

Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board

Annual Report

2012–2013



SIMCOE MUSKOKA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



Dear Partners in Catholic Education,

“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me not me but the one who sent me.” – Mark 9:37

2012 – 2013 was an incredible school year for our board. I am so humbled by the outstanding gifts and talents of our staff who dedicate themselves to the faith-filled learning of our students. I am also inspired by what I see in our classrooms every day – children learning and growing to reach their God-given potential. This annual report to our community provides you with some highlights of the amazing activities that occur in our board and in our schools.

I am pleased to announce that the extraordinary work of bringing our strategic multi-year plan to fruition has been completed. You will be learning more about *Our Faith ~ Our Future*. This plan provides a framework and road map to strengthen our faith identity and student learning over the next five years. We look forward to implementing this plan in the coming months and sharing its details with all of our community partners.

As Catholic educators, we are privileged to work in an environment where we can celebrate our faith and influence our students’ and staffs’ spiritual journeys. There are so many ways in which Catholic schools are unique and distinct. The Gospels are reflected in every subject that we teach. We have visible symbols of our faith throughout the board and schools and we have daily prayers and regular celebrations of

Mass. By highlighting our successes and focusing on our strengths, we can ensure Catholic education will continue to prosper for future generations of learners.

We do not succeed in isolation. We value the important partnerships that support our Catholic schools. Our relationships with parish priests are a blessing. We are also working hard to encourage parents to be engaged in their children’s learning. With priests and parents as partners, we can work together toward achieving higher academic and spiritual success.

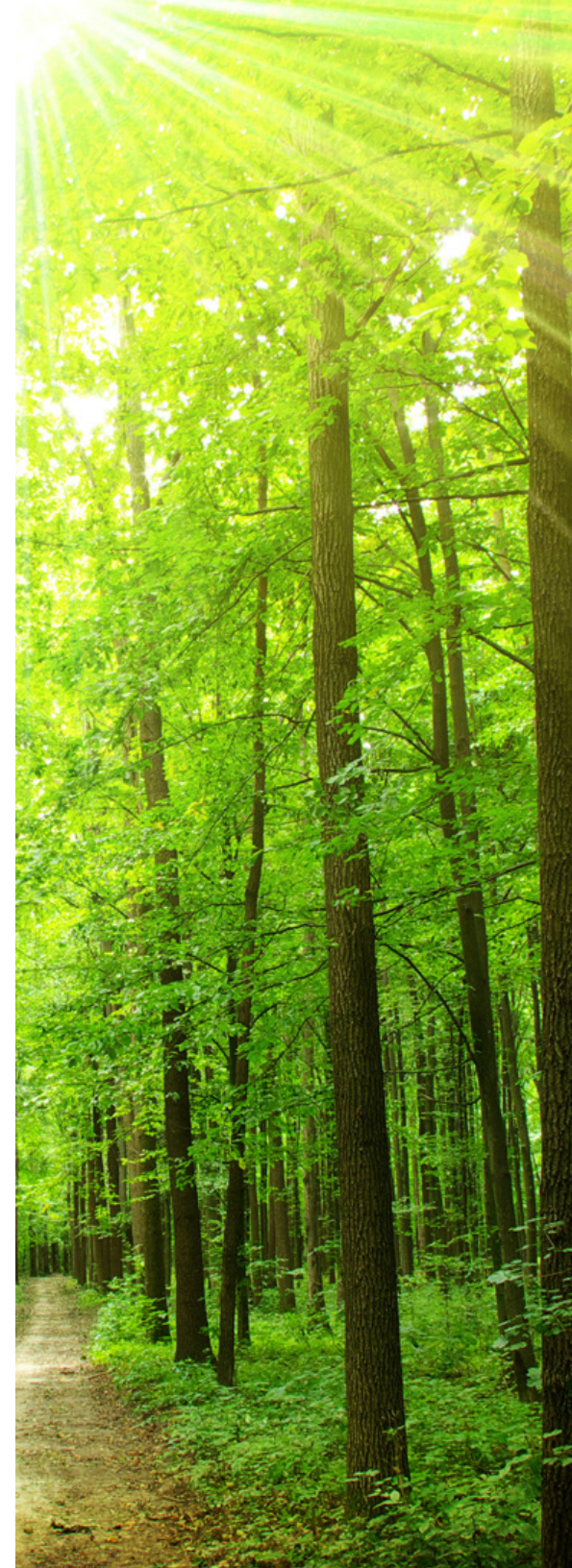
The learning experience we offer brings out the very best in our students and helps them believe they can transform the world. So many of our students take a leadership role in social justice issues in their own communities as well as in the broader global community. Our Catholic schools inspire excellence in academics as well as personal integrity, moral values and a deep caring for others who are not as fortunate.

