Come Grow With Us

Simcoe Muskoka Catholic
District School Board

Welcome to Catholic Education

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"Teacher where are you staying?" Jesus said to them, "Come and see." ***- John 1:38-39***

Welcome

We know that choosing a school is one of the most important decisions you will make for your child and family. We hope you will use this booklet, other materials in this package, and our website to help guide you in your choice.

In addition to a wealth of practical information that we are providing you, we also hope you will get a sense of what it means to be part of a Catholic learning community. For us, it is about welcoming each student into school as a special gift from God, where they will grow academically, spiritually and socially.

Our professional staff brings the curriculum to life by offering innovative and exciting programs to students, while nurturing their spirit of faith. And they do so within a safe and caring environment that recognizes the unique learning abilities of every child.

We invite you and your child to "come and grow with us" and we sincerely hope you will entrust your child's learning to one of our Catholic schools.

GETTING TO KNOW US

Our Board has vision and mission statements, as well as Catholic values that help define who we are as an organization. Our vision that "We are a faith-filled Catholic learning community dedicated to excellence," is our commitment to students, staff, parents and the larger community. Our Catholic values and virtues, which are faith, hope, love, family, compassion, service, truth, justice and forgiveness, play an important role in all aspects of life in our schools, both inside and outside of the classroom. Our Catholic schools use these values, along with the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations*, as a framework for the academic and spiritual journeys of our students.

You can find out more about our vision, mission and values at www.smcdsb.on.ca – Our Board menu in the About Us section. Information about the Institute for Catholic Education and the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations* can be found at www.occb.on.ca/ice.

OUR STUDENTS AND STAFF

We provide a Kindergarten to Grade 12 learning experience for more than 20,000 students. Our approximately 4,000 dedicated employees work hard to ensure these students receive exceptional programs and services.

The professional staff in our schools, including teachers, educational assistants, school leaders, custodians and school office administrators, work directly with students to help them learn and grow both academically and spiritually. There are also professional Board office staff who provide a range of services that support the students and staff at our schools.

Whether it's a custodian, teacher, computer technician or curriculum consultant, the primary goal of all of our employees is to help your child learn and grow. Our staff will be there to make sure your child has the best possible experience while learning with us.

OUR WEBSITE

This booklet will provide you with a general overview of things you will need to know about sending your child to one of our Catholic schools. We know that you might be looking for more detailed information on a particular topic and so we encourage you to visit our Board's website at www.smcdsb.on.ca. In addition to finding exciting updates about programs, events and initiatives on our Home Page, you will also find a wealth of information on everything from literacy tips and provincial testing to special education and healthy schools.

Each school in our Board is a unique community and may approach the delivery of programs and services differently. Regardless of differences between schools, all of our staff is equally passionate about providing an exceptional and enjoyable experience for your child.

OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Our policies are essentially statements that guide our Board's overall direction – they state our intent, principles or goals. We also have procedures or guidelines that help to support these statements. Our trustees regularly work with staff to update and maintain these policies and procedures. Learn more about the role of our trustees on page 28.

We encourage you to take a look at the policies and procedures, located on our website at www.smcdsb.on.ca – the Our Board menu in the Policies and Procedures section. This will give you a greater insight into how our school communities are governed.

Faith In Our Schools

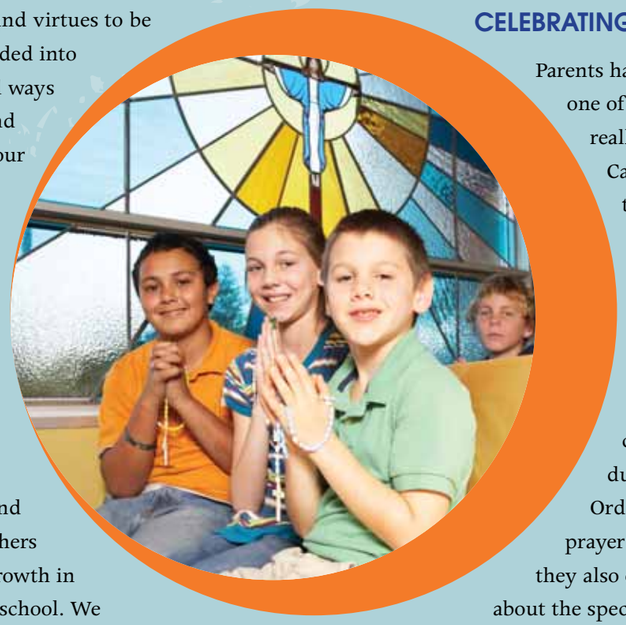
What does it mean to be part of a faith-filled school community? It means that while students are pursuing their academic goals, they will also have the wonderful opportunity to learn and grow in spirit and faith. There is something unique and truly special about an education that has faith at the heart of academic and social learning.

People tell us that they can feel and witness something different when they walk into one of our schools – a wonderful sense of community that is rooted in our Catholic faith. Our distinctiveness is reflected in tangible ways through daily prayer, chapels in many of our schools, celebrations of liturgies, religious images and social justice activities. And it is also reflected in less obvious ways, through how our faith is lived within our school communities. The following page will tell you a little bit about why a Catholic education is so unique.

FAITH IN THE CURRICULUM

When your child attends a Catholic school, one of the great benefits is that our faith is reflected in all Ontario subjects and courses. This infusion of Gospel values and beliefs into the curriculum makes us distinct and provides students with an invaluable dimension to their learning. From math and science, to English and religious education, our students learn about our faith so that they can develop and grow into individuals with a strong moral character.

We recognize the need for values and virtues to be part of our schools and to be included into our teaching. We do this in several ways – by modelling for our students and by showing them how to live out our Catholic values in "action."



HOME – SCHOOL – PARISH CONNECTION

Part of what makes Catholic schools distinct is our participation in the mission of the Catholic church. We believe in fostering a strong relationship between your home, our schools and your parish. You will find our teachers supporting your child's ongoing growth in faith through Mass and prayers at school. We are blessed to have priests and other members of our parishes visiting our schools on a regular basis. In addition, there will be opportunities for your child to visit your parish with staff from the school.

In our Board, we are fortunate to belong to the Archdiocese of Toronto and the Archdiocese of Peterborough, which means we have two Bishops who support our parishes and schools. If you would like more information about our parish communities, please visit our website at www.smcdsb.on.ca under the Community menu.

SUPPORTING SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Receiving the sacraments are very special moments in our Christian tradition.

