learning: K-12” and “Equity - Extracurricular Activities: Sports, Clubs and Workshops”



The Review of “The Northern Initiative”

THE SCHOOL-PARISH-HOME RELATIONSHIP

The School-Parish-Home Relationship

As Catholic communities, we share a commitment to provide a strong faith foundation and to support the faith development journey of every students in our care. In fact, one of the Board’s strategic commitments is “Integration of Our Catholic Faith”. We do so when we:

- nurture the Catholic Faith and spirituality of ALL through relevant Religious Education programs and experiences;
- foster a culture in which daily interactions and practices are respectful and inclusive, and inspired by Gospel Values; and,
- support all members of our community on their faith journey.

School communities move more effectively and quickly to realizing these goals when parents, students, teachers, support staff, administrators and the parish priest work in close partnership. The school-home-parish triad is at the heart of what it means to be a Catholic school community. When families, schools and parishes work together, we are united in our efforts to fulfill the mission of the Catholic church and foster higher levels of achievement, well-being and faith development for everyone in our communities.

When families, schools and parishes work together, we are united in our efforts to fulfill the mission of the Catholic church and foster higher levels of achievement, well-being and faith development for everyone in our communities.

Among the terms of reference of this review was to identify successes and challenges of the present model (K-12) as well as supports to promote achievement and well-being. From this perspective, we sought to ascertain stakeholder views as they related to the nature and impact of the school-parish-home relationship. Following is a description of what we heard.

What We Heard

In surveys, stakeholders were asked the following: “Our schools strive to help students grow in their faith. For each of the following statements, select the option that best reflects your opinion.” Their answers follow:

The signs of the Catholic Faith (such as morning prayer, school masses and social justice programs) help make the Catholic school experience distinctive.	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Parents	97%	2%	1%
Students	68%	25%	8%
Staff	98%	2%	0%

Catholic/Christian beliefs and values are strongly portrayed at the school.	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Parents	95%	4%	1%
Students	77%	19%	4%
Staff	93%	7%	0%

Our Catholic school experiences strengthen and support students' personal faith journeys	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Parents	91%	6%	3%
Students	50%	39%	11%
Staff	94%	4%	2%

The relationship between the home-school-parish enriched students' faith development.	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Parents	75%	14%	11%
Students	40%	42%	17%
Staff	70%	19%	11%

I. THE SCHOOL-PARISH RELATIONSHIP

Interviews with principals and the parish priest took place to explore the nature and impact of the school-parish relationship. These interviews revealed that many school-parish activities take place in the pursuit of student and adult faith development. These include: school-wide masses (at the school and the church), homeroom masses, and reconciliation visits to the school, to name a few. In addition, schools actively support the efforts by the parish priest to promote and communicate events that are taking place at the local parish (e.g., principals send Synervoice messages on behalf of the parish priest). It became clear, however, that the foregoing was inconsistently present throughout our four Georgina schools and that the level of involvement by the parish priest differed from school-to-school. Notwithstanding any inconsistencies, the four principals and the parish priest shared the desire to work more collaboratively and creatively in the months and years to come.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

That the Principals of the Georgina schools meet with the Parish Priest before each school year to establish norms, discuss pertinent issues and develop a common/shared calendar.

That the Principals of the Georgina schools and Parish Priest meet in February of every school year to discuss pertinent issues and revise the common/shared school-parish calendar.

II. THE SCHOOL-HOME RELATIONSHIP

Study after study has shown that student achievement improves when parents play an active role in their children's education. Furthermore, students are more likely to have a positive sense of well-being when their parents are actively engaged in supporting their challenges and successes at school. Indeed, good schools become even better schools when parents are engaged. Indeed, parent engagement is a key contributor to improved student achievement and higher levels of well-being; students are more likely to be motivated to earn higher grades and to continue their education to a higher level when their parents are actively engaged in supporting their success at school.

The goal of parent/family engagement is to develop partnerships in support of student success.

There is a distinction between involvement and engagement. Both have a place in the school-home relationship but it is the latter that fosters the kind of school-home connection that raises student achievement and fosters higher levels of well-being. “Engagement” implies collaboration and trust between and among parents and educators. Engagement is about “doing with”; involvement implies “doing”. The goal of parent/family engagement is to develop partnerships in support of student success. It is from engagement that things like “Family Literacy” and “Family Math” arise.

What We Heard

Because “parent engagement matters”, we explored the nature of the school-home partnership. One area of investigation was parents’ satisfaction with levels of involvement and opportunities for input. Specifically, parents were asked in their survey how satisfied they were with the level of opportunities for input and involvement in school activities and decision-making.

PARENTS	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
I have opportunities to be involved in school decisions that affect my children.	64%	27%	9%
I have opportunities to be actively involved at my child's school	75%	18%	7%
I have opportunities to sit on school committees	80%	11%	9%
I have opportunities to make suggestions about activities at my child's school	59%	24%	17%

Roughly one third of parents said they disagreed with the statement that they had opportunities to be involved in making the decisions that affected their children. Approximately one quarter of parents disagreed with the statement that they had opportunities to make suggestions about

activities at the school. High proportion of parents agreed that they had opportunities to sit on committees and to be actively involved at the school.

Notwithstanding the fact that parents said they wanted more opportunities for input and involvement, teachers and principals expressed their frustration at attempts to “engage” more parents in the life of the school and their child’s education. In focus groups, teachers were asked to describe what they perceived to be the most significant challenges to improve student achievement. A frequent answer was “the lack of parent engagement”. As an example, they said they would like to see more parental support in the area of homework completion. Principals would like to see more parent involvement on Catholic School Councils.

Teachers and principals would like to see more parent attendance at the evening presentations they offer in support of students achievement and well-being. Some teachers suggested that the school should engage in more outreach activities to encourage more parent involvement and engagement, including an “Open House” and a “Curriculum Night”.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

That Principals and Catholic School Councils collaborate to develop and implement a Georgina-wide strategy to foster higher levels of parent/family involvement and engagement.

III. STUDENT VOICE

As an extension of the school-home relationship, we also explored the nature of the school-student relationship. Often referred to as “student voice”, this is a metaphor for student engagement and participation in issues that matter to their learning.