Together, staff, students, parents, parish priests and community partners can be extremely proud of the great achievements and the depth of commitment to faith-filled learning in our Catholic schools.

Yours in Christ,



Brian Beal
Director of Education



A Focus on Faith

“Do not neglect doing good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” – Hebrews 13:16

As a Catholic learning community, one of our key goals is to provide a distinctive Christ-centred learning environment to our students. We integrate faith values and spiritual formation into all academic programming. With the launch of the board’s multi-year strategic plan, one of the key priorities we identified is “nurturing a distinct Catholic identity.” This priority and its goals will guide our staff as they deliver a strong, faith-filled education to our students.

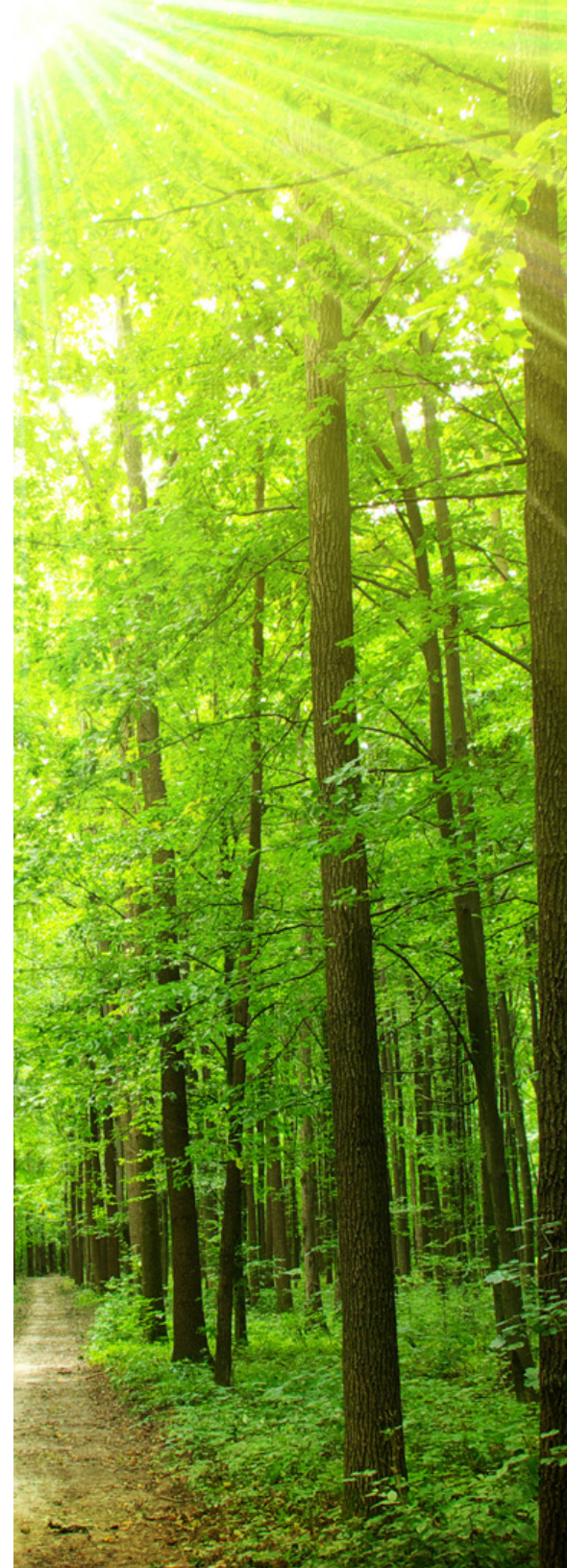
The theme for the 2012 – 2013 school year, *Living our Faith ~ Head, Heart and Hands* was embraced by everyone. It was drawn in to many aspects of student learning – academic, social and spiritual. It was also celebrated during staff development sessions and at a variety of gatherings and meetings. For this school year, we are looking forward to celebrating the theme, *Living in Hope ~ Grounded in Faith*.