We work closely with our parish communities to support our students as they get ready to receive the sacraments. Parents will partner with their parish priests to prepare their children for Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation. Our schools complement what children are learning at their parish through classroom teachings.

CELEBRATING OUR FAITH

Parents have told us that one of the things they really value about Catholic education is that their children openly celebrate the liturgical seasons – Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. Not only do children celebrate our faith during the Season of Ordinary Time through prayer and Mass, but they also observe and learn about the special seasons in the liturgical calendar.

During these times, it is wonderful to see how students embrace their faith. There are examples of Kindergarten students relaying the "true" meaning of Christmas to their parents, and high school students re-enacting the Stations of the Cross to captivated audiences. Whatever the example, students and parents greatly value the ability to openly celebrate their belief in God at all times.

CHAPLAINCY AND SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

Another benefit of attending a Catholic school is that we offer spiritual support in our elementary schools and chaplaincy services in each of our high schools. This means that we have professional staff who are passionate about providing ongoing pastoral guidance to students and staff.

Each of our high schools has a chaplaincy team leader dedicated to supporting students in their growth. In addition, every school has at least one staff member who acts as a faith ambassador who works to enhance the faith life in our school communities.

HOW DO WE PROMOTE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT?

- Partnering with our parishes
- Preparing and leading schools in prayer
- Observing and celebrating special liturgical seasons
- Supporting sacramental preparation
- Including faith in the curriculum
- Overseeing school retreats
- Fostering an awareness of Catholic social teachings and encouraging students to respond
- Using visible symbols and expressions of our faith

RESPONDING TO ADVERSITY THROUGH FAITH

Our chaplaincy team leaders, faith ambassadors and other spiritual leaders are also available for direction and support – this is especially reassuring when we are faced with difficult situations.

There are times during any school year when students and staff experience loss due to a death, illness, separation or hardship in their family, or other issues. There is great comfort in knowing that we can support and guide one another during difficult times by turning to God through prayer and reflection.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

We believe it is important to put Catholic moral teachings, beliefs and values into practice as part of daily life in our school communities; in other words we want our students to truly live what they believe. One of the key ways that we do this is through Catholic social teachings.

Throughout the school year, all of our elementary and high schools participate in a wide range of social justice activities. Our students learn about social justice and put the principles into action. For example, students become involved with fundraising activities, caring for God's creation, and volunteering in their community. They also learn about justice and the dignity of human life, and freedom from racism and prejudice.

These activities are a part of the fabric of our schools and are rooted in the belief that God is present with us. We teach students that they should strive to build a world where justice and peace triumph over injustice and war. We do this by supporting initiatives that help us establish goodness in our local community, in our country and in the world-at-large.

"Remember when you leave this earth, you take with you nothing you have received – only what you have given: a heart enriched by honesty, service, love, sacrifice and courage." ***- St. Francis of Assisi***

K To 12 Learning Journey

OUR KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12 EXPERIENCE

Students in our schools are involved in exciting learning journeys. Our staff is concerned about much more than the basics of education – we are interested in developing the "whole" student. How are they learning and growing academically, spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically? How can we support your child's growth as they journey from elementary school to high school and then on to a successful future?

Whether your child is going into Grade 2 or Grade 12 – our schools are caring and nurturing places that offer enriching programs, exceptional services and a full range of courses to help them learn and grow in every way. This means they will be fully prepared for life after high school.

KINDERGARTEN

Starting Kindergarten is the beginning of a wonderful learning journey. That is why we have developed a strong and comprehensive Junior and Senior Kindergarten program that will help ensure the long-term success of our students.

We know that starting Kindergarten is a unique time in your child's life and so we have developed a special package of information specifically geared to making the transition from home to school as easy as possible.

If you have a child who is about to begin Kindergarten, we encourage you to contact the school in your area and ask for the *Getting Ready for Kindergarten* package.

You can also find this package, including booklets for parents and children, as well as a DVD, on our website at www.smcdsb.on.ca – under the Parent menu in the Enrolling Your Child section.

THE *ONTARIO CURRICULUM* INFUSED WITH CATHOLIC VALUES

Like all schools in Ontario, we use the *Ontario Curriculum* documents developed by the Ministry of Education to teach your child. What makes us unique is that the curriculum taught in our schools is infused with Catholic values.

Catholic teachings and Gospel values are an integral part of how students learn in all subject areas. Meaningful connections to our faith are incorporated into every subject.

The Ministry of Education has listed all of the curriculum documents on their website. By visiting their site at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/grades and viewing the documents, you will get a good sense of what your child will learn in any grade or subject area.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Our elementary schools are wonderful places where students and their parents are welcomed as part of our Catholic learning community. From Grades 1 to 8, your child will learn and grow in so many ways. The following pages give you a brief overview of what your child will be learning.

LANGUAGE

Developing language skills is central to your child's growth and a crucial tool for learning in all areas. Whether in mathematics, social studies, science or music, we want our students to be good communicators who speak, write and listen effectively, honestly and sensitively. Developing strong literacy skills – which includes reading, writing and verbal communication – is a key component of the curriculum and an important focus for us in all of our schools.

MATH

As we become more of an information and technology based society, the math curriculum becomes increasingly important for your child. We encourage our students to think about complex issues, analyse and adapt to new situations, solve a range of problems and communicate their thinking effectively. It is more than just understanding basic math skills that will help students succeed now and in the future. It is also important that they learn to reason and justify their conclusions and work collaboratively.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND FAMILY LIFE

Our religious education program is designed to help your child know and understand God's great love within the context of Gospel values. This program, which was developed by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, explores topics to help them grow in faith in each of the elementary grades. You can find out more about our religious education program on the Institute for Catholic Education's website at www.occb.on.ca/ice.

Our Family Life curriculum reaffirms and complements the religious education program with the basic underlying belief that we are all created in God's image. Children learn that they are called to love and to see what is good in each other by following Jesus as their model. This Family Life program is called Fully Alive and was sponsored and developed by the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops in collaboration with the Catholic community in Ontario. A copy of the *Fully Alive Parent Brochure* can be found on our website at www.smcdsb.on.ca.

THE ARTS

The arts provide unique ways for your child to gain new insights through visual arts, music, drama and dance. Students enjoy tapping into their creative side to celebrate and communicate stories, values, attitudes and traditions. Arts education provides ways for students to express what they see, hear, feel and touch.

Visual arts includes traditional fine arts such as drawing, painting, sculpting, printmaking and multi-media. We offer an interesting and challenging music program that will help your child understand the meaning and purpose of music for themselves and for others. Students will also learn to appreciate and understand drama and dance.

FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (FSL)

The FSL program in our schools enables your child to become an effective communicator in French, and encourages speaking, writing and listening in our country's other official language. It also gives students an appreciation of French culture in Canada and in other parts of the world. Learning a second language will help your child to communicate and participate effectively in the workplace and the global community.

An exciting aspect of our FSL program is that it is offered to students from Grades 1 to 8.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Studies show that physical activity leads to many benefits for students, such as improved concentration, creativity, sense of self-esteem, and positive attitudes and behaviours. That is why our schools offer a variety of health-related topics and activities. In addition to physical education classes, your child will enjoy 20 minutes of daily physical activity (DPA) in elementary schools. On days when no physical education classes are scheduled, teachers build DPA into their day.

Read more about how we create a healthy school environment for your child on page 22 of this book.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Our science and technology program introduces students to the basic concepts of science. It also helps students develop the skills, strategies, and habits required for scientific inquiry and technological design. Through this program, your child will develop communication skills so that they are better able to express their thinking, inquiry and problem-solving skills.

Our Board makes significant investments in technology for our elementary and secondary classrooms. To learn more about our commitment to technology, please see page 12 of this book.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Your child will take social studies courses from Grades 1 to 6. The program will enable students to examine and understand communities – from local to global. They will learn heritages, physical systems, and the nature of citizenship within their communities. In Grades 7 and 8, students will take history and geography courses. The Grade 7 and 8 history program focuses on Canada and provides students with a comprehensive overview of the development of this country. The geography program examines the earth's physical systems and the people in them. It also investigates how people and environments affect each other.

GOING ON TO HIGH SCHOOL

Graduating from elementary school into high school is an exciting time for students. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet new friends, gain a sense of independence and become involved with new learning experiences – both inside and outside the classroom. Our elementary schools have an excellent relationship with our Catholic high schools, and together, they work to prepare your child for a smooth transition to Grade 9.

In Grades 7 and 8, our staff begins to prepare your child for the journey into secondary education. We talk to students about their interests and skills and start to make plans for the kinds of courses they may want to take to prepare them for their future.

We have developed a booklet, *iConnect – Your High School Connection,* for Grade 8 students to help your child during this important time. We encourage students to talk about choices and work through this book with their teachers, high school guidance counsellor and parent/guardian. You can find more information about going on to high school on our website at www.smcdsb.on.ca – under the Student menu.

HIGH SCHOOL

Throughout high school, your child will grow in faith and knowledge, participate in many aspects of the school community and gain valuable life experiences. The following will give you a good overview of what you should know about our secondary schools.

SEMESTER SYSTEM

Our secondary school programs are provided to students through a semester system. A semester covers one half of the school year, so that every school year has two semesters. Semester One begins on the first day of school in September and usually ends on the last school day in January. Semester Two follows from approximately the beginning of February to the end of June.

CREDIT SYSTEM

All secondary school programs in the province of Ontario, including ours, are based on a credit system. Your child must earn a total of 30 credits in order to graduate (see more about graduation requirements on page 10). One credit is equal to a 110-hour course. There are compulsory credits (credits that your child must take) and optional credits, which allow your child to build an educational program that suits his or her individual interests.

Normally, your child will take four full credits per semester. Half credits are available for some courses, e.g., civics and career studies.

FULL RANGE OF COURSES

This is an exciting time for students attending one of our Catholic high schools. They will be offered a wide range of excellent academic opportunities to help them get ready for life beyond school.

Students may choose to go to college or university, complete an apprenticeship, or enter the workforce following high school. Whatever their future destination, we have the necessary courses as well as professional staff to help prepare students.

A list of all of the courses can be found in your Catholic high school's course calendar. You can find electronic versions of each high school's course calendar on our website at www.smcdsb.on.ca under the Student menu or by contacting the guidance department at your local high school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COURSES

In addition to exceptional academic programs, each of our nine high schools strives to create an inclusive and nurturing Catholic learning environment. By partnering academics with faith teachings, your child will benefit from a distinctive educational experience – one that we believe will better prepare them to be thoughtful and responsible citizens now and in the future.

Your child will complete four religion courses as part of the high school program. These courses not only provide students with greater insights into our own faith, but also into other religions. Students are also invited to continue to build their relationship with Jesus Christ. They will also learn and grow by studying social justice in our society, and they will examine their moral and ethical stance on a range of issues.

More information about religion courses at our high schools can be found on our website at www.smcdsb.on.ca – under the Parent menu in the Faith Focused Learning section.

"I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." ***- Philippians 4:13***

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO GRADUATE

In order to receive a high school diploma (also known as the Ontario Secondary School Diploma – OSSD) your child must complete the following:

COMPULSORY CREDITS

- 4 credits in English (1 credit per grade)
- 1 credit in French as a second language
- 3 credits in mathematics (at least 1 credit in Grade 11 or 12)
- 2 credits in science
- 1 credit in Canadian history
- 1 credit in Canadian geography
- 1 credit in the arts
- 1 credit in health and physical education
- 1/2 credit in civics and 1/2 credit in career studies

PLUS ONE CREDIT FROM EACH OF THE FOLLOWING GROUPS:

- 1 additional credit in English, or a third language, or a social science and the humanities, or Canadian and world studies, or guidance and career education, or co-operative education
- 1 additional credit in health and physical education or the arts, or business studies, or co-operative education
- 1 additional credit in science, or technological education, or co-operative education
- and 4 compulsory credits in religion

OPTIONAL CREDITS

Your child must take eight optional or elective credits to help meet university, college, apprenticeship or work requirements, as well as to continue your child's faith journey.

40 HOURS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

In order to graduate, your child must also complete a minimum of 40 hours of unpaid community service activities at some time throughout high school. Students will be able to choose their own community involvement activities, within guidelines that are provided by their high school.

We believe that community service hours are a wonderful way to demonstrate a commitment to faith formation. Students really benefit from the exciting opportunities available in the community and often learn a lot about themselves and the value of helping others.

This requirement is to be completed on your child's own time, outside of normal classroom hours. All students are required to maintain and provide a record of their activities using a form that is provided by your child's school. Our secondary school principals will decide whether your child has met the requirements of both the Ministry of Education and the Board for this service.

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL LITERACY TEST (OSSLT)

All students in Ontario are required by the provincial government to take the OSSLT in Grade 10 and must pass it in order to graduate and receive their OSSD. Students who do not complete the test successfully will receive additional help to prepare them for retesting in the following school year. Students who have been eligible to write the OSSLT at least twice and have been unsuccessful at least once, are eligible to meet the requirement by taking the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course, which is offered at our schools. Please see more on provincial testing on page13 of this booklet.

