



## Director's Annual Report TO THE COMMUNITY

**“The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.”**

Throughout this most unusual year, we have operated with a fairly simple credo: let's focus all our attention on what we can do, and not on what we can't do.

Rather than being deterred by the limitations COVID-19 has imposed on us, let's focus on what we can deliver for our staff, students and their families despite those challenges.

I can say with conviction, we have held true to that principle. In the pages ahead, you will see the evidence of what we have accomplished this year under extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

Of course, there have been some bumps in the road along the way. We often needed to pivot quickly, and on short notice, in order to meet the needs of those we serve, while remaining compliant with the many regulations that governed our operations in a pandemic situation.

I'm incredibly proud of the way our entire school board community united for a common cause. From March to June, everyone worked extremely hard on behalf of our students, but we knew we had to do better. We spent a tremendous amount of time during the summer working on plans for schools to reopen in September, going back to the drawing board on numerous occasions.

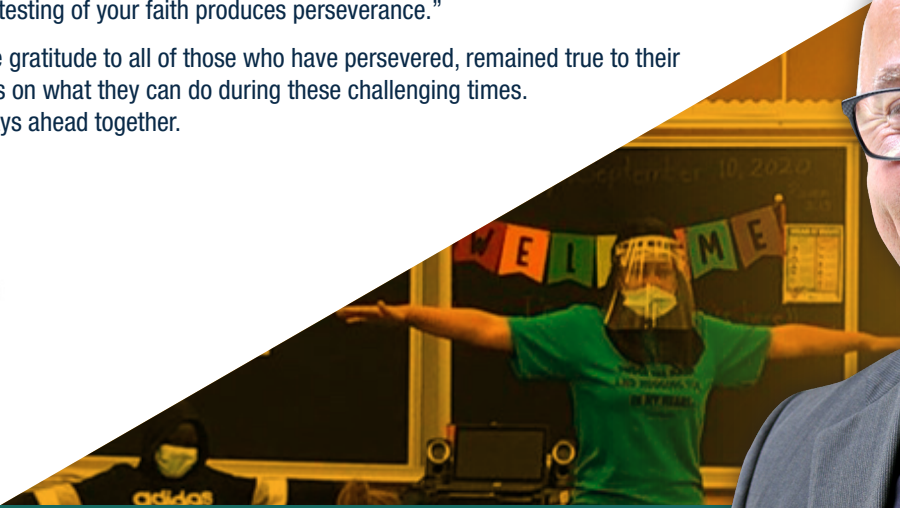
Throughout the entire journey, we never lost sight of our vision to build communities of faith, hope, and service, or our mission to know every student, to inspire them to follow the example of Jesus, and to empower them with the knowledge and skills they need to live purposeful, meaningful lives.

Most importantly, we relied upon our Catholic faith to guide us. Although it has surely been tested, as St. James said in his Epistle, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”

In closing, I offer my sincere gratitude to all of those who have persevered, remained true to their faith, and continued to focus on what they can do during these challenging times. I look forward to brighter days ahead together.