STUDENTS	Agree	Disagree	Don’t Know
I have opportunities to be involved in school decisions that affect me	60%	34%	6%
I have opportunities to take on leadership roles in school	61%	32%	7%
I have opportunities to make suggestions about activities at school	58%	36%	6%

In the student survey for Our Lady of the Lake CCS, we asked students to express their opinion on the opportunities that existed for input and involvement in school activities and decision-making. Roughly one third of students disagreed with the statements. In other words, they were dissatisfied with existing opportunities for input into decision-making. In focus groups, student told us they wanted to be asked their opinion and they wanted more opportunities to share their ideas on matters of importance - ways to foster engagement and promote achievement and well-being. The workshops for Grade 6 students were an opportunity to honour “student voice”.

These workshops affirmed the power inherent in asking, listening to and involving students in the decisions that impact them. They enjoyed the experience and look forward to more opportunities.

Teachers and administrators benefit from broadening their understanding of student voice and exploring new ways to generate and gather students' ideas and insights.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

That the Principals explore and implement ways to foster “student voice”, including application for a SpeakUP grant from the Ministry of Education for students in Grades 7-12.



The Review of “The Northern Initiative”

EQUITY

EQUITY

Too often, the terms and are used interchangeably, leading to confusion and frustration. Understanding the differences between equity and equality helps us to recognize and respond to some of the beliefs, insights and suggestions that were articulated by stakeholders in Georgina.

Most often, equality connotes “sameness”. For example, in the context of resource allocation, the concept of equality aims to ensure that “everyone should get the same thing”, regardless of difference or distinction, advantage or disadvantage. To the extent that equality seeks to promote fairness and justice, it can only do so if everyone is at the same place and needs the same things.

Equity, on the other hand, is all about “fairness and justice”. Equity involves giving people and communities what they need in order to achieve (or approach) the same outcome as others. Often, it necessitates differentiation, not sameness. In the context of Catholic education, equity calls us to recognize that everyone we serve in our community is created in the image of God. Each person brings gifts to our school and broader community and is to be celebrated, encouraged and supported to grow in Christ. Equity, not equality, is one of the Board’s Core Values.

Equity involves giving people and communities what they need in order to achieve (or approach) the same outcome as others. Often, it necessitates differentiation, not sameness.

Parents, students, teachers, support staff and administrators in Georgina know the limits that location and small school size impose on attempts to achieve equality. Given the vast differences that exist within the Board’s geographic jurisdiction (e.g., population, density, socio-economic, diversity), they acknowledge that equality is impossible to achieve. Having said this, they do expect equity (i.e., fairness under the circumstances).

Stakeholders felt that three issues in particular placed students in Georgina at a disadvantage relative to their peers in other YCDSB high schools:

- the number of elective courses offered in Grades 11-12;
- the availability of (and participation in) extra-curricular activities (e.g., sports, clubs and workshops) as limited by busing and the condition of the field at Our Lady of the Lake CCS;
- the challenges that exist to provide students with experiential learning activities from K-12, including a Co-operative Education program.

Notwithstanding the root of these inequities, stakeholders seek “fairness” and are hopeful that these issues will be addressed. Through this lens, therefore, the proposed action items are intended to promote equality of opportunity and respond to stakeholders’ calls for justice and fairness. To be clear, stakeholders recognize that every school in the Board is challenged to provide these opportunities. They feel, however, that - given the location relative to other communities and the small population of their schools - the issues are more frequent, more noticeable, and have deeper consequences and impact in Georgina.

I. Elective Course Offerings in Grades 11 and 12 at Our Lady of the Lake CCS

Our Catholic high schools offer faith-filled programs that promote high standards of achievement and provide all students with the learning opportunities they need to succeed. Earning an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) prepares students for life after high school - it is an important credential.

In order to earn an OSSD, students need to meet certain requirements. Among these are:

- 4 credits in Religious Education (one each for Grades 9-12)
- 18 compulsory credits
- 8 optional credits (also known as “elective” courses)
- must meet the provincial literacy requirement
- must complete 40 hours of Christian service activities

Courses in Grade 9 and 10 are organized by “type” - academic, applied, locally developed and open. Students have opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills and explore their interests. Students’ experiences in these courses will help to determine their courses in the senior grades. Courses in Grades 11 and 12 allow students to focus their studies on their individual interests and equip them with the knowledge and skills they will need to meet their initial post-secondary goals.

In Grades 11 and 12, courses are organized by “destination”. In alphabetical order, they are: college, university, university/college, and workplace. In addition, high schools offer “Open” courses in the senior grades that give students the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and skills in a particular subject that may or may not be directly related to their post-secondary goals. These courses are appropriate for all students regardless of post-secondary destination.

Following are the Grade 11 and 12 courses that count as compulsory credits towards an OSSD:

- Grade 11: ENG3U, ENG3C, ENG3E, MCR3U, MCF3M, MBF3C and MEL3E
- Grade 12: ENG4U, ENG4C and ENG4E

All others (i.e., the vast majority of Grade 11 and 12 courses) are “elective” courses. Additionally, the vast majority of Grade 12 courses have prerequisites. A prerequisite is a course considered essential for the successful understanding and completion of a subsequent course.

What We Heard

In focus groups with Grade 12 students and alumni, we asked what they believed to be areas for improvement in the Grade 9-12 program. Both groups expressed their concerns around the number of course offerings in Grades 11 and 12. By this, they were referring to the fact that they had fewer courses from which to choose than they would have preferred. Students cited examples of how pathways were “cut-off” because the Grade 11 or 12 course(s) they

“I have had to change and narrow my pathway choice three times due to the lack of a course I wanted and needed.”

most desired - and needed - were either not offered at all or failed to run due to insufficient enrollment. One Grade 12 student said that, “I have had to change and narrow my pathway choice three times due to the lack of a course I wanted and needed”. Students frequently recounted the experience of having to “settle” for courses they did not really want just to complete their timetable and meet post-secondary requirements. In the student survey, one respondent said, “allow students to choose what courses they want and need rather than lock them into courses they didn’t want”. Again, through the survey, some students made impassioned pleas: “Don’t cut the French Program for Grade 12 Students!!!”, “More Social Science courses”, or simply, “More Business”.

