



INAUGURAL ADDRESS

2015

CHAIR OF THE BOARD

DECEMBER 2, 2014

Father Whalen, Mr. Laurie, senior administration, trustee colleagues and guests:

Welcome to the Inaugural Meeting of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, which officially marks the beginning of the 2015 School Board year.

Father Whalen, please accept my personal thank you for your presence with us this evening. The public support you and your brother priests give to our Catholic education system and the continued prayers for us in Algonquin and Lakeshore provide spiritual strength and guidance as we work to serve our students.

Thank you to my trustee colleagues for providing me with the opportunity to serve as Chair of the Board. I appreciate your confidence in me and will honour that confidence by committing to faithfully serve you, the students, the staff and all constituents of the Board.

As Catholic school Trustees, we are the advocates, stewards and guardians of Catholic Education for almost 12,000 students in schools across our jurisdiction. Each of us brings a unique perspective to the board table and we should be proud that through teamwork and collaboration we have established a firm foundation for good decision-making. Our willingness to serve all students of this Catholic school system provides strength to our Catholic schools and I look forward to the journey we will share together.

I am pleased to welcome trustee John Brisbois into the role of Vice-Chair and trustee Tom Dall as Chair of the Finance and Operations Committee. We will work collaboratively in service of our mission and I know I will look to them for support and advice throughout this term.

This Catholic School Board continues to have a strong sense of direction and purpose. Our Catholic education mission remains vibrant and alive as we continue to embrace the pillars of Discipleship, Scholarship and Stewardship. We are at our best when we support and nurture each other in our efforts to be people of faith, people of hope, and people of integrity. Throughout our Catholic School Board we relentlessly pursue success for each student; we commit to academic excellence; and we educate our students in faith-based and faith-filled learning environments.

As a Board of Trustees, we have worked closely with the Director of Education and our senior staff to create a robust and ambitious Strategic Plan that sets forth a bold agenda for the Board. It will continue to be our responsibility as Trustees to ensure that the vision expressed in this plan is realized throughout the Board and it is imperative that we build upon our greatest strengths. The vital partnership of home, parish and school.

It is our students who give us purpose and hope. They are the reason we are here. We delight in seeing how engaged they are in their learning, how they give witness to their faith, and how they are contributing to make a positive impact on our world. I thank them for the inspiration they bring to us.

We champion and celebrate all staff who, each and every day, provide outstanding service to

our students. Our staff are to be commended for their commitment to provide a Catholic education that fosters and supports a witness to our *Faith in Action*, and who nurture the faith-filled environments where our students continue to learn, improve and excel.

Our work in 2015 will not be without its challenges. As a Board of Trustees, we have a complex agenda ahead of us – one that will call on each of us to make decisions in light of our mission and values. We must continue to address an aging school infrastructure and ensure we are providing the best possible programs, resources and facilities if we want to continue to improve student learning and ensure prudent budget and resource allocation.

The importance of a Catholic education is never more apparent than it is today in this rapidly changing 21st century where the magnitude of change is staggering. Advances in technology have made the world a much different place than it was even ten years ago. Careers and occupations of previous years have been replaced with jobs unheard of ten years ago. We are educating our children for a future that will be much different than today. As a consequence, education must adapt to keep pace with these changes. We must continue to innovate, to explore and to expand opportunities for students. We must always remember that we are educating students for their world, for their future. Maintaining the status quo is not an option.

I am proud to be a Catholic trustee and I am honoured to serve as the Chair of this Board. One that respects the traditions of our faith and one that recognizes our part in an ever changing global society.

As always, we look forward with hope, with confidence, and with optimism to a future where each student and staff member in our Catholic school system is able to grow and mature into the person God has intended them to be.

Thank you and God Bless.