We celebrated many wonderful expressions of learning and faith throughout Catholic Education Week, which took place from May 5th to 10th. During this special week that begins in our parishes on Sunday, students and staff celebrated the gift of Catholic education through literacy, numeracy, technology and social justice initiatives. There was also much evidence of faith in those celebrations.

Our religious education co-ordinator worked with principals and staff throughout the year to ensure Gospel values were reflected in the curriculum for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. This was complemented by the religious education programs that were offered in every grade.

The faith development of our staff remained a key focus as our adult faith animator offered staff resources and support to enrich their faith experience at work. Staff participated in prayer and liturgies while the Faith Ambassador program continued to support faith development in the schools and at board offices.

We are very proud of the work our students and staff do to champion social justice causes – and there are so many wonderful examples. Of special note are the amazing leadership mission programs that we offer students in our secondary schools. These programs expose students to the challenges faced in developing countries. They learn about the geography, culture and dire social conditions in impoverished communities. The culmination of the learning is a trip to a location supported by Free The Children. While there, students work and learn first-hand with their global neighbours. These life-altering trips have taken over 445 students to Kenya, Ecuador and India. On their return, students share their experiences with other students in their own school as well as with elementary students.



***Our Faith ~ Our Future* – Multi-year Strategic Plan is Approved**

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” – John 14:6

We are very excited to announce that the Board of Trustees approved a five-year strategic plan called *Our Faith ~ Our Future* at their June 2013 meeting. This plan is the culmination of two years of extensive work that involved significant consultation with students, staff, families, parish priests and other members of our Catholic community. An amazing steering committee led the process of bringing all the pieces of the plan together. The committee members were:

- Jim Sirdevan, Steering Committee Chair/Facilitator
- Sherry Chapman, Adult Faith Animator
- Ab Falconi, Superintendent of Education – Elementary
- Jo-Anne Flood, Manager, Payroll and Benefits
- Linda McGregor, Manager, First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education
- Karen Pond, Religious Education and Chaplaincy Services Co-ordinator
- Clayton R. J. Ferguson, Chair of the Board of Trustees
- Brian Beal, Director of Education

Our Faith ~ Our Future includes a new mission and vision statement for our board. There are also three key priorities and several goals to support the

achievement of each priority and the realization of the mission and vision. Together with our Catholic virtues and values and the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations*, *Our Faith ~ Our Future* is a solid plan that will guide us as we make decisions that ultimately lead to improved student learning.

Implementing the plan began with the principals, vice-principals and managers at a meeting in August. Communicating *Our Faith ~ Our Future* to staff, parents, students and the community is planned for the fall of 2103. Action plans will also be developed and implemented for year-one of the plan. We look forward to sharing more details on our plans as they unfold in the coming year.

2012 – 2013 Highlights

There were so many exciting activities during the past school year. We welcomed more students into full day Kindergarten, hired new staff, brought three Catholic school communities together under one roof and undertook several major construction projects that are improving the learning environments for our students. Take a peek at some of the highlights.

Enrolment

Our board provided exceptional faith-filled learning to 20,866 students in 50 schools (nine high schools and 41 secondary schools). The most recent



enrolment numbers for 2012 – 2013 as of October 31, 2013 were:

Elementary: 13,159
Secondary: 7,727

Full Day Kindergarten

“Who are these with you? Jacob said, “The children God has graciously given your servant.” – Genesis 33:5

As we continued to expand the full day Kindergarten program across our board, we are currently offering this exciting program in 34 of our Catholic schools. The next phase of rolling out this program will see all 41 of our Catholic elementary schools offering full day learning in the 2014 – 2015 school year. This means that every child who begins a learning journey with us will benefit from enrolling in this program.