We investigated the number of “elective” courses running across all YCDSB high schools. Following are the findings:

School	Number of "Elective" Courses (2015-2016)				
	English	Mathematics	Sciences	Other	Total
Cardinal Carter CHS	3	4	10	60	77
Father Bressani CHS	2	4	7	65	78
Fr Michael McGivney Academy	3	4	9	51	67
Holy Cross Catholic Academy	2	4	9	53	68
Jean Vanier CHS	0	5	8	46	59
Our Lady Of The Lake CCS	0	5	8	39	52
Sacred Heart CHS	2	5	10	67	84
St Augustine CHS	2	5	6	56	69
St Brother André CHS	2	6	8	79	95
St Elizabeth CHS	4	5	9	95	113
St Jean De Brebeuf CHS	4	6	9	76	95
St Joan Of Arc CHS	2	5	9	86	102
St Maximilian Kolbe CHS	1	5	10	79	95
St Robert CHS	3	4	8	61	76
St Theresa Of Lisieux CHS	4	4	8	64	80
Average of ALL Schools	2.3	4.7	8.5	65.1	80.7

As the preceding chart illustrates, students from Our Lady of the Lake CCS have fewer elective courses from which to build their timetables than their peers in all other YCDSB high schools. For the purposes of this report, an elective course was defined as a Grade 11 or 12 course running in the 2015-2016 school year other than one of the compulsory English and Mathematics courses previously listed. We excluded Co-operative Education, Tutorial and e-Learning courses from all school reports. And finally, we only counted a distinct elective course once - even if there were multiple sections or if the course ran in both semesters.

Guidance counsellors recounted stories of their frustration at not being able to meet students' educational and pathways needs based on course availability and course cancellations. They are skillful at bringing all the resources to the table when working with students, including Co-operative Education and options offered by the Board (e.g., dual credit courses, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, e-Learning, Continuing Education). Parents, including those from elementary schools, also expressed concerns around the scale of programming in the senior grades at Our Lady of the Lake CCS. They saw the limits on course offerings as a significant impediment to their children's need to discover and develop their talents, not to mention the urgency to prepare and qualify for their preferred post-secondary program.

They (parents) saw the limits on course offerings as a significant impediment to their children's need to discover and develop their talents, not to mention the urgency to prepare and qualify for their preferred post-secondary program.

To some extent, the Board's introduction of e-Learning has helped to mitigate this issue. Nonetheless, students told us they would prefer face-to-face options. In an effort to meet students' pathways needs, Our Lady of the Lake CCS offers certain courses every-other-year. Students told us they appreciated the effort but readily shared that it is a "hit-and-miss" approach; that is, depending on your cohort year, you might (or not) get the course(s) you need in the year you need it. This issue is compounded by the fact that many Grade 12 courses have Grade 11 courses as a prerequisites. Many students shared stories of having to go outside the Board to earn the credits they needed.

Schools receive "sections" in direct proportion to their overall enrollment. Adjustments are then made for special circumstances or the existence of special programs. It is the total of these "sections" that constitutes the sum total of courses that can be offered in Grades 9-12, across all disciplines. If the same course is offered in both semesters (i.e., one section per semester), that counts as two sections against the total allocation for the school. For the purposes of staffing and allocating sections, Our Lady of the Lake CCS (Grades 7-12) is treated as a high school.

Like every other high school, Our Lady of the Lake CCS receives sections in direct proportion to its student enrollment. This is an "equality-based" distribution model in action. To compensate for its small enrollment numbers relative to other YCDSB high schools, Our Lady of the Lake CCS has always received the equivalent of one additional teacher (i.e., 6 sections). This practice extends to another "small school" in the Board. The Board also allocates additional sections to support high schools with "special programs". In the case of Our Lady of the Lake CCS, the Board recognizes the distinct nature of the school (i.e., the Grade 7-12 model) and treats it as a "special program". Accordingly, the Board allocates additional sections. Specifically, Our Lady of the Lake CCS receives additional sections equivalent to another 2.5 teachers (i.e., 15 sections) because it has a "special program". The total sum of all "additional sections" - 6 for "small school" and 15 for "special program" - constitutes the "equity-based" portion of the school's allocation.

Stakeholders indicated that they appreciate the additional allocation, but assert that it still falls short of the school's needs and students are still at a disadvantage relative to their peers in other YCDSB high schools.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

That the Principal at Our Lady of the Lake CCS and its Superintendent of Education review how the present allocation - including the “additional sections” - is deployed to meet students’ needs.

That, subsequent to that review, the Superintendent of Education provides the Director of Education with an update and “next steps” that could include the provision of additional sections.

II. Extracurricular Activities: Sports, Clubs and Workshops

Participation in extracurricular activities (e.g., sports, clubs and workshops) fosters higher levels of engagement and helps students develop a sense of belonging. The availability of such supports signals to students that their needs are recognized. Indeed, research is now demonstrating that these after-school activities have a significant impact on students' overall success: they provide opportunities to develop knowledge, character, critical thinking skills, social skills, and talents.

Many extracurricular activities provide leadership-training opportunities as well as the opportunity to learn, first-hand, the importance of teamwork, goal-setting, planning for success, responsibility, commitment, and hard work. Clubs and workshops provide opportunities for students to develop their knowledge, confidence and competence in matters of personal importance or need. Clubs that are rooted in Catholic Social Teaching and principles of social justice provide opportunities for students to put their faith-in-action in ways that are immediately obvious to them. In almost every case, extracurricular activities enable students to develop a wider social circle and enables them to spend time with others of similar interests or needs.

What We Heard

In the surveys, stakeholders were asked to suggest supports, activities or resources that schools should consider in order to promote physical well-being. One parent wrote, "Get the Grade 1s more involved in intramural sports". On that same topic, another parent said, "I would like to see sports teams at a younger age - Grade 3".

In our workshops with Grade 6 students, we asked them to list and explain their "Cheer, Fears and Unclears" about the Grade 7-8 program at Our Lady of the Lake CCS. Again, their CHEERS were "what you looked forward to", their FEARS were "what you were worried or anxious about", and their UNCLEARs were "what you are wondering about". Across all three elementary schools, "the opportunity to join sports and clubs" was either the top or second in a long list of CHEERS.