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS – INTERESTS AND CHOOSING COURSES

There are many things your child can decide to do once they have finished high school. Students may choose to go to college or university, train for an apprenticeship, or enter the world of work. Whatever pathway your child chooses, we will work hard to ensure that they are well-prepared for success.

We encourage students to start planning early by exploring their interests and abilities. Together, parents and educators can help students research and gather information so that they choose the kinds of courses that will best prepare them for life after high school.

TYPES OF COURSES IN GRADES 9 AND 10

In areas like the arts, health, physical education and business studies, students in Grades 9 and 10 will take the same type of course, called an open course. In the core subjects like math or English, your child will be able to choose between academic, applied or locally developed courses. Academic courses draw more heavily on theory and abstract thinking, while applied courses focus more on practical applications and concrete examples. Locally developed courses are approved by the Ministry of Education and are for students who may require additional background knowledge and skills in subjects such as English, math, history and science.

TYPES OF COURSES IN GRADES 11 AND 12

In Grades 11 and 12, your child can choose college preparation, university preparation, workplace preparation or open courses.

Open Courses – allow students 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 their plans after high school.

College Preparation Courses – provide the knowledge and skills needed to meet the entrance requirements for college programs.

University Preparation Courses – are designed to give students the knowledge and skills they will need to meet entrance requirements for university and college programs.

Workplace Preparation Courses – provide the knowledge and skills necessary to enter directly into the workplace, or for admission to an apprenticeship or other training programs offered in the community.

"In the young there is, in fact, an immense potential for good and creative possibility."
- Pope John Paul II

Above And Beyond – Enhancing Your Child's Learning Experience

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

We provide an excellent working environment for our staff, which helps us attract some of the most highly skilled professionals in Ontario and beyond. Our staff is committed to providing exceptional programs and services and they are passionate about Catholic education – whether it is within one of our schools or at the central board office.

It's not just our students who are engaged in a learning journey – our staff is also on a journey to learn and improve. Providing opportunities for professional growth is a key priority and that is why we offer ongoing learning for staff in all areas. Professional development courses and training sessions are offered throughout the school year and in the summer months so that our staff remains current with the latest techniques and technologies.

Whether it's our principals, teachers, managers, custodians or any of our staff, we strive to be leaders in education because great leadership is key to your child's success.

AWARD WINNING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The result of our ongoing commitment to learn and grow is exceptional programs and services for your child. In fact, we are recognized nationally and even internationally for academic leadership in several areas. Over the years, we have taken a lead role in introducing innovative programs and approaches to enhance student learning. Our students participating in science fairs as well as our special education, Catholic life education and Reading Recovery® programs are just a few examples.

In addition, many of our employees have been recognized with awards of excellence for their exceptional contributions to student learning. Our staff has been acknowledged for everything from the Premier's Awards for Teaching Excellence to the Inclusion Excellence Awards, as well as many others.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

We recognize that providing students and staff with access to the latest technology is an important way to maintain excellence in education and that is why we continue to make significant investments in this area.

All elementary schools have technology carts, which include laptop computers, LCD projectors and interactive whiteboards. These portable carts ensure that all classrooms have access to the very latest equipment. Your child will also benefit from up-to-date computer labs in all of our secondary schools. These updated labs are in addition to the many high-tech, specialized classrooms at our high schools.

In addition to giving students access to this state-of-the-art equipment, staff throughout the Board continues to benefit from extensive training and professional development so that they can support ongoing changes in technology.

GREAT FACILITIES

We are committed to ensuring your child learns in a safe and clean school. Our schools have excellent amenities, including gymnasiums (with stages) and outdoor areas for play and athletics. Schools have library resource centres to provide students with the opportunity to engage in meaningful learning experiences, share information and ideas, solve problems and become self-motivated and independent learners. In addition, each of our high schools and many of our elementary schools have chapels. Even schools without chapels have special places where students and staff can pray and reflect.

MAKING THE GRADE – ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

We look at assessing and evaluating children's progress a little bit differently because we are a Catholic organization. We recognize each student as an individual who, through God, possesses unique gifts and experiences. In addition, we always strive to maintain children's self-worth and dignity and provide opportunities for hope and success.

In our schools, assessment and evaluation are about more than measuring achievement and assigning value to your child's work. Our objective is to improve how students learn. We use information from assessments to improve teaching strategies and programs for your child.

There is a wealth of information on our website about measuring student achievement. In addition to great information about how we assess, evaluate and report your child's achievements, you will also find a Frequently Asked Questions page and a section on understanding report cards.

Report cards and provincial testing are only two of the ways we assess your child's learning. Our teachers will communicate your child's progress through:

- Informal progress reports
- Write-ups on assignments or projects that have been assessed and returned to students
- Telephone conversations with parents
- Parent-student-teacher conferences
- The use of other assessment tools

Take a look at www.smcdsb.on.ca and look under the Parent menu in the Measuring Student Achievement section.

You are encouraged to speak to your child's teacher whenever you have a question or want an update.

PROVINCIAL TESTING

In addition to the evaluations that our teachers do in the classroom, every year the provincial government requires students in Grades 3 and 6 across Ontario to complete assessments of reading, writing and mathematics. High school students must also take the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics, and in Grade 10, they write the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). All of these tests are administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) and are part of knowing how well your child is learning.

There has been a continuous upward trend in our Board's EQAO results since the testing was first introduced. Every year, our schools have improved and we have results that meet or exceed the provincial standard. In fact, many of our schools have been recognized for their significant achievement. Our excellent results demonstrate an ability to adapt, grow and improve teaching and learning strategies for the benefit of our students.

For more information about EQAO tests, you can visit our website at www.smcdsb.on.ca – Under the Parent menu in the Provincial Testing section or the EQAO website at www.eqao.com.

Programs That Enhance Learning

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

We know that many students come to our schools speaking different languages. We value and cherish cultures and diverse backgrounds in our school communities and work hard to make sure students are able to overcome language barriers. We offer English as a second language programs to help students learn English. For more information about our English Language Learner programs, please contact your school.

FIRST NATION, MÉTIS AND INUIT EDUCATION

Our Board has an initiative called Making Good Tracks, which is aimed at improving learning environments and outcomes for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students. It will also raise awareness about First Nation, Métis and Inuit culture, languages, history and perspectives in all of our schools.

