



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Director announces retirement**

***Paul Picard to retire effective October 2017***

(Tuesday, June 13, 2017) – After a 41-year career in education, Paul Picard has decided to retire. He will step down as Director of Education on October 30, 2017.

“It’s been an honour and a privilege to have served the children of Windsor-Essex and their families for so many years,” said the 64-year-old Picard. “Our board has accomplished a great deal, and now it’s time for someone else with a strong sense of our vision, our goals, and our commitment to Catholic education to step up and assume the mantle of leadership.”

Picard has been in the role of Director since August of 2010. He began his career as a teacher with the board in 1976 with positions at Notre Dame, St. James, St. Edward, and Christ the King Catholic Elementary Schools. In the early 1990s he moved to administrative roles in the system, serving as vice-principal or principal at W.J. Langlois, St. Paul, and Holy Cross Catholic Elementary Schools, before becoming a program principal in 2005, and a superintendent in 2008.

The son of a former Chair of the Windsor Separate School Board, Picard has guided the board through some of its most tumultuous years, and has overseen a long list of accomplishments. During his tenure, the board has: seen student achievement scores and graduation rates steadily increase; consolidated schools so that more resources could be devoted to innovative programs and placed into the classroom; created three new middle schools; launched numerous new academy programs; experienced a notable increase in international student enrollment; began the construction of St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Elementary School; and received \$27M in funding for a new high school to replace Catholic Central.

Board Chair Barbara Holland praised Picard for all that he has achieved throughout his lengthy career and his service to the Board.

“Paul has enjoyed a long and distinguished career in education,” she said, “always marching to the beat of his own drum. Thanks to his guidance and collaboration with our Trustees, our board is in a much better place now, as is Catholic education in Windsor-Essex. Although we’re sad to see him go, we wish him all the best.”

Holland said Picard will be difficult to replace, but that the board will follow a very clearly prescribed and thorough process, which will be announced in the coming weeks, to make sure the best candidate for Director of Education can be found.

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“It will be important to ensure that we find someone with fresh ideas to carry on in the direction that we have established with Paul in order to keep the positive momentum going,” she said.

Ensuring that the board’s schools always maintained their strong Catholic identity was always a top priority for Picard, according to Board Chaplain Father Larry Brunet.

“Paul has always remained true to the fundamental vision of providing a distinctly Christian education for our students and their families,” Brunet said. “That commitment has really been at the core of all of his decisions, and for that, we’re truly grateful.”

As for future plans, Picard said he looks forward to the freedom that comes with retirement.

“I’m certain there will be no shortage of opportunities to keep my mind occupied, but at this point I’d like to take some time to relax and reflect upon what this next chapter of my life will look like,” he said.

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