In a workshop with Grade 7 & 8 students at Our Lady of the Lake CCS, we asked them to reflect on their transition experiences from Grade 6-7 as well as the Grade 7-8 program as they had come to know it. Their feedback was organized under three headings. Again, KEEP referred to "what should remain", CHANGE to "what should be changed or be revisited" and START to "what should be initiated or introduced". Overwhelmingly, the area they identified as needing to CHANGE/START was "more sports, activities and clubs available to Grade 7 and 8". Students said that "the older kids get to participate in a whole bunch of activities and teams" and that they felt "left out". In the student survey, Grade 9-12 students often asked for "More sports teams" and "More Clubs".

Grade 12 students expressed concerns that extended beyond the availability of teams and clubs. Many of them felt the Grade 7-8 students received "too much attention", at their expense. When we spoke to them in their focus group, they said that senior students had very important needs that were not being met. A prime example was around financial literacy. Another area of need was stress management (e.g., anxiety) resulting from the workload in senior courses and their imminent

transition to life after high school. These students recognized that there were limited opportunities to address these issues in their course work; nonetheless, they want support in these areas. When asked whether or not they or their peers would attend after-school workshops on these issues, many Grade 12 students replied that they would or that they would at least appreciate the the option of after-school workshops. As an example, students were asked whether or not they would attend an after-school workshop lead by a banking professional on topics of budgeting, student loans, or managing student debt. They were asked to consider whether or not they would attend an after-school workshop on the issue of understanding and managing anxiety. Again, they said they would or would at least appreciate the option. In the survey, one parent offered an idea along these same lines: “There should be more extra programs to promote healthy living after school hours - clubs and exercise programs”.

There are impediments to the provision of more after-school activities, not the least of which is that they rely on the good-will of teacher-volunteers and that students already have after-school commitments like work or supporting siblings. But, busing also presents challenges.

“There should be more extra programs to promote healthy living after school hours - clubs and exercise programs”.

As is the case in all YCDSB high schools, many students are dependent on busing to get to and from school. Generally speaking, buses leave promptly when loaded immediately after school. This reliance on busing places tremendous limits on students’ ability to remain at the school to participate in after-school activities. To help address this issue, the Director of Education provides funding for a “late bus”, twice per week - Monday and Wednesday. These buses board students at 4:25PM - almost 90 minutes after school ends. One goes to Sutton and the other covers neighbourhoods in Keswick. To support student safety, the exact route “home” is determined by the driver based on which students are on board that day. The presence of these two late busses helps but does not remediate the entire need. One students shared a story of having to pick between two after-school clubs that were of special interest to him, but both were offered on a Monday.

“The Field”

And finally, in every stakeholder group and across all data gathering mechanisms, “the field” was a source of frustration. By this, they were referring to its condition of the field at Our Lady of the Lake CCS which was frequently characterized as “embarrassing” and “unsafe”. Observations and a walk-through confirmed that there are many “ruts and holes”. Many stakeholders recounted stories of the measures to which the school goes to avoid using the field; most notably, the track team using sidewalks on Glenwoods Avenue for practices (substituting one unsafe environment for another) and a variety of teams practicing on the field across the street at Prince of Peace CES rather than risking injury on their own field. Among other limitations imposed by the condition of the field were: the inability to host home games; and, the inability to host feeder school games or tournaments.

It should be noted that in 2014-2015, a YCDSB Grounds Consultant visited the site to explore the possibility of adding a track on the field. A subsequent drawing makes clear the fact that a track

would either encroach on the driveway and port-a-pac around the south side of the school or will have to extend onto private property to the west. As it presently stands, Our Lady of the Lake CCS is the only one of the three publicly-funded, English language high schools in Georgina without a track. The property is also absent of bleachers or stands of any kind.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

That the Board add a “late bus” to the existing complement to encourage greater student participation in extracurricular sports, clubs and workshops.

That the Board repair the field at Our Lady of the Lake CCS to a level considered safe.

That the Board enter into discussions with the Town of Georgina to explore and investigate any shared use possibilities, including the construction of a track with stands.

III. Experiential Learning: K-12, Including Co-operative Education

Education and career/life planning is more important today than at any time in our history. The world is increasingly complex, change in every dimension is rapid, and various technologies are presenting unforeseen challenges to social, economic and other structures. Indeed, our Catholic graduates will need to be knowledgeable, resilient and skillful in order to make successful transitions and contribute to the building of a just society throughout their lives. Accordingly, our schools are called to offer an education and career/life planning program from K-12 that focuses on students' self-discovery, building self-knowledge, and on their creative use of this knowledge in the exploration of opportunities and the planning of pathways for education, career, and life. The program helps students develop reflective habits of mind and enables them to answer four key questions:

- Who am I?
- What are my opportunities?
- Who do I want to become?
- What is my plan for achieving my goals?

“Experiential Learning” is an important part of every school’s education and career/life program. The term refers to planned learning experiences that take place in the community (e.g., industry tours, skills competitions, job shadowing, Co-operative Education) or those that bring the community into the classroom (e.g., career fairs, guest speakers, simulations, mock trials, competitions). When schools partner with the larger community, they enhance opportunities for student success and well-being and better prepare their students to become creative and critical thinkers who integrate Catholic Values into their daily lives, as socially responsible global citizens. In both cases (i.e., going into the community and bringing the community into the school), students broaden their understanding of “what’s out there” and they are helped to answer the questions “Who am I?”, “What are my opportunities?”, and “How do I plan for success?”