The project includes a Voluntary Aboriginal Student Self-Identification policy that will help us collect accurate data for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students in Kindergarten through to Grade 12. With this data in-hand, we will be able to track student progress and help evaluate the effectiveness of our programs.

Information about this project can be found on our website, www.smcdsb.on.ca – under the Parent menu – Aboriginal Education Project.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Our Board offers a wide range of continuing education courses for both elementary (Grades 7 and 8) and secondary students. Students can take courses in the summer time to catch up on or jump-start their studies. Elementary students can even earn a high school credit before getting there, by taking a Reaching Up course. More information can be found on our website www.smcdsb.on.ca or by contacting your local school.

READING RECOVERY®

We know that providing students with a strong literacy foundation when they are young will help them succeed in the later grades. We have a variety of programs and supports to help ensure our students develop strong literacy skills. One of those programs is Reading Recovery®.

Reading Recovery® is a research-based, short-term early intervention program involving one-on-one teaching for Grade 1 students who need extra help with reading and writing. Our Board has been providing the Reading Recovery® program to Grade 1 students for more than a decade and we are recognized as a leader in this area. Our experience shows that this program has been very successful in improving literacy skills for our students.

SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARD OPPORTUNITIES

Our secondary schools have a wealth of scholarships and awards to assist students in their post-secondary endeavours. Students also have a chance to receive awards such as Leon Bursary or Patrick Fogarty, which provide financial support to students in our Board. Details can be found directly from your child's school.

COOPERATIVE (CO-OP) EDUCATION

Co-op education is a unique program that integrates academic study with practical workplace experience. A co-op credit provides our secondary students with an excellent opportunity to test-drive a job to see if they like it. Our high schools actively connect with employers in the community to provide meaningful and exceptional co-op work placements for students. We are always looking for new and innovative ways for students to gain practical experience so they are better prepared for their future.

ONTARIO YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM (OYAP)

Through OYAP cooperative education, secondary students can register as apprentices while they are still in high school. Through an apprenticeship, students will gain on-the-job training while they are working toward a certification. It is a great choice for students who enjoy learning by doing. Apprenticeship training provides access to well-paying jobs that demand a high level of skill, judgement and creativity.

Every year, our high schools successfully register numerous students in the OYAP program. Between the ages of 16 and 18, our students are able to start their apprenticeships while they are still working toward their high school diploma. Some of our former students finished their apprenticeships and were writing their certification exams when they were only 20 or 21 years old – this is an amazing accomplishment.

SPECIALIST HIGH SKILLS MAJOR (SHSM)

SHSM is a Ministry of Education approved program that provides secondary students with on-the-job training in a particular field, so that they are more prepared to pursue post-secondary opportunities in that area. Students who complete the program, will receive a special designation on their diploma. Our high schools have several SHSM programs in fields ranging from manufacturing to hospitality and tourism.

"The Spirit makes you God's children." ***- Romans 8:15***

e-LEARNING

We work hard to make sure our programs reflect current learning trends and that is why we provide secondary students with the opportunity to enroll in on-line courses through our e-Learning program. The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic Virtual Learning Centre (SMCVLC) offers courses to students that may not be available at their high school.

Students who take courses through SMCVLC are provided with space in their timetable, a computer with Internet access, and daily support from their on-line teacher to help them successfully complete the course. Your child can speak to the school's guidance counsellor for more details on how to enroll for on-line courses.

DUAL CREDITS

Can you imagine getting high school and college credits at the same time? Many of our high schools partner with Georgian College so that students can experience what it is like to take a college course and the best news is that the credits earned count towards both their high school and post-secondary diploma.

Including Every Student – Our Special Education Program

INCLUSION AND ACCEPTANCE

We believe that God has created each child as a unique individual and that is why we promote an atmosphere that includes and accepts everyone at our schools. Our philosophy of inclusion is central to the delivery of our special education programs and services. Students with special needs are provided with support and encouragement so they can participate with their peers at school. Our staff works hard to ensure that all children in a classroom have opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

For students with exceptional learning needs, school staff will work with parents to develop an individualized program. An IEP is a written document detailing the special education program or services that your child might require. It outlines how your child's individual program might vary from other students in the same grade.

We believe that the learning needs of all students are best served within their local school. Inclusion means that students with exceptional needs fully participate in the activities of the school and learning takes place in regular classrooms along with other students of the same age group. Depending on the individual needs of your child, as outlined in the IEP, classroom learning may be augmented by teaching in the school's resource room.

IDENTIFICATION PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC)

The IPRC is a team (always with representation from a principal or a superintendent of schools) who has the role of determining whether or not a child should be identified as exceptional and deciding on an appropriate placement for that child.

IPRC meetings may be requested by a parent or by the principal of a child's school. The IPRC process is a formal one that school boards must follow according to guidelines set by the Ministry of Education. We encourage you to find out more about the IPRC process by viewing a *Parent's Guide to Identification Placement and Review Committee* found on our website at www.smcdsb.on.ca under the Parent menu in the Special Education section.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Research shows that the use of certain tools can help students be more successful with their academics. Assistive technology are powerful tools that can help support our students by increasing, maintaining or improving their abilities.

There are a variety of tools available to aid in learning. Most are licensed by the Ministry of Education and are used in classrooms. When using these tools, it is important to understand the needs of the student and build on their individual strengths so that they become motivated and engaged learners. To find out more about assistive technology, visit the Special Education section of our website under the Parent menu.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

There are many committed and skilled individuals in the community that can assist us with developing special education programs. That is why we value the opportunity to work with our SEAC to help establish special education programs and services for our exceptional students.

SEAC is a subcommittee of our Board of Trustees, and membership includes two school board trustees, board staff representatives and up to 12 community members nominated by local associations of parents. These members have a strong interest in assisting parents who have children with special needs or abilities.

SUPPORT SERVICES

We are always looking at ways to ensure your child receives the best possible learning experience. We have a wide range of skilled employees who work closely with teachers to ensure every child and classroom has the resources and supports they need.

