

NEWS RELEASE FROM THE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

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Subject: St. John Elementary Named School on the Move

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St. John Catholic Elementary School Named “School on the Move” by Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat

Perth, ON – St. John Catholic Elementary School in Perth is one of only 40 schools to be named a “School on the Move” by the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. The school was selected in the second phase of the Secretariat’s *Schools on the Move: Lighthouse Program*.

St. John Catholic Elementary will participate in the sharing of best practices with other educators from schools across the province. The school will open its doors in the fall of 2007 to welcome professional visitors who will observe best practices while also meeting with staff for open discussions.

Entire school community involved

Principal Theresa Lalonde-Pankow said the entire St. John Catholic school community believes that every child can be successful. “We work toward ensuring that each child is given the tools required to be successful, whether it is through our nutrition program, our running club, our music programs or our academic programs. We offer children opportunities to build on their strengths as they develop their minds, bodies, hearts and souls.”

The Schools on the Move: Lighthouse Program helps schools and boards share effective practices to ensure students become successful. The program was introduced in 2006 with 23 schools participating in the first year; the CDSBEO’s Holy Cross Catholic School in Kemptville was among them.

Mrs. Lalonde-Pankow said the approach is an adaptation of the Board’s theme: *We are people of God... Transforming the World!* “We have been *People of God transforming the World* one student at a time. We, as a staff, feel we are called to serve, by working with our children to ensure that they are successful in order to spread the Gospel values they have learned to everyone they come into contact with.”

A number of factors go in to the *Schools on the Move* selection process, such as: Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessment scores, the school community’s

involvement in student success, the use of data and research to help improve student learning, and the school's internal focus on student learning and performance.

Leadership, teamwork highlighted

"We meet as a leadership team to examine the data from numerous sources to look at trends in the school and in particular each grade to see what areas have been met with success and what areas require further improvement," said Mrs. Lalonde-Pankow.

St. John's Professional Learning Communities (PLC) were highlighted as a strength by the Secretariat. "Our teachers meet regularly in divisions and grade teams to examine their own practices and share strategies they can use to improve their teaching in order to benefit student learning. They search for ways to support each other in order to ensure success for every student, and evaluate individual students in order to determine whether they are meeting with success," said Mrs. Lalonde-Pankow.

The Board-wide reading and writing programs Facilitating Reading for Optimum Growth (FROG) and Higher Achievement in Writer's Know-how (HAWK) were also highlighted by the Secretariat as strengths. FROG is an elementary targeted reading program that helps to increase student reading and comprehension skills while providing all readers with daily small-group reading instruction in a comfortable environment. HAWK's goal is to improve writing skills at the junior grade level, while meeting the needs of all learners. With HAWK, students study the traits of good writing, view examples of good writing in other texts, and utilize the writing process to apply the forms and genres of writing.

"We want our students to know that we have worked with them to help them achieve their potential," said Mrs. Lalonde-Pankow. "Our goal is for our children to be confident in their academic abilities in order to be self-directed, responsible contributors to our school community today and our larger community in the future."

An excellent board representative

Board Chair Ronald Eamer stated that the Board is very pleased to have St. John open its doors to other educators. "Mrs. Lalonde-Pankow, her staff and her students will be excellent representatives for our Board, and for the Catholic education system in Ontario. St. John is a shining example of a Catholic school community uniting for the good of its students."

"Mrs. Lalonde-Pankow and the entire St. John staff have a great deal to be proud of," said CDSBEO Director of Education Bill Gartland. "The effort that they and the Catholic school community as a whole have put in to student success is indeed worthy of the *School on the Move* designation."

Superintendent of Education Dr. Donaleen Hawes agreed. "The St. John community has shown that it has the commitment and aspiration needed to help all students achieve success. The school has embraced the FROG and HAWK programs and the results of the effort put forth can be seen in the year-after-year increase in EQAO scores and this well earned designation from the Secretariat."

Doors to open in fall 2007

St. John Catholic Elementary School will begin sharing its best practices with other schools in the fall of 2007. Schools from across the province that wish to learn from St. John's success and adapt its methodology to suit their individual school needs will be visiting according to a schedule set by the school and the Secretariat's office.

In order to prepare for its hosting duties, St. John staff are drawing on the experience from the Board's other *School on the Move*, Holy Cross in Kemptville.

For more information please contact Bob Perreault, Communications Officer at 1-800-443-4562 ext 206.

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario operates 40 elementary and 10 secondary schools across 8 counties. The CDSBEO offers excellence in Catholic education through provincial-leading programs to approximately 15,000 students.