Experiential learning activities can take place in all grades, and they can be repeated. When they are organized in a way that meet students’ education and career/life needs, experiential learning activities can foster high levels of social and intellectual engagement, they supports students’ academic achievement, and they promote well-being. Experiential learning programs and activities help all students (K-12) to:

- engage more fully in their learning
- discover their God-given strengths and gifts
- develop their knowledge, talents, and skills
- apply their learning in real-life settings
- demonstrate curriculum expectations in new ways
- explore possibilities in career fields or specific occupations
- earn credits in authentic workplace settings (in the case of Co-operative Education)
- prepare more fully for their post-secondary destination

What We Heard

In our workshops with Grade 6 students, “excursions” was noted among the list of CHEERS (i.e., what they looked forward to). Grade 7 and 8 students listed “More field trips” among the activities the school should CHANGE/START offering. In the student surveys, they were asked “What additional suggestions do you have for the Grade 7-12 program that will enable us to prepare all students for life after high school?” There were many references to activities outside the classroom:

- “More opportunities to see different careers out there, experiencing a portion of it to help decide whether or not this is the path students wish to take”;
- “Bring in special speakers from real jobs”;
- “Bringing speakers like past students to talk about their college experiences”;
- “I strongly suggest that you prepare more field trips for grades 10-12 to visit universities/colleges that may interest them to see what it’s like.”
- “More opportunities for field trips”

In focus groups, parents were asked “What do parents want and expect from our Catholic schools in Georgina?” Many of the conversations revolved around the concept of equality of opportunity. In that context, more “field trips” was mentioned in every parent focus group - elementary and secondary - as one way to broaden their children’s education and their ability to “dream big” and aspire. Parents were generally of the opinion that students will aspire to what they know and see. Implicit in that statement is that students will aspire to a broader range of possibilities if they are exposed to a broader range of opportunities.

... more “field trips” was mentioned in every parent focus group - elementary and secondary - as one way to broaden their children’s education and their ability to “dream big” and aspire.

When asked what her biggest surprise was when she attended post-secondary studies outside her community, one alumna said, “I was shocked at how little I actually knew about life outside Keswick.” She attributed this to infrequent trips outside her immediate community.

Perhaps the highest form of experiential learning is Co-operative Education. Cooperative Education is a ministry-approved program that allows students to earn secondary school credits while completing a work placement. The program consists of “a co-op course” monitored by a Co-operative Education teacher, a related curriculum course in any subject, and a work placement. Placements are arranged for students by their secondary school and must follow Ministry of Education policy and guidelines. At their placements, students have opportunities to:

- experience hands-on learning;
- “Test-drive” career options;
- see the relevance of their classroom learning;
- earn credits through workplace experience;
- develop the essential skills and habits required in the workplace; and,

- gain valuable work experience that will help build a resumé for post-secondary programs and future employment.

Co-operative Education plays a key role in student success at Our Lady of the Lake CCS. It is an integral part of the school's strategy to meet the needs of all its students; however, the school has to overcome many obstacles in order to run a successful program. The school is committed to offering nine sections of Co-operative Education each year, three in semester I and six in semester II. This is an increase from four sections just three years ago. Students can earn anywhere from 1-4 credits in a semester.

Teachers at Our Lady of the Lake CCS are challenged to find viable placements. When students express an interest in IT or marketing, for example, Newmarket is the closest option. There is only one diesel mechanic in Keswick, and students from Our Lady of the Lake CCS must compete for that placement with students from other high schools in Keswick and Sutton. But, the number of placements is only one issue.

Approximately 40-50% of placement require transportation. Routinely, students have to travel outside of Keswick for their placements. Some travel to Sutton while others travel to Newmarket to attend their placement at Southlake Regional Health Center. Newmarket is a two-zone bus route from Keswick. The board provides a maximum of \$60 per student as a subsidy to offset the transportation costs they incur. For many, the cost of transportation makes Co-operative Education prohibitive. On rare occasions (and as a last resort), the school has used taxis to enable participation. On many occasions, the school's Superintendent of Education has provided funding to support student participation in Co-operative Education. Lastly, there is a cost associated with many certifications. This is yet another challenge for students and their families.

All stakeholders recognized the limits imposed by geography/location on efforts to engage in experiential learning activities. This is compounded by financial considerations given the expense of travelling within and outside Georgina and the drain it places on school budgets that are tied to "small" student enrollment numbers.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

That the Board establish a line item in the GSBs of these "small schools" for the dedicated purpose of encouraging and enabling experiential learning activities, including Co-operative Education in the secondary school.



The Review of “The Northern Initiative”

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITIES

Engaging Our Communities: Communication, Marketing & Promotion

YCDSB and its schools are committed to “Engaging Our Communities”. In this regard, the Board provides stakeholders with opportunities for input and/or feedback to support and/or inform Board and school decision-making. In large part, that is what this review is all about. By engaging and collaborating with our communities, we build trust which contributes to student success and well-being.

When school staff, parents and other community stakeholders have a common understanding of news, developments and program offerings at the school and Board levels, we raise awareness and enhance confidence in each other’s ability to contribute to student faith development, achievement and well-being. We recognize the need to highlight and share information and success stories that are aligned with school improvement plans and the Board’s improvement and strategic plans.

“Engaging our Communities” also encompasses the development and implementation of communication and marketing materials and campaigns to promote student, school and board information. Indeed, the Board uses various media to showcase student success and celebrate school and Board initiatives, ensuring that information is accessible for all members of our diverse communities.

What We Heard

In parent focus groups, we heard that one of the things they expect from our Catholic schools is “timely communication on important news and developments”. Traditionally, school communities have responded by developing newsletters or sending letters home. More recently, principals use Synervoice services to reach out to parents. Notwithstanding the use of these communication tools, it became evident during these focus groups that many parents from our elementary schools were unaware of the various supports and mechanisms that make up the Grade 7-12 model at Our Lady of the Lake CCS.

In the parent focus groups, we used a slide that listed and described five features of the Grade 7-8 program that make significant contributions to students’ sense of belonging and safety. The slide that followed listed and described five features of the Grade 7-8 program that make significant contributions to fostering higher levels of student achievement and well-being. When we asked parents whether or not they had ever seen these supports displayed in this way (i.e., on a single page, in chart form) or on any marketing or promotional material, they said “Never”. In truth, they may have been presented with the information, but not in a format that was “memorable” or “sticky”.

In a focus group, elementary teachers were asked whether or not they considered themselves “ambassadors” for Our Lady of the Lake CCS. In other words, how confident were they in their

ability to explain the Grade 7-8 program to their students and parents. Most elementary teachers replied that they were not confident. It is worth noting that parents of Grade 6 students attend an evening session at Our Lady of the Lake CCS where they receive information via a PowerPoint and ask questions. This school year, that session was held on December 2, 2015.