Staffing

As one of the largest employers in the area, we are proud of the depth of professional expertise. We have approximately 3,363 employees in a range of positions. Last year, we hired 35 new permanent teachers and 183 occasional teachers in long-term assignments. In addition, 325 people were hired into a variety of permanent and casual positions. Twenty-six designated early childhood educators were hired to work alongside our teachers in providing full day Kindergarten. Our new employees were welcomed to the board with an orientation session co-ordinated by the Human Resources department.

Rebuilding Our Lady of Grace Catholic School

A totally renovated school will bring together students from Prince of Peace, Our Lady of Grace and Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Schools. The \$11.4 million work on the facility continued during the school year and students and staff are anticipating a move into the facility soon. Construction began on the new school at the current Our Lady of Grace site. Until construction is finished, the students from all three communities are being housed at Prince of Peace Catholic School. In addition to a new chapel and office area, the school will have 18 classrooms to serve our students.

Upgrades St. Joseph’s Catholic High School

The \$2.4 million investment in renovations and improvements at St. Joseph’s Catholic High School are hard to miss. There is a brand new entrance to the school, which is outfitted with safety features. To symbolize our faith, there is a large new cross adjacent to the entrance. Inside the school, along with renovated administrative office space, there will be many new specialized academic classrooms including a 21st century mathematics class, dance/drama, music and a special education area – all of which will be completed in the 2013 – 2014 school year. In addition, there will be new meeting spaces to accommodate the needs of the school and the board.



Other Projects

New Entry and Safe Arrival Zone for St. Marguerite d'Youville Catholic School – With the opening of Hamner Street in Barrie, the school received a new entry. To accommodate the change, the school has two paved parking lots, a bus entry and a safe school drop-off zone for its students. Work on the project was completed over the summer and was ready for school opening in the fall of 2013.

New Full Day Kindergarten Classrooms – To accommodate the program needs of full day Kindergarten, classrooms had to be expanded at St. Catherine of Siena, St. John Vianney, St. James and St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Schools. The construction got underway this school year and is expected to be completed during 2013.

New Roofing, Fencing and Entry – Saint Mary Catholic School in Hunstville received a new roof over the summer. In addition, there was painting that gave the school a bright new look for its students. At St. Mary's Catholic School in Barrie, new fencing is providing an enclosed area for student recess as well as enhancing safety at the school. St. Ann's Catholic School in Penetanguishene got a new, fully accessible entryway, which is a welcome addition to the school. Many painting, HVAC, and other projects also took place in a number of schools to ensure the learning environment is the best it can be for our students.

