



**DIRECTOR'S REPORT -  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**PRESENTED TO THE BOARD  
OF TRUSTEES  
DECEMBER 2, 2014**

Mr. Chair, throughout the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, fostered within faith-filled learning environments, we remain resolute in our commitment to academic excellence and the relentless pursuit of success for each student.

Mr. Chair, my 2014 Director's Annual Report, outlines our successes and accomplishments over the past year as we continue toward achievement of our strategic planning goals.

Tonight, I am pleased to present to the Board, an executive summary of the final Report, which outlines for Trustees our Catholic school board's continued commitment to provide faith-based and faith-filled learning opportunities for students and touches on just a few of our recent accomplishments.

Mr. Chair, we live in a world today that is much more complex than it was even just a few years ago. For our students to thrive and be successful in an ever changing world environment, we must ensure that all classrooms reflect the future-focused vision we have for the learner.

A vision that is rooted in our faith and reflects an understanding of what it means to be literate in our modern context; and, which views learning as an integrated, life-long endeavour.

Across our Board, we continue to strive to create learning environments for students, where both teacher and student are learners, understanding becomes as important as knowing, innovation and exploration are part of learning, and students and teachers connect with their community and the world.

Framed around our pillars of Discipleship, Scholarship and Stewardship, our Board strategic plan continues to focus our efforts to improve student achievement; ensure our students' well-being; and support and guide their faith formation.

Mr. Chair, we have much to celebrate in Algonquin and Lakeshore.

### **Discipleship**

Our spiritual theme, ***Faith in Action***, continues to frame many of our community celebrations as we give witness to our Catholic faith.

The distinctive nature of our Catholic schools represents an authentic and dynamic integration of Catholic teachings and gospel values across the curriculum.

With great enthusiasm, our students are not waiting to exercise leadership in our communities and in our world. Regardless of their age, students in Algonquin and Lakeshore exemplify the mantra "Be the Change" evidenced through their involvement in initiatives such as PeaceQuest, the Poverty Challenge, Eco schools, Speak Up, mission trips, Best Foot Forward and numerous other social action projects.

Our Board's Catholic Character and Culture committee has embraced their mandate to strengthen the relationship between home, school and parish and to bring the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations to life through significant initiatives such as our personalized Kindergarten faith keepsake and welcome kits, as well as the very successful elementary student Faith Conference. A conference that focuses not only on faith development but faith leadership by bringing together the gifts and talents of elementary and secondary students.

Mr. Chair, children and students who have strong relationships and a positive sense of self – and who can understand and manage their own health and emotions – are in a better position to reach their full

potential in the future. Their sense of well-being supports their learning because it makes them more resilient and better able to overcome challenges.

As Catholic educators we recognize the interconnectedness between academic achievement and student mental health and well-being, and we are committed to nurture and develop the mind, body and spirit of every student within our Catholic learning communities.

Programs such as Roots of Empathy, Rainbows and Mental Health Assist, as well as our restorative practices framework, exemplify our efforts to teach and build resiliency, empathy and social awareness in students.

Through our mental health strategy we are building a shared language around mental health that reflects an understanding and belief that positive mental health is critical in order for every person to be able to make a positive and productive contribution in our communities.

### **Scholarship**

Mr. Chair, we know that school leaders have a profound impact on student achievement and school culture. Likewise, system leaders have a crucial role to play in creating successful schools. While research shows that the Principal is second only to the teacher in improving student achievement, it also shows that it is leadership, distributed across a system, that has the greatest potential to impact student learning.

Our Catholic leadership strategy has been developed to foster the highest quality leadership in our schools and school board. Our goal is to ensure that, throughout our board, leaders inspire a shared vision of Catholic education, and, are passionate and skilled in order to sustain continued improvement, address the complexities associated with their instructional leadership role and nurture a culture of accountability.

Over the past year, staff have participated in a variety of leadership opportunities such as Leadership Academy, Principal and Vice-Principal Assessment Centres, and Principal Qualification Courses.

And, realizing that leadership development extends beyond the principal and vice-principal, board and school staff have participated in leadership sessions offered in partnership with St. Lawrence College, the Eastern Ontario Staff Development Network and our own Looking to Lead Speakers Series focussed on building and sustaining positive and effective professional relationships.

Mr. Chair, we continue to provide students the tools they need to reach their full potential, regardless of their individual circumstances.

By raising expectations, the transformation that is taking place in our classrooms will ensure that students achieve at high levels, acquire valuable skills and become engaged members of their communities.

Teacher professional learning continues through a model of collaborative inquiry and represents a fundamental shift in the way professional learning takes place. The networks teachers are developing are focused on learning and build new knowledge.

Teacher networks foster opportunities to challenge existing practices and advance instruction and assessment beyond the status quo.

While foundational skills for academic achievement include reading, writing and mathematics, we create a balance between understanding basic concepts and developing the thinking skills needed for advanced problem solving. Combining foundational skills, with creativity and critical thinking, innovative problem solving, effective communication and collaboration, leads to excellence.

Mr. Chair, this past year we witnessed a significant investment of resources in the design of our technology infrastructure and hardware to ensure reliable, robust access in classrooms and across schools.

Through our Technology Embedded Learning Strategy, we continue to invest in innovative teaching practices and instructional methods that will enable us to use technology more precisely to engage and address the learning needs of all students.

Mr. Chair, from Full Day Kindergarten to Specialist High Skills Majors; from Summer Literacy and Numeracy classes to Dual Credits and School College Work Initiatives; and, from play-based learning and child care to increased student engagement in mathematics - we continue to expand relevant and new learning opportunities for students and explore different models of learning as we modernize classrooms and raise expectations for excellence.

### **Stewardship**

Mr. Chair, the opening of the addition to St. Paul Catholic Secondary School, the newly constructed St. Peter Catholic elementary School, the initial planning for the new Kingston Centre Catholic elementary school and the completion of over \$4 million in capital retrofits, this board is demonstrating a responsible commitment to ensuring our school facilities are up to date, modern and contribute to positive student outcomes.

Continuing to make decisions based on evidence and research will ensure sustainability and accountability and will ensure that we are seen as being good stewards of public resources.

Mr. Chair, students in our schools are more successful and our school communities are stronger when parents are actively engaged in their child's learning.

Programs such as our Parent and Family Literacy Centre, and our extended day programs, promote healthy child development; foster children's early learning through play, and support parents and families in their role as primary caregivers.

In addition, our Catholic School Councils actively encourage engagement in our schools and provide opportunities for parents to come together to discuss issues important to them, such as social media awareness, mental health and resiliency.

### **Conclusion**

Mr. Chair, this is an exciting and inspiring time for Algonquin and Lakeshore, and it is with a sense of pride and a deep commitment to the success of this Catholic school system that I submit to you my 2014 Director's Annual Report.

Our Catholic school system is characterized by motivated students, skilled educators, strong educational leaders, and supportive families, parishes and community partners.

Our accomplishments over this past year continue to strengthen a foundation on which we will build our future successes and direct our work for future improvements.

As always, I acknowledge the leadership and guidance of Archbishop Brendan O'Brien and you, our Board of Trustees, who ensure that Catholic schools in Algonquin and Lakeshore continue to inspire and nurture strong communities of faith, engaged communities of learning, and compassionate communities of service.

Thank you.