At parent focus groups, we asked when it would be appropriate for parents to get information on the 7-12 program at Our lady of the Lake CCS. One parent replied, "By Grade 5 at the very least." Another parent made the case that parents should know the complete K-12 model they enrol their children in Kindergarten. In the survey, one parent wrote, "I do not feel this transition is well communicated to the parents. I feel strongly that this information should be made available to all from the time of enrollment on a website".

Finally, to the extent that the Board's four Georgina schools are communicating, marketing and promoting, it is school- and event-specific. Presently, there exists no vehicle to communicate as a "family of schools" in Georgina (i.e., to speak with one voice) nor is there a comprehensive marketing campaign (i.e., branding and collateral material to include on Board and school websites, a brochure, a poster, and insert for church bulletins and advertisements for the community newspaper).

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

That the Board's Communications Department collaborates with the Principals to develop a comprehensive marketing campaign that promotes the benefits Catholic Education in Georgina.

That this marketing campaign and collateral material promotes all the facets and advantages of programming in all four schools (including the components of the Grade 7-8 program) and makes clear the ways in which there is K-12 alignment and coherence.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

MOVING FORWARD: FOSTERING COHERENCE FROM K-12

That, together with their Superintendents of Schools, the Principals of the Georgina schools develop a plan to encourage and support high levels of collaboration within and between their school communities.

That the Board supports these efforts to foster coherence from K-12 by providing differentiated support to the Georgina Family of Schools, including teacher release.

THE GRADE 7-8 PROGRAM

That the Principals of the Georgina schools collaborate to review existing Grade 6-7 transition practices with a view to offer more transition experiences for students and parents, including some prior to Grade 6.

That the Board explore possibilities to shorten the travel time from the easternmost parts of Georgina to Our Lady of the Lake CCS.

THE SCHOOL-PARISH-HOME RELATIONSHIP

That the Principals of the Georgina schools meet with the Parish Priest before each school year to establish norms, discuss pertinent issues and develop a common/shared calendar.

That the Principals of the Georgina schools and Parish Priest meet in February of every school year to discuss pertinent issues and revise the common/shared school-parish calendar.

That Principals and Catholic School Councils collaborate to develop and implement a Georgina-wide strategy to foster higher levels of parent/family involvement and engagement.

That the Principals explore and implement ways to foster “student voice”, including application for a SpeakUP grant from the Ministry of Education for students in Grades 7-12.

EQUITY

That the Principal at Our Lady of the Lake CCS and its Superintendent of Education review how the present allocation - including the “additional sections” - is deployed to meet students’ needs.

That, subsequent to that review, the Superintendent of Education provides the Director of Education with an update and “next steps” that could include the provision of additional sections.

That the Board add a “late bus” to the existing complement to encourage greater student participation in extracurricular sports, clubs and workshops.

That the Board repair the field at Our Lady of the Lake CCS to a level considered safe.

That the Board enter into discussions with the Town of Georgina to explore and investigate any shared use possibilities, including the construction of a track with stands.

That the Board establish a line item in the GSBs of these “small schools” for the dedicated purpose of encouraging and enabling experiential learning activities, including Co-operative Education in the secondary school.

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITIES

That the Board’s Communications Department collaborates with the Principals to develop a comprehensive marketing campaign that promotes the benefits Catholic Education in Georgina.

That this marketing campaign and collateral material promotes all the facets and advantages of programming in all four schools (including the components of the Grade 7-8 program) and makes clear the ways in which there is K-12 alignment and coherence.

GRADUATION CEREMONIES

To Follow



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INPUT

“Conversations” with Parents, Administrators and Teachers

Audience	Date	Time	Location
Catholic School Councils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prince of Peace CES (15) ● St. Bernadette CES (5) ● St. Thomas Aquinas CES (12) ● Our Lady of the Lake CCS (6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● October 5, 2015 ● September 21, 2015 ● September 23, 2015 ● September 14, 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 6:30-8:30 PM ● 6:15-8:15 PM ● 7:45-8:45 PM ● 6:30-8:00 PM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● POP ● SBE ● STA ● OLLH
Principals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prince of Peace CES ● St. Bernadette CES ● St. Thomas Aquinas CES ● Our Lady of the Lake CCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● October 19, 2015 ● October 19, 2015 ● October 19, 2015 ● October 19, 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1:00-1:45 PM ● 6:15-8:15 PM ● 3:30-4:15 PM ● 12:00-12:55 PM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● POP ● SBE ● STA ● OLLH
Staff at OLLH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● October 13, 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3:10-4:00 PM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OLLH

Interviews & Questionnaires: Input From Principals and the Parish Priest

Audience	Date	Time	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frank Pignataro ● Janet MacMillan ● Todd Wilkinson ● Frances Fraser ● Fr. Sherwin Holandez 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● October 28, 2015 ● October 27, 2015 ● October 27, 2015 ● October 28, 2015 ● January 5, 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1:00-3:00 PM ● 9:30-11:30 AM ● 1:00-3:00 PM ● 9:30-11:30 AM ● 10:00-11:00 AM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● POP ● SBE ● STA ● OLLH ● Church

Focus Group With Current and Previous Administrators at Our Lady of the Lake CCS

Audience	Date	Time	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Current and Former Administrators (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● November 4, 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9:00-11:00 AM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OLLH

Focus Groups With Teachers

Audience	Date	Time	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elementary Teachers (9) ● Grade 7 & 8 Teachers (9) ● Grade 9-12 Teachers (8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● November 10, 2015 ● November 12, 2015 ● November 12, 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9:00-10:30 AM ● 10:00-11:30 AM ● 1:30-3:00 PM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OLLH ● OLLH ● OLLH

Focus Groups With Parents/Guardians

Audience	Date	Time	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic School Councils Representatives (10) • Prince of Peace CES (14) • St. Bernadette CES (5) • St. Thomas Aquinas CES (8) • Our Lady of the Lake CCS (11) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 18, 2015 • November 23, 2015 • November 25, 2015 • November 30, 2015 • December 9, 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7:00-9:00 PM • 7:00-9:00 PM • 7:00-9:00 PM • 7:00-9:00 PM • 7:00-9:00 PM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OLLH • POP • SBE • STA • OLLH