Planning for Student Success

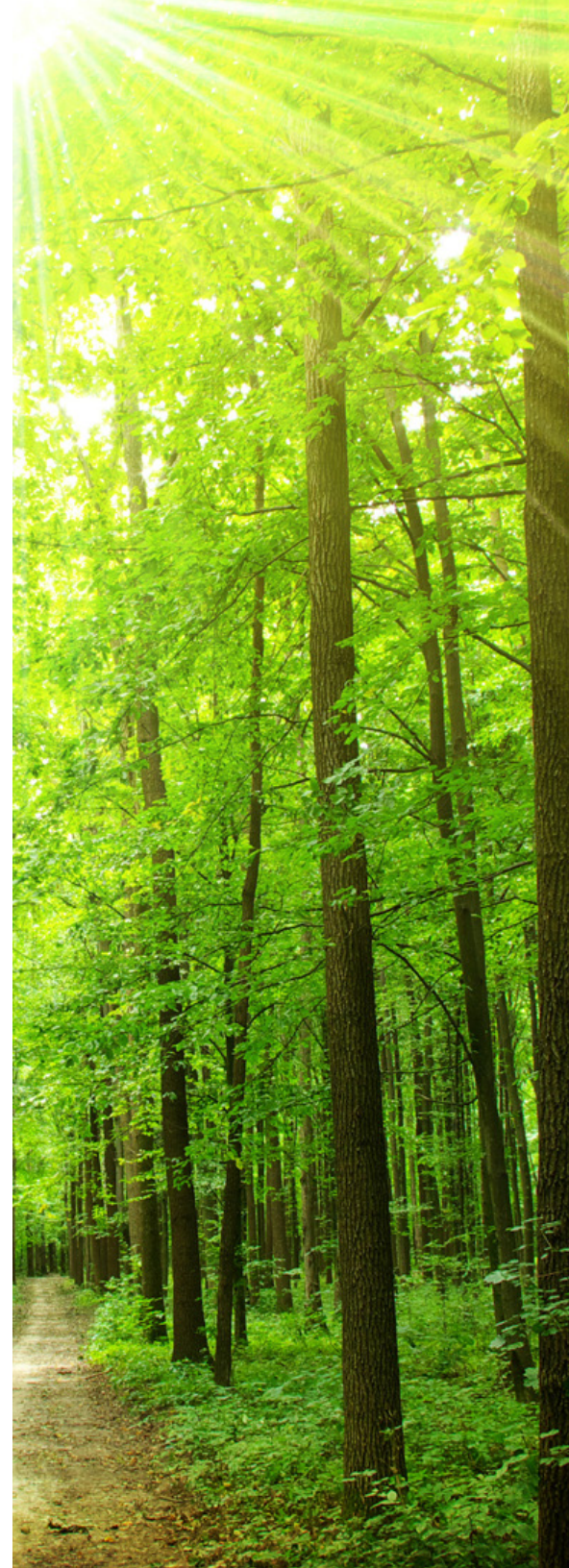
"Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance." – Proverbs 1:5

Achieving our learning goals and objectives is central to *Our Faith ~ Our Future*, and to everything we do as a board. To support this, we develop an annual improvement plan for student achievement. The plan outlines goals, strategies, professional development plans as well as methods for evaluation. It is based on four key pillars and it is used as the foundation to achieve our teaching and learning objectives. It also identifies future areas for improvement. The four pillars are:

- Catholic Community, Culture and Caring
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Pathways.

In turn, each Catholic school developed their specific school improvement plan using the board plan as a guide. Principals, staff and parents were involved in creating a local plan that reflected the unique needs of their school and their students.

Staff in the Academic Services area worked with schools to ensure that our improvement plan goals and objectives were met. During the school year, staff continued to offer many programs and services to support our schools:



- Reading Recovery® in all of our elementary schools
- Numeracy initiatives
- English language learner and French as a second language support
- Expanding technology in the classrooms
- Student success initiatives such as Special High Skills Major, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, Dual Credits and School Within a College were available for secondary students.

Including Everyone in Our Learning Community

“And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” Colossians 3:14

The board’s new mission statement speaks to including everyone – “Our inclusive Catholic learning community is dedicated to excellence. We give witness to the teachings of Jesus Christ, as we journey in faith and learning, to develop the God-given abilities of each person.”

Students who require assistance to achieve success have access to a wide-range of special education programs and services. Our philosophy of inclusion is a focus for our learning environment so that all students can learn together. We continued to maximize funding available to us through Special Equipment Amount and Special Incident Portion to enhance learning for our students.

In addition, our psychologists, social workers and school counsellors provided consultation, assessment and counseling services for students who have complex emotional and learning needs. Supporting our board and our schools is the Special Education Advisory Committee made up of key community partners. They meet regularly and provide advice to the Board of Trustees.

Implementing the *Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Policy Framework* continued to be a priority. Last year, our board received provincial funding of \$53,500 to help us achieve our goals. Our award-winning Making Good Tracks initiative continued to advance cultural awareness, student success and community partnerships. A significant highlight for the board was the signing of an Educational Services Agreement with Beausoleil First Nation during a special ceremony on Christian Island. Other highlights included the launch of our Canoe Literacy program, Me to We Sacred Circle Leadership Program, Dreamcatcher Transition project, and professional development opportunities for champion teachers that included guest speakers, community partners and whole school events. Direct support was also available to students of First Nation, Métis and Inuit ancestry by student support workers at Patrick Fogarty and St. Theresa’s Catholic high schools.

