

NEWS RELEASE

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Subject: Catholic Community Schools

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CATHOLIC DISTRICT
SCHOOL BOARD OF
EASTERN ONTARIO



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Catholic Community Schools Plan Approved For Cornwall Supports Full Access To Core & Immersion Programs

Kemptville – Trustees of the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario (CDSBEO) have approved an ambitious restructuring plan for Cornwall that will see the Board consolidate its eight Catholic elementary schools into six ‘Catholic Community Schools’ offering both Core French and French Immersion programs. The new plan, approved at the April 19, 2005 Board Meeting in Kemptville, will result in universal access to French-language instruction, academic programs and special education support for all students beginning in September of 2005.

School Closure – A Key Factor in Catholic Community Schools Plan

The adoption of the Catholic Community Schools model will help the Board stabilize school populations and make greater use of its facilities in the city. Currently, the Board’s five French Immersion schools are significantly under capacity, while its three Core French schools are over capacity. As part of the restructuring plan, Trustees made the decision to close two Immersion schools – St. John Bosco Catholic School and St. Columban’s East Catholic School. The students from these schools will be welcomed into one of the renewed Catholic Community Schools.

Rejuvenation of School Buildings

The School Closure Review Committees at St. John Bosco and St. Columban’s East presented their final reports to the Board on April 5, 2005. Both Committees supported the concept of ‘dual-track’ Core and French Immersion programming. Understanding for the need for closures, Committee members brought forth a number of considerations. They asked the Board to ensure that sufficient funds be allocated to undertake significant physical improvements at the remaining schools and that the schools have adequate facilities to accommodate a computer lab, library, resource area and special education area by this September if possible.

Board Chair *Ron Eamer* says, “We appreciate the input of parents, and I know administration will do everything possible to ensure that the newly structured elementary schools meet the needs of all of our students.”

Parents Provide Input

The restructuring plan approved by the Board also contains a number of ideas and suggestions brought forward for consideration by parents during public consultations held in February and March. Parents provided feedback in a number of areas, including programs, transportation and attendance boundaries.

CDSBEO Director of Education *Ann Perron* says the ambitious renewal plan is motivated by a number of important factors, including enhanced student learning, enrolment, school usage, travel time for students, transportation costs and the need to reduce excess pupil places in Cornwall. Ms. Perron states, “Our administration has demonstrated great leadership in supporting our parents, staff and students through this process.”

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Creates Vibrant Catholic School Communities

The six consolidated Catholic Community Schools will have populations large enough to support Core and French Immersion programs, a full-time principal, and a variety of academic options with more specialized teachers. High needs students will continue to have access to Special Education resources and staff in all schools. The move also means opportunities for a wider range of student activity clubs and sports teams.

Superintendent of Education *Jane McMillan* explains, "With a dual-track approach, students who switch French programs will not be forced to change schools, resulting in a more positive neighbourhood school environment. With Immersion and Core programs under one roof, classes and programs can be blended for part of the day. There will also be a focus on community-based early years programs and school readiness programs with a commitment to Early Literacy in both languages."

As part of the reorganization process, boundaries at all elementary schools will be changed. With more students attending Catholic schools closer to their home, many students will be able to walk to school, while travel times for others will be shorter. This will also help the Board reduce overall transportation costs. The Catholic Community Schools model will also help strengthen the ties between local parishes and each school.

Transition Period

During the restructuring process, every effort will be made to ease the transition of students and staff moving to new school environments. The Board is working with its teachers and support staff to ensure employees are assigned in a fair and equitable manner.

In the next several weeks, parents will receive letters specifying their child's school for September, 2005. Parents can contact Nicole Makinson, CDSBEO Manager of Transportation, at 933-1720 for further information on transportation and boundaries. For information on programs, parents can contact their local Catholic school principal.

Key Points of Catholic Community Schools Restructuring Plan:

- 1) Sacred Heart, St. Anne's, St. Columban's West and Bishop Macdonell become Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 Catholic Community Schools, offering dual-track Core and French Immersion programming, effective September, 2005.**
- 2) St. Peter and Immaculate Conception become Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6 Catholic Community Schools, offering dual-track Core and French Immersion programming, effective September, 2005.**
- 3) Holy Trinity welcomes Grade 7 and 8 students from St. Peter and Immaculate Conception in September, 2005. Holy Trinity becomes a Grade 7 to 12 Catholic Secondary School.**
- 4) St. Joseph's Catholic Secondary School continues as a Grade 9 to 12 Catholic Secondary School.**
- 5) St. John Bosco and St. Columban's East Catholic schools close, effective June 30, 2005.**
- 6) St. Matthew Catholic Learning Centre continues to serve our alternate high school students as well as providing both night school and summer school courses.**

(For more information, please contact Cornwall Area Superintendent of Education Jane McMillan at 933-1720 or 1-800-267-7136, ext. 371)