Focus Groups With Alumni / Students

Audience	Date	Time	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OLLH Alumni (4) • Grade 9 Students (10) • Grade 12 Students (7) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2, 2015 • December 8, 2015 • December 8, 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7:00-9:00 PM • 9:15-10:40 AM • 1:30-3:00 PM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OLLH • OLLH • OLLH

Workshops With Students

Audience	Date	Time	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 6 Students SBE (19) • Grade 6 Students POP (21) • Grade 6 Students STA (24) • Grade 7 & 8 Students OLL (23) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 8, 2015 • December 8, 2015 • December 9, 2015 • December 9, 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11:00-11:55 AM • 2:00-3:00 PM • 10:30-11:30 AM • 1:30-3:00 PM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBE • POP • STA • OLLH

Surveys

Audience	Respondents	Survey Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents, K-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POP - 51 • SBE - 31 • STA - 45 • OLL - 75 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 23, 2015 - December 11, 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff, K-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POP - 5 • SBE - 10 • STA - 12 • OLL - 39 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 28, 2015 - December 7, 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students, 9-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 330 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 7, 2015 - December 11, 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 8, 2015 - December 16, 2015

vii. Debrief Meetings

Principals	Date	Time	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frank Pignataro • Janet MacMillan • Todd Wilkinson • Frances Fraser 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 11, 2015 • December 15, 2015 • December 11, 2015 • December 15, 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10:45-12:15 PM • 1:30-3:00 PM • 9:00-10:30 AM • 9:00-11:00 AM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POP • SBE • STA • OLLH

APPENDIX II - School-by-School / Grade-by-Grade Retention Rates

Prince of Peace

School Year (Grade 6)	Graduation Year	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	Earned OSSD
2003 - 2004	2009 - 2010	87.3%	100.0%	89.1%	100.0%	87.8%	97.7%	92.9%
2004 - 2005	2010 - 2011	72.7%	97.5%	92.3%	94.4%	100.0%	100.0%	88.2%
2005 - 2006	2011 - 2012	87.8%	97.7%	95.2%	100.0%	95.0%	94.7%	94.4%
2006 - 2007	2012 - 2013	87.5%	97.6%	97.6%	82.5%	97.0%	100.0%	78.1%
2007 - 2008	2013 - 2014	92.0%	100.0%	93.5%	90.7%	92.3%	94.4%	85.3%
2008 - 2009	2014 - 2015	97.7%	97.7%	88.1%	94.6%	97.1%	97.1%	93.9%
2009 - 2010	2015 - 2016	94.8%	100.0%	83.6%	95.7%	93.2%	97.6%	
2010 - 2011	2016 - 2017	88.1%	97.3%	86.1%	93.6%	100.0%		
2011 - 2012	2017 - 2018	84.2%	100.0%	100.0%	96.9%			
2012 - 2013	2018 - 2019	97.1%	100.0%	97.1%				
2013 - 2014	2019 - 2020	91.2%	100.0%					
2014 - 2015	2020 - 2021	100.0%						

St. Bernadette CES

School Year (Grade 6)	Graduation Year	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	Earned OSSD
2003 - 2004	2009 - 2010	77.5%	96.8%	86.7%	100.0%	96.2%	100.0%	80.0%
2004 - 2005	2010 - 2011	80.0%	89.3%	92.0%	100.0%	91.3%	81.0%	88.2%
2005 - 2006	2011 - 2012	86.2%	100.0%	96.0%	100.0%	91.7%	90.9%	85.0%
2006 - 2007	2012 - 2013	80.0%	91.7%	100.0%	86.4%	100.0%	94.7%	88.9%
2007 - 2008	2013 - 2014	85.7%	100.0%	91.7%	81.8%	88.9%	87.5%	85.7%
2008 - 2009	2014 - 2015	94.4%	100.0%	94.2%	93.8%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
2009 - 2010	2015 - 2016	83.3%	93.3%	78.6%	81.8%	77.8%	85.7%	
2010 - 2011	2016 - 2017	92.9%	69.2%	88.9%	100.0%	100.0%		
2011 - 2012	2017 - 2018	83.3%	90.0%	88.9%	100.0%			
2012 - 2013	2018 - 2019	78.6%	86.4%	89.5%				
2013 - 2014	2019 - 2020	100.0%	100.0%					
2014 - 2015	2020 - 2021	81.3%						

St. Thomas Aquinas CES

School Year (Grade 6)	Graduation Year	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	Earned OSSD
2003 - 2004	2009 - 2010	82.1%	100.0%	96.9%	100.0%	83.9%	100.0%	92.3%
2004 - 2005	2010 - 2011	84.6%	95.5%	88.1%	94.6%	100.0%	91.4%	90.6%
2005 - 2006	2011 - 2012	87.2%	97.6%	92.5%	100.0%	89.2%	93.9%	93.6%
2006 - 2007	2012 - 2013	94.4%	98.0%	94.0%	85.1%	95.0%	89.5%	79.4%
2007 - 2008	2013 - 2014	87.5%	100.0%	91.4%	90.6%	93.1%	92.6%	88.0%
2008 - 2009	2014 - 2015	91.7%	100.0%	97.0%	90.6%	100.0%	100.0%	96.6%
2009 - 2010	2015 - 2016	86.7%	100.0%	87.2%	97.1%	93.9%	100.0%	
2010 - 2011	2016 - 2017	88.6%	96.8%	90.0%	96.3%	100.0%		
2011 - 2012	2017 - 2018	94.7%	100.0%	88.9%	93.8%			
2012 - 2013	2018 - 2019	95.0%	100.0%	100.0%				
2013 - 2014	2019 - 2020	89.7%	100.0%					
2014 - 2015	2020 - 2021	93.3%						

EXTRA STUFF - FOR LATER



The Review of “The Northern Initiative”

GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Grade 8 & Grade 12 Graduation Ceremonies

It is generally understood (and acknowledged in Board policy) that graduation exercises are an important recognition of a student’s transition from elementary to secondary school and, having met the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Graduation Diploma, upon leaving high school. These exercises mark important milestones and help us to celebrate each student’s human journey. To date, graduation exercises at Our Lady of the Lake CCS have been scheduled as follows:

- a Grade 8 graduation ceremony in late June; and,
- a Grade 12 graduation ceremony in October, after the cohort’s Grade 12 year.