BOARD RESOURCES

- Autism Spectrum Disorder Consultants (from Kinark Child and Family Services)
- Curriculum Consultants
- Hearing Resource Services
- Information and Communication Technology Consultant
- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program Teacher
- Psychological Services
- Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders
- Research and Evaluation Consultant
- Special Education Consultants
- Speech Language Services
- School Counsellors
- School Social Workers
- Vision Resource Teacher

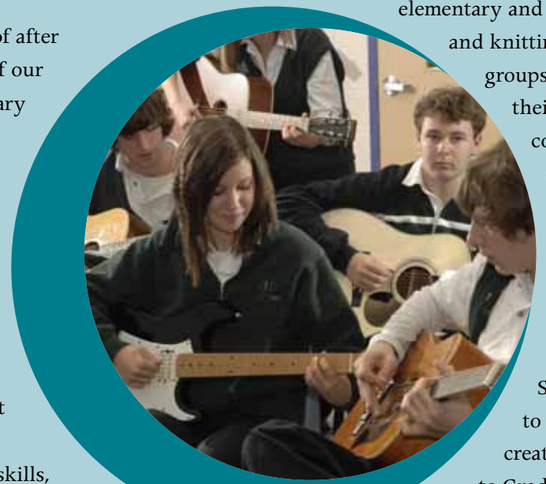
SCHOOL RESOURCES

- Chaplaincy Team Leaders (secondary schools only)
- Educational Assistants
- Special Needs Teachers
- Special Education Resource Teachers
- Student Success Teachers

These skilled professionals work as part of an interdisciplinary team to assist teachers to meet the collective and individual needs of students.

Beyond The Classroom

Academics are important, but there is more to school than just reading, writing and arithmetic. We know that when students become involved in activities outside the classroom, their learning journey is greatly enhanced. We also know that cocurricular activities are important to students in our schools – they love participating and this is reflected in the large number of teams, and clubs at each of our schools.



We offer a wide range of after school activities at all of our elementary and secondary schools. Whether it is athletics, student governance, volunteer programs, arts activities or social justice initiatives, there is something available for every child. There is no doubt that these options help students develop their skills, talents and interests so they can gain important life skills, preparing them for the future. These activities will also help shape your child into a well-rounded individual.

ATHLETICS

Student athletics are an important and exciting part of life at our schools. We offer a wide range of both competitive and intramural athletics in both elementary and high school. We are proud that many of our teams compete with some of the very best in the province.

Every individual who is involved in school sport is a member of the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA). OFSAA is an organization comprised of student-athletes, teacher-coaches, teachers, principals, and sport administrators all committed to the philosophy of education through school sport.

Our schools support participation in sports activities and encourage students to get involved – as a team player or a fan – because we know this is an important part of a student's whole learning experience.

CLUBS

Joining a club is a popular choice for many of our elementary and secondary students. From chess and knitting clubs, to environmental action groups – students of every age are exploring their interests and enhancing the school community by participating in clubs and groups. Our schools offer excellent opportunities for your child to discover hobbies as well as develop leadership and other life skills.

THE ARTS

Students are always looking for ways to showcase their remarkable artistic and creative talents. From Kindergarten through to Grade 12, your child will be presented with countless options to showcase dramatic, visual and musical abilities. Concerts, musical and dramatic productions, and art shows keep our students, staff and parents busy and entertained throughout the school year. These activities, which often take place outside of the classroom, help to develop creativity, imagination and confidence in students.

Whether they are five or 15, it is always wonderful to see the smiles of pride and excitement on students' faces when they have the opportunity to demonstrate their God-given artistic talents.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

All of our high schools and many of our elementary schools have student councils. By becoming involved with student government, your child will learn important leadership skills. These skills often translate into a greater sense of community and a stronger connection with fellow students and staff. Through student councils, students get to initiate and plan a range of activities – academic, social and spiritual – helping to create memories for themselves and their peers that will last a lifetime.

STUDENT TRUSTEE AND STUDENT SENATE

At our Board, high school students can become even more involved with student governance through the student trustee and Student Senate positions – these opportunities provide students with ways to represent their interests.

The student trustee is elected by the Student Senate and acts as a student voice at Board of Trustee meetings. The Student Senate is comprised of a group of students with a representative from each of our secondary schools. The Student Senate meets several times during the school year with our superintendent of secondary schools and the student trustee. At these meetings, students learn from each other and discuss issues of importance to their peers.

You can learn more about both of these roles on our website under the Student menu in the Beyond the Classroom section at www.smcdsb.on.ca.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

We believe it is important to put our faith into action and one great way to do this is through social justice activities. It is amazing to see how students from Kindergarten right through to Grade 12 embrace social justice initiatives in their school communities. There is a real desire to help people and make the world a better place.

Students take their efforts and energy outside of the classroom to raise funds for worthy causes, help people less fortunate both in our community and abroad, and care for our environment. Many students actively participate in social justice clubs or partake in charitable causes on their own time – simply because they feel compelled to help. Every day, our students and staff inspire us with their compassion and commitment to serve – values that, as Catholics, we hold dear.

In Caring Hands – Safe And Healthy Schools

We know that parents want us to provide a learning atmosphere where all students can feel safe, valued and respected and where a healthy environment is promoted. We also know that being proactive is an important part of providing safe and healthy schools for our students and staff. Our Board, and our various schools, have developed a range of policies, procedures, programs and services to help ensure the health and safety of your child.

"Be the living expression of God's kindness." ***- Mother Teresa***

POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

Positive school climates are important because they help students feel safe, welcome and secure. We use Ministry of Education guidelines – infused with our Catholic values – to develop Board-wide procedures around appropriate conduct in our schools. In addition, staff, students, parents and members of the community have worked together to develop procedures and guidelines, specific to each individual school community.

We encourage you to visit our website at www.smcdsb.on.ca in the Safe Schools section under the Parent menu to view our policy statements and supporting guidelines on codes of conduct, suspension and expulsion, appropriate dress and police school protocol. You can also contact your local school directly to find out more about appropriate conduct specific to your school.

KEEPING SCHOOLS SAFE

Through programs and initiatives, we have developed an approach for fostering and maintaining positive learning environments in all our schools. The strategies we adopt include a specific focus on prevention and intervention.

There are classroom strategies, community initiatives and partnerships with outside agencies that help us foster positive school cultures.

Examples of these initiatives include Peaceful Schools International, anti-bullying and safe use of technology programs, and Roots of Empathy. For more on these, visit our website under the Parent menu in the Safe Schools section.

SAFE ARRIVAL AND ATTENDANCE

It is important that your child arrives at school safely and on time. Not only does it make things easier at the school, it also teaches your child the value of being punctual. Our schools take attendance every day to confirm your child's safe arrival.

Each school has specific practices in place to deal with absenteeism, lateness, leaving school early, truancy and illness. We encourage you to become familiar with the procedures that apply at your school.

If your child is going to be late or absent, it is important that you call the school immediately. If you don't get through to someone directly in the office, be sure to leave a detailed message on the school's answering machine. Our school staff makes every effort to contact you if your child is absent and we have not heard from you. Providing your child with a signed and dated note when returning from an absence is a good practice (and may be a requirement at your child's school). Students over the age of 18 are of legal age to sign their own note.

