

The Future of Catholic Schools

This past week I attended a mini-symposia sponsored by the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE). The symposia focused on the role of religion in Ontario society. The symposia had representatives from the Bishops, trustees, principals, parents teachers, directors and all other partners in Catholic Education.

Some very interesting statistics were presented at the beginning of the symposia. When comparing Census data from 1961 with the data from 2001 we can glean the following information:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1961 | 30% identified themselves as <i>Roman Catholic</i> |
| | 55% identified themselves as belonging to a mainstream <i>Protestant</i> faith |
| | 1% identified themselves as having <i>no faith affiliation</i> . |
| 2001 | 33% identified themselves as <i>Roman Catholic</i> |
| | 25% identified as belonging to a mainstream <i>Protestant</i> faith |
| | 16% had <i>no faith affiliation</i> |

As you can see from the data the strength of faith affiliation to the Catholic Church has actually grown over this period versus the protestant faiths that have seen a very dramatic decline in their affiliation. This is in some ways a good news message. We have a very large group supporting our system out there. Yet we all know that overall, church attendance is down.

Another hopeful sign occurred at this meeting. People began asking the question why? Why do people identify themselves as Catholic and not attend church? What value does this very large community of supporters see in identifying themselves as Catholic? How do we reach out and engage these people in supporting our schools? Our Church?

As we continue this conversation and explore the answers to these questions we stand in a position to influence both this community of Catholics as well as the practices of our parishes and schools. This dialogue is overdue. We need to enter the discussion in a spirit of hope and openness. I hope that the focus remains on engaging our Catholic constituents while continuing to value and respect the opinions and perspectives of all.

Likewise, as we enter this conversation we need to avoid language that would devalue the contributions of all members of the community. Phrases like “practicing Catholic” serve only to present an elitist attitude of “I’m a better Catholic than you.” Above all we are a community whose members, like any community, participate according to their abilities and interest.

Upcoming Events

March 12, 2009
PD Committee meeting

**March 14, 2009 -
March 16, 2009**
Provincial AGM

March 25, 2009
Post Provincial AGM
Delegate Meeting

March 27, 2009
OEFTA Volleyball Tournament at St. Mary C.S.S.

March 27
Young Authors' Deadline

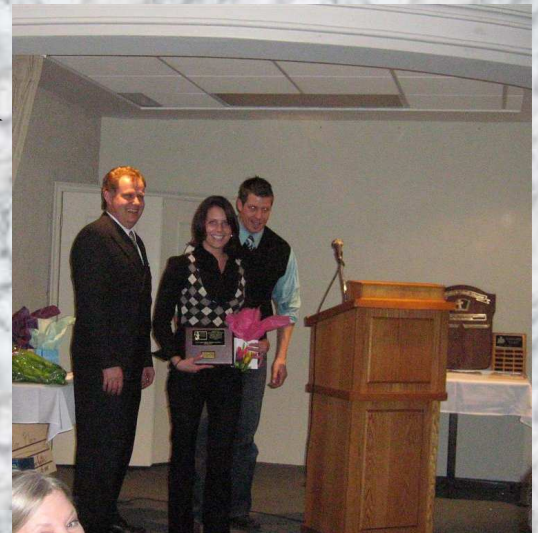
April 1
ETO Meeting

Awards and Appreciation Dinner





Award	Winner	School
Exemplary Service	Edmund Wyse	M. Doyle
Occasional Teacher	Vella Giglio Jerry Polischuk	St. Bernadette St Nicholas
Beginning Teacher	Karen Hunt Laura Fralick	St Benedict St Timothy
Sullivan Award	Amy Rockel	St. Daniel
Dedication to Catholic Education	Bernie Pickett	St Mary's



Know Your Collective Agreement

Teacher Directed Planning Time:

One of the major changes to planning time in the current Collective Agreement(s) is the definition of planning time as “teacher directed.” This phrase is important in order to reduce the erosion of planning time by administration booking meetings during your scheduled planning time. Your planning time is yours to control. If you wish to have a meeting during that time then by all means go ahead, however, if the meeting or consultation is “booked” for you during that time you can request that it be rebooked during instructional or other convenient time.



Elementary 4.17

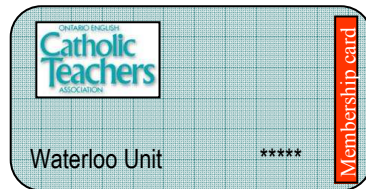
- 1) Planning / Preparation time shall be teacher-directed.
- 2) Planning time shall begin no later than the first Wednesday of the school year.

Planning / Preparation time shall be scheduled with input from the teacher(s).

Occasional Teachers should remember that they receive the planning time of the person that they are replacing.

OECTA / EDVANTAGE Number

Did you realize that the number on your OECTA membership card is also your EDVANTAGE number? Yes, they one in the same!



If you need an OECTA Membership card please call the OECTA Office for assistance.

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