There are advantages and disadvantages to this model. This scheduling is reflected in the Board’s Policy 220, entitled “Graduation Exercises in Elementary and Secondary School”, which stipulates that:

3.9 - Secondary schools, with the exception of Our Lady of the Lake Catholic College School, shall hold Graduations in June of the graduating year and will inform their elementary feeder schools of the date.

3.11 - Elementary schools shall make every effort to hold Graduations no sooner than the Thursday prior to the last week of school, and ensure that the Graduation is not held on the same night as the Secondary school graduation.

Among the terms of reference of this review was to identify stakeholder preferences related to the timing of the graduation ceremonies. To that end, this was a topic for discussion at all focus groups and was included in every survey. Following is a description of what we heard.

What We Heard

In surveys, stakeholders were asked the following:

What is your opinion about the timing of the Grade 8 graduation?	Parents	Students	Staff
Total number who took part in the survey	199	330	70
Number who expressed an opinion on this questions	156	136	47
I believe the Grade 8 graduation should remain at the end of June	95 - 65%	136 - 55%	21 - 45%
I believe the Grade 8 graduation should take place in October of the students’ Grade 9 year	10 - 7%	33 - 13%	5 - 11%
I have no preference about the timing of the Grade 8 Graduation	41 - 28%	79 - 32%	21 - 45%

What is your opinion about the timing of the Grade 12 graduation?	Parents	Students	Staff
Total number who took part in the survey	199	330	70
Number who expressed an opinion on this questions	117	257	47
I believe the Grade 12 graduation should continue to take place in October	20 - 17%	39 - 15%	3 - 6%
I believe the Grade 12 graduation should take place at the end of June	72 - 62%	171 - 67%	21 - 45%
I have no preference about the timing of the Grade 12 graduation	25 - 21%	47 - 18%	23 - 49%

As a follow-up to the question on the Grade 12 graduation ceremony, stakeholders were asked to express a preference for an afternoon or evening event:

When would you prefer the ceremony to take place?	Parents	Students	Staff
Total number who took part in the survey	199	330	70
Number who expressed an opinion on this questions	145	255	46
The Grade 12 graduation ceremony should take place in the afternoon	7 - 5%	48 - 19%	4 - 9%
The Grade 12 graduation ceremony should take place in the evening	78 - 54%	153 - 69%	18 - 39%
I don't have a preference	60 - 41%	54 - 21%	24 - 52%

Since this issue most directly impacts the staff, students and parents at Our Lady of the Lake CCS, it is instructive to disaggregate the data. When we do so, the following arises:

What is your opinion about the timing of the Grade 8 graduation?	Parents from OLLH	Students at OLLH	Teachers at OLLH	Support Staff at OLLH
Total number who took part in the survey	63	330	31	8
Number who expressed an opinion on this questions	50	248	22	7
I believe the Grade 8 graduation should remain at the end of June	31 - 62%	136 - 55%	10 - 45%	4 - 57%
I believe the Grade 8 graduation should take place in October of the students' Grade 9 year	4 - 8%	33 - 13%	3 - 14%	2 - 29%
I have no preference about the timing of the Grade 8 graduation	15 - 30%	79 - 32%	9 - 41%	1 - 14%

What is your opinion about the timing of the Grade 12 graduation?	Parents from OLLH	Students at OLLH	Teachers at OLLH	Support Staff at OLLH
Total number who took part in the survey	63	330	31	8
Number who expressed an opinion on this questions	50	257	22	7
I believe the Grade 12 graduation should continue to take place in October	6 - 12%	39 - 15%	1 - 5%	2 - 29%
I believe the Grade 12 graduation should take place at the end of June	36 - 72%	171 - 67%	10 - 45%	5 - 71%
I have no preference about the timing of the Grade 12 graduation	8 - 16%	47 - 18%	11 - 50%	0 - 0%

These same patterns were evident in many of the focus groups. The majority of stakeholders acknowledged that both ceremonies represent important milestones. Everyone acknowledged that holding two ceremonies at the end of June presents planning challenges. Nevertheless, the preference most often expressed in the focus groups was for ceremonies to be held at the end of June. It is noteworthy that significant numbers in all groups had either no preference or did not care about the issue.

The reasons most often cited for a June preference for the Grade 12 ceremony were captured in the following statements: “It brings closure to students’ academic life at OLLH”; and, “It’s very difficult for students to come back for a graduation ceremony in October since many have already left the community for post-secondary studies”. Offering a deeper explanation, one alumnus stated

that the October ceremony happens at the same time as mid-term exams in many post secondary programs, and that those students must choose school over the ceremony. At the most recent graduation ceremony held on October 8, 2015, 24 of 103 graduates were not in attendance - almost one quarter.

In the focus groups and the survey, stakeholders were asked to consider moving the Grade 8 graduation ceremony from June to October of the students' Grade 9 year. This idea had almost no traction. The reason most often cited to maintain the status quo was captured by a parent when she said, "All the other schools have their Grade 8 grad in June".

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

That the Grade 8 graduation ceremony at Our Lady of the Lake CCS continue to be held in late June as an evening event.

That the Grade 12 graduation ceremony at Our Lady of the Lake CCS be held in late June as an evening event.

That the administrative team at Our Lady of the Lake CCS have access to additional support, if necessary, to enable both ceremonies to take place in late June.

WELL-BEING

Well-being refers to a student's overall sense of happiness, satisfaction and optimism. It integrates physical, cognitive, social/emotional and spiritual dimensions. Students with a positive sense of well-being are said to have:

- 1- an awareness of self and a recognition of their God-given talents;
- 2- the ability to be creative and resilient (i.e., persevere through challenging times);
- 3- a sense of "connectedness" to others and belonging to a community;
- 4- a sense of a promising future which will support a productive life.

In this report, when we refer to the school's role in promoting well-being, we mean the ways in which schools help students develop resilience, confidence, optimism and the skills necessary to make sound decisions and foster healthy relationships.