REPORTING TO THE OFFICE

As part of our schools' safety procedures, all parents and other visitors to schools are required to sign in at the office, where they will be provided with a badge that clearly identifies them as a visitor. To ensure the safety of all students, parents will not be able to go to their child's classroom to drop off items or to check-in, etc. If you need to see your child for any reason or are picking your child up throughout the school day, please stop at the office and the staff there will be happy to help you.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Whether your child is in elementary school or in high school and wearing a uniform, we have dress code policies that reflect our commitment to promoting and nurturing safe, positive and respectful learning environments. We work closely with parents to develop our appropriate dress guidelines.

In addition to a standard dress code for every school, students in our high schools wear a uniform. Each school has its own guidelines in place that determine what the uniform looks like and how it is worn. Having a uniform creates a distinctive look for the school and it also makes it easier to identify students on school grounds, which is great for safety reasons. Another great advantage of school uniforms is that, in the long-term, the annual average cost for school clothes is considerably less for students. You can learn more on our website under the Student menu in the Dress For Success section.

RIDING THE BUS

We are committed to making Catholic education accessible to children in our school communities by providing safe and reliable bus transportation to students who qualify.

In order for your child to receive bus service to school and back home, the distance travelled one way must be greater than 1.6 kilometres for elementary students and 3.2 kilometres for high school students.

Riding the bus is an important part of your child's school experience. We want to ensure that all of our students are made to feel as safe and comfortable as possible. This requires the support of parents, students and all members of our community who use the roads when school buses are in operation.

On inclement weather days, we also encourage you to visit the home page of our website to find out about school bus cancellations.

PLEASE VISIT THE TRANSPORATION SECTION OF OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.SMCDSB.ON.CA FOR DETAILS ABOUT:

- Pick-up and drop-off information
- Ensuring bus safety
- Bus service during inclement weather
- School weather zones
- Criteria for bus cancellations

HEALTHY FOOD

Research tells us that healthy and well-balanced meals help provide the fuel necessary for learning – this is especially true for breakfast. Providing children with a healthy meal before sending them to school will help them concentrate and learn. At school, snacks and lunch are also essential.

We work with community partners to offer children nutritious foods and encourage lifelong, healthy eating habits through nutrition-related education. We do this in Simcoe County in partnership with the Eat Well To Excel program and in the District of Muskoka through the Food For Learning program. You can learn more about healthy eating on the Sicmoe Muskoka District Health Unit's website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

School is a great time to develop good lifelong fitness habits. We combine physical activity and appropriate lifestyle choices to help our students learn about a wide variety of health-related topics and to develop relevant skills and positive attitudes. From Grades 1 to 8, children will participate in sustained moderate to vigorous movement everyday through activities like games, dance, aquatics, sports, fitness, recreational activities or walking. In addition, all high school students are required to take at least one health and physical education course in order to receive their diploma.

STUDENT MEDICATION

There are some students who require regular or special medication. We all want to be sure that your child receives any medication he or she needs. And so we have very specific procedures about giving medicine to children at school. Medication cannot be given to a child by school staff unless you have filled out and submitted a written consent form. This is available at all of our schools or on our website at www.smcdsb.on.ca in the Healthy Schools section under the Parent menu.

Medication must be provided to a staff person at the school in its original container. Children are also not allowed to carry medication with them at any time (with the exception of inhalers and epi-pens).

ALLERGIES

Our Board believes in a philosophy of inclusion and that is why we will make every effort to ensure that all students feel safe and healthy in our school communities. We know that there are students who suffer from severe and potentially fatal allergies. Our schools have developed individual procedures to support the safety of all students. Schools and classrooms may have restrictions on certain foods, scents, etc., and we encourage students, staff and guests to respect the procedures that have been put in place at all times. Be sure to find out what you may need to do at your school to keep all children safe.

IMMUNIZATIONS

In Ontario, under the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*, you must provide proof that your child's vaccinations are current. When you register your child for school for the first time, you will be asked for a record your child's immunizations. It is important to note that students who do not have up-to-date immunizations or a valid exemption on file at the Health Unit, may be suspended from school. You can find out more about the immunization programs at both elementary and secondary schools on the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

HEALTH UNIT PARTNERSHIP

We play an active role in helping to promote the health and well-being of our students by working closely with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. We work in partnership to offer a variety of programs, services and initiatives that not only benefit our students, but also the larger community. We work with the Health Unit on pandemic planning, promoting oral health, fostering safe and healthy lifestyles, providing health resources to teachers, and more. To learn more about how we work with the Health Unit, please visit the Healthy Schools section of our website under the Parent Menu.

GREEN SCHOOLS

Our schools participate in a wide range of environmental initiatives. Our Plant Department has numerous green initiatives that contribute to lowering the consumption of heat, hydro and water. We also have a comprehensive recycling program.

The Ontario EcoSchools program is another key initiative in our Board. It is an environmental education program designed to positively influence students so that they will take what they have learned about energy conservation and waste reduction at school and apply these ideals at home and into their future lives.

Our Board and many of our schools have embraced this program and have been officially certified as EcoSchools. Regardless of whether or not a school has been officially certified, all of our schools participate in environmental action and make a commitment to actively care for God's creation.

"There is never a pilgrim who returns home without one less prejudice and one new idea." ***- St. Thomas More***

YOU WILL REQUIRE THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR CHILD'S REGISTRATION:

- Proof of age (birth certificate)
- Parent or child's Roman Catholic baptismal certificate (for elementary school only – see note below)
- Updated immunization records
- Proof of Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status
- Proof of address
- Educational records, if available

OPEN ACCESS AT HIGH SCHOOL

There is open access for students who want to attend one of our Catholic high schools. This means that students are not required to be Catholic and will not require proof of Catholic baptism to enrol. Non-Catholic students attending any of our high schools must respect the rites and practices of the Catholic school system.

Join Our Family

ENROLLING YOUR CHILD

Now that you know more about our schools and Catholic education, we know you will be happy about registering your child with us. In order to confirm which school your child will attend, you can call the Catholic school in your area or visit our Board website at www.smcdsb.on.ca and look at the boundary maps in the School Directory under the Parent menu.

Registering becomes easier if you can start gathering the documents you will need early on. Our school office administrators (secretaries) will also help you with registering.

It is important for the future of Catholic education that parents check their property tax bills to ensure they are recorded as being Catholic school supporters.

