

Keeping our Schools Safe: New Reporting Procedures

As of the 2011-12 school year, all school boards in Ontario are required to provide an annual report on the number of specific violent incidents taking place at school, or during school events, to the Ministry of Education. The existing *Safe Schools* legislation provides guidelines and requirements for boards to implement policies and procedures for *Keeping our Kids Safe at School* (Bill 157).

Superintendent of School Effectiveness, Dr. Donaleen Hawes, and Principal of Special Education, Tom Jordan, presented to Trustees a summary of the Ministry identified procedures.

All violent incidents that occur on school premises during school-run programs must be reported to the Ministry, whether the violent incident was committed by a student of the school, or whether it was committed by any other person.

Research shows that violence in schools can affect the social, psychological, and physical well-being of students, as well as the learning process. It also shows that monitoring the occurrence of violent incidents helps to obtain valuable data on which to base policies and planning.

The Ministry defines a violent incident as: possession or use of a weapon, physical assault causing bodily harm, sexual assault, robbery, extortion, or hate or bias motivated occurrences.

In circumstances where board employees have reason to believe that a student may be in need of protection, they are required to call the Children's Aid Society, in accordance with the requirements of

the *Child and Family Services Act*.

Dr. Hawes and Mr. Jordan also presented copies of the new *Police and School Board Protocol* and the *Community Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol*. A signing ceremony was held Monday, October 17, where the Directors of the five eastern Ontario school boards, local Police Chiefs, and community agencies signed the documents endorsing their commitment to the protocols to ensure student safety.

Holy Trinity CSS's Justice League Shares "We Day" Experience

Holy Trinity CSS Chaplaincy Leader, Gordie Van Putten, and members of the Holy Trinity Justice League, presented a summary of their recent trip to *We Day*, a special youth symposium held in Toronto.

In order to be selected to attend, schools have to take on a significant project to help change the world. "In talking with our HT Justice League members, our goal was to build a clean water project in Haiti. We had to raise \$5,000 to make this project a reality. We picked this project because we know Haiti is still recuperating from the devastating earthquake of 2010."

We Day is a national event created by Craig Kielberger, founder of *Free the Children*. It inspires youth to be the change in our world. It was held in Toronto's Air Canada Centre arena, bringing together 18,000 people. Grade 12 student, Michelle Gallant, said she instantly felt comfortable. "We were suddenly surrounded by thousands of other young people who felt the same and wanted the same thing we did. There was an intense feeling of community and

belonging in the crowd. You could just tell that you could be yourself there, and let go of the fear of being silently judged or ridiculed by others for taking action."

We Day explores topics of peace, women's rights, the environment, overcoming obstacles, and more. Throughout the event, speakers, panels, and performers give youth an educational and engaging launch pad for a year of social change. Since its inception, *We Day* has inspired tens of thousands of youth to build a community dedicated to social change.

Grade 12 Student, Sabrina DeBellefeuille, said she can be counted as one of those inspired by the day. "Throughout the amazing day, we kept thinking of how do we bring this experience back to our school community. Listening to the various stories of celebrities and people who have experienced tremendous turmoil in their lives, caused all of us to think about how we can *Be the Change*."

Fellow Grade 12 student, Sereena McDonald added, "Our Social Justice League is presently working on a school wide presentation depicting the positive effects that *We Day* has provided to our group. Also, we will be providing up-to-date information on the importance of clean water and how this will help the women of Haiti, who no longer have to travel many kilometres to bring fresh water to their homes."

Board Chair Ron Eamer thanked the group for their presentation. "You are all examples of Catholic education at its finest. We are very fortunate to have students like you in our system, doing your part to improve your Catholic community, and our world. Thank you very much for inspiring us tonight."

Upcoming Dates/Events:

October 26, 2011 - Parent Involvement Committee Summit
October 26, 2011 - SEAC, Kemptville Board Office, 7 p.m.
October 28, 2011 - Professional Activity Day

Contact
1-800-443-4562
or 613-258-7757
for more
information.



**Next
Board Meeting:**
November 1, 2011
Kemptonville Board Office
7:00 p.m.