EQAO

Once again, our board’s overall results showed achievement above or close to the provincial



averages in Grades 3 and 6 reading, writing and mathematics. We are also seeing steady progress in the number of students who are meeting or exceeding provincial standards since the tests were first introduced in 2002 – 2003. The results for Grade 9 academic and applied mathematics also showed continuous improvement over time. Students are demonstrating success in completing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT).

GRADE 3

Board Results		Provincial Results
Reading	65%	68%
Writing	79%	77%
Mathematics	64%	67%

GRADE 6

Board Results		Provincial Results
Reading	76%	77%
Writing	77%	76%
Mathematics	53%	57%

GRADE 9 MATHEMATICS

Board Results		Provincial Results
Applied	39%	44%
Academic	76%	84%

OSSLT

Board Results		Provincial Results
First-time eligible students	81%	82%
Previously eligible students	57%	49%

Parent Involvement

We know that when parents are actively involved in their children's education there is a significant improvement in student achievement. That is why we remain committed to engaging and involving our parents in many aspects of learning in our schools. Each of our schools had a Catholic School Community Council (CSCC) that worked with the school principal and staff to make improvements through spiritual, social and academic initiatives.

In addition to the CSCCs, there is a Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) with 18 members who represent each Catholic school community. The PIC works with the Director of Education and a Trustee to enhance communication among parents and to have a link to the board. In the past school year, PIC created a website for all parents that includes valuable information such as terms of reference, minutes and links to resources that parents can use.

Parent Reaching Out (PRO) grants provide another opportunity for parents to enhance the success of students in our schools. In 2012 – 2013, parents from many schools applied for PRO grants for a range of school-based projects including website redesign, bullying prevention programs and English language learner support.



Safe and Healthy Schools

We know that providing a safe and healthy learning environment for our students leads to greater success in school. We offer a number of programs in our schools including Roots of Empathy, alternative education programs, care and treatment day programs and restorative justice practices. These serve to make our schools safe environments for learning. In addition, our schools have implemented several initiatives, many of which focus on faith, to raise awareness about preventing bullying.

From healthy eating to eco-schools, our schools are committed to providing students with a healthy place to learn and grow.

There is Hope for Learning

“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord and will be repaid in full.” – Proverbs 19:17

The Hope for Learning Foundation is a separate, charitable entity from the board that brings hope and help to our students. Funds raised through contributions to the Foundation went directly to helping many vulnerable children in our schools. Whether providing funds for basic needs like food and clothing, or investing in a student's future with scholarships, the Hope for Learning Foundation made a significant difference in the lives of many of our students during the past school year. Much needed donations are always welcome. Contact the board for

more information on the Foundation and how you can help.

Trustees

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift you have received.” – 1 Peter 4:10

In December 2012, Clayton Ferguson and Maria Hardie were acclaimed as Chair and Vice-Chair (respectively) to serve the 2013 board year. Our trustees worked tirelessly as stewards of faith to ensure that the board offers the best Catholic learning environment for our students. Through policy governance, they approved the board's budget, set policy and ensured that a faith-based curriculum is a central tenet of learning in our Catholic schools. The trustees serving our communities are:

Shawn Cooper
(Clearview, Collingwood, Springwater,
Wasaga Beach)

Carol Corriveau-Truchon
(Huntsville, Muskoka Lakes, Lake of Bays,
Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, Georgian Bay,
Parry Sound)

Clayton Ferguson
(New Tecumseth, Essa, Essa-CFB,
Adjala-Tosorontio-CFB)



Maria Hardie
(Barrie, Wards 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)

Catherine MacDonald
(Midland, Penetanguishene, Tiny, Tay)

Connie Positano
(Barrie, Wards, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Jeanny Salmon
(Bradford West Gwillimbury, Innisfil)

Francis Smith
(Orillia, Ramara, Severn, Oro-Medonte)

Emily Cicchetti
(Student Trustee)

Budget

In June 2013, the Board of Trustees approved a balanced budget for the 2013 – 2014 school year in the amount of \$260,028,808 to support Catholic learning in our schools.

Board Website

For more information on any of the topics in this annual report, you can visit our website,
www.smcdsb.on.ca