GETTING INVOLVED

Once your child is enrolled in one of our schools, we sincerely hope you will become actively involved in his or her education.

Establishing a positive and communicative relationship between parents, teachers and students is a critical part of achieving excellence in education and it is something we value. As a parent, you are a positive influence for your child in education and in life. We look forward to working closely with you as your child develops and grows in our care.

There are a lot of ways you can contribute to a positive learning experience and one of the best ways is to become involved. We know that every parent's situation is different and that levels of involvement will understandably vary. But, even simple activities, like reading or taking an interest in homework, will make a huge difference.

Here are some of the ways you can participate in your child's education from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

- Parent/Teacher interviews – throughout elementary and high school, you will be invited to attend conferences with your child's teacher. This is a formal opportunity to have an undivided, one-on-one discussion about your child's progress.
- Participating in school events – attending special events such as plays, assemblies, teas, barbecues, etc., are great ways to informally meet teachers, school staff, other children and parents. This also shows children that you are interested in their school experience.
- Volunteering – our schools are always looking for parent volunteers. There is a wide range of volunteer opportunities to help you become engaged with your child's education.

Anyone interested in volunteering must submit an original or certified copy of a Criminal Background Check form, including Vulnerable Sector Screening. Ask your child's school for more information.

- Catholic School Community Council – each of our schools has a Catholic School Community Council made up of parent volunteers and staff. You can work with other parents and members of the school community to make improvements to the school and student learning. We also have a Central Committee for Community Council that meets three to four times a year to support schools.

ADDRESSING YOUR CONCERNS

A strong relationship between home and school is an important part of helping all children reach their full potential. From time to time, we know there may be a misunderstanding, lack of communication or situations that require attention. When this happens, all parties must work together to resolve the matter.

We encourage you to always speak with your child's teacher first. If you can't find a satisfactory solution with the teacher, then the principal may be approached. In very rare circumstances, when a resolution cannot be found with the help of the teacher or principal, you may choose to contact the superintendent responsible for your child's school.

Regardless of the situation, we are committed to working with parents to ensure that their children receive the care and understanding they need for an excellent education.

Where We're Located

Our schools in Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka are located in some of the most beautiful natural settings in the province of Ontario. Our Board encompasses a large and dynamic region serving small towns, rural areas and urban centres. Our boundaries stretch from Bradford West Gwillimbury in the south to Huntsville in the north and from Collingwood in the west to Brechin in the east.

Our Schools

Adjala-Tosorontio/Adjala Tosorontio-CFB/ Essa/Essa-CFB/New Tecumseth

Father F. X. O'Reilly School
Holy Family School
Monsignor J. E. Ronan School
Our Lady of Grace School
Prince of Peace School
St. James School
St. Paul's School
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School

Barrie

Pope John Paul II School
St. Bernadette School
St. Catherine of Siena School
St. John Vianney School
St. Nicholas School
St. Michael the Archangel School
St. Joan of Arc High School
St. Peter's Secondary School
Saint Gabriel the Archangel Catholic School
Monsignor Clair School
St. Marguerite d'Youville School
St. Mary's School
St. Monica's School
Sister Catherine Donnelly School
The Good Shepherd School
St. Joseph's High School

Bradford West Gwillimbury/Innisfil

Holy Cross School
Marie of the Incarnation School
Mother Teresa School
St. Charles School
St. Francis of Assisi School
St. Jean de Brébeuf School
Holy Trinity High School

Bracebridge/Georgian Bay/Gravenhurst/ Huntsville/Lake of Bays/Muskoka Lakes

Monsignor Michael O'Leary School
Our Lady of Mercy School
Saint Mary School
St. Dominic Catholic Secondary School

Clearview/Collingwood/ Springwater/Wasaga Beach

Our Lady of Lourdes School
Our Lady of the Assumption School
St. Noel Chabanel School
St. Mary's School
Jean Vanier Catholic High School

Midland/Penetanguishene/Tay/Tiny

Canadian Martyrs School
Monsignor Castex School
Sacred Heart School
St. Ann's School
St. Antoine Daniel School
St. Theresa's High School

Orillia/Oro-Medonte/Ramara/Severn

Foley Catholic School
Guardian Angels School
Monsignor Lee School
Notre Dame School
St. Bernard's School
Patrick Fogarty Catholic Secondary School

Parry Sound

St. Peter the Apostle School

More About Our Schools

ABOUT OUR PAST

Our Board has a long and rich history in Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka. Catholic education has had a strong presence in our community for more than a century – with a number of schools opening their doors to students in the 1800s.

Throughout the late 1800s and the early 1900s, our Catholic communities were known for taking a leadership role in lobbying the government to extend public funding to Catholic high schools. In fact today, our schools benefit from full public funding because of the ongoing efforts of those supporting Catholic education.

We have experienced a lot of growth over the years. In 1969, the student population was just under 6,000 and remained virtually unchanged until the 1980s. At that time, we experienced rapid growth and expansion – growing by more than 50% in a short four-year period. Throughout the 1990s, we were one of the fastest growing areas in the province. Today, our growth has stabilized and our student population sits around 20,000.

We accommodated this student growth by building many new schools in communities throughout Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka. We also actively update and expand our existing school facilities to meet the changing and growing needs of students and staff.

TRUSTEES – STEWARDS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

At the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, our trustees are more than elected officials representing the members of our school communities. Their role as Catholic trustees also includes a spiritual responsibility, providing leadership and governance within the context of our faith. In addition to our elected officials, there is a student trustee who represents the voice of students on the Board.

Along with our senior leadership team, our trustees set direction for the Board through developing governing by-laws and policies, approving an annual balanced budget, establishing system priorities and making decisions that ensure our students receive the highest quality of faith-filled learning. Our Catholic trustees work tirelessly to ensure that a Catholic dimension is reflected in policies, practices, programs and decision-making.

As a Catholic school supporter (remember to check your property tax bill to confirm this) you are eligible to vote for Catholic trustees in the municipal election.

You can find out more about the trustee in your area, meeting agendas, minutes and highlights, as well as other information about our Board's trustees on our website at www.smcdsb.on.ca – the Our Board menu in the Trustee Table section.

COME GROW WITH US

Maybe you have already joined our family or you are still trying to decide whether to become a member of one of our school communities – in either case we welcome you and hope that this information has helped you to see our passion for learning and for Catholic education.

If you have questions or need any additional details, we know that our staff would be happy to assist you. And remember you can visit our website at www.smcdsb.on.ca.

Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board

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