Sincerely,

**Terry Lyons**  
Director of Education

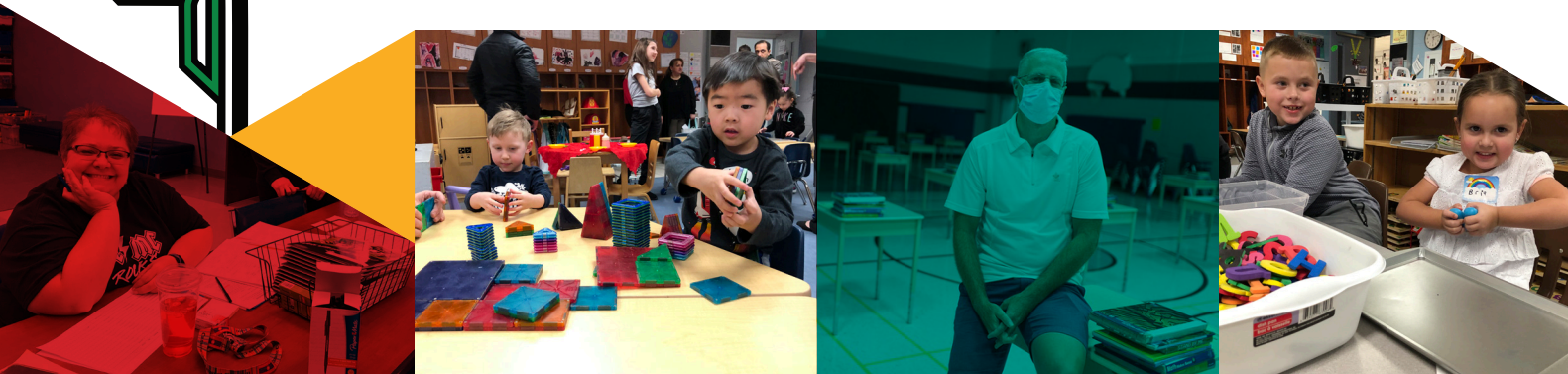


## Priority: Our Students

- Provided academic, mental health and special education supports virtually during the school closure and in person learning.
- Developed the Continuity of Learning platform that supported virtual learning for staff, students and parents.
- Established an I.T. service desk to assist students and staff with technological issues as we transitioned to virtual classrooms.
- Provided additional mental health services during COVID-19 with a focus on supporting students' well-being.
- Provided additional supports for self-identified Indigenous students during COVID-19.
- Expanded support of board wide reading strategies such as Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), Lexia and Guided Reading.
- Supported English language learners by evidence-based strategies such as guided reading and small group instruction to further support their language acquisition and comprehension.
- Recognized and celebrated student achievements through virtual graduations, both elementary and secondary.
- Provided and expanded virtual summer academic programs for elementary and secondary students. Some of these programs included Summer Learning Program Grades 3-8 and Reach Ahead.
- Expanded French Immersion programming at Holy Names Catholic High School in Grade 9.
- Established St. Isidore de Seville Catholic Elementary Virtual School in September 2020 including programming for French Immersion and IB.
- As a Ministry of Education designated board, an adaptive quadmester model was established in all eight secondary schools.
- Created a STEM program in Grades 1-8 through aggregate prep curriculum delivery in 15 elementary schools. Continued STEM programming in three of our secondary schools.

## Priority: Our Community

- In consultation with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU), established back to school protocols and procedures to safely re-open schools for staff and students.
- In collaboration with the WECHU, developed a communication protocol to respond to COVID-19 related matters.
- Engaged in initial conversations with community organizations to further our work in equity and inclusive education, specifically in the area of anti-racism.
- Students in our Construction Academy participated in home building projects in summer 2020.
- Continued collaboration with local and provincial Indigenous communities and organizations including Grandmother's Voices, Point Pelee National Park, Parks Canada, John R. Park Homestead, Métis Nation of Ontario and Caldwell First Nation (Elders).
- Continued partnership with United Way on various projects such as On Track to Success, Summer Eats, Backpacks for Students, WE-STEAM After School Program, and School Nutrition Lunch Program.
- Continued to develop partnerships with community service providers such as John McGivney Centre, New Beginnings, Children's Aid Society (CAS), Regional Children's Centre (RCC) and Maryvale.





## Priority: Our Faith

- Continued to update the elementary Religion curriculum by introducing Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ in Grade 7.
- Provided in-service training via in-person and virtual for the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) on the role of the Catholic Teacher.
- Introduced Faith Improvement Plans in all secondary schools, and provided in-service training on Faith Improvement Plans to Campus Ministers.
- Established Family of Schools' Together in Faith planning committees, including both elementary and secondary representatives as well as parish pastoral team members.
- Celebrated our Together in Faith Day in September 2020 around the theme of Building communities of faith, hope and service.

## Priority: Our Team

- Provided the necessary resources and support to all Board staff upon the closure of schools at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff provided dedicated continued learning opportunities for students and maintained Board operations throughout the pandemic.
- Facilitated a safe reopening of schools by hiring additional teachers, early childhood educators, educational assistants, professional/paraprofessional and other support staff to support the Board's elementary and secondary learning models.
- Hired additional temporary custodial staff to support health and safety protocols by providing enhanced cleaning to all schools.
- Provided professional development to all employees with regard to health and safety measures and procedures including the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Provided Google G-Suite technical support to students and staff to ensure a productive, safe and enjoyable virtual environment.
- Provided mental health and well being, special education, literacy and numeracy, technology and anti-racism introductory professional development to educators.
- Provided resources and training to support elementary educators with the implementation of the new Ontario Mathematics Curriculum, Grades 1-8.
- Introduced the Grade 9 Math Online Field Adaptive Assessment to Grade 9 applied and academic students.
- Continued professional development that focused on Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP) for educators.
- Provided Indigenous Education professional development that focused on cultural competencies to educators at both elementary and secondary.

## Priority: Our Resources

- Purchased and reallocated technological resources such as chromebooks, iPads, webcams, internet connectivity for staff and students to facilitate virtual and in school learning.
- Provided more than 6,000 Chromebooks to students, 1,200 Chromebooks and webcams to staff and internet access to 130 families to facilitate virtual learning.
- Procured critical personal protective equipment and supplies to ensure the safe return of students to school and staff to the workplace.
- Developed a \$269M compliant budget for 2020-21 that supports student success and faith formation.
- Ended the 2019-20 fiscal year with a \$5M in-year surplus, bringing the accumulated surplus to \$22M.
- Increased stakeholder participation in the 2020-21 budget development process with 750 more responses to the budget consultation survey than what was received in the prior year.
- Advanced the New Catholic Secondary School construction project with the submission of a comprehensive Approval to Proceed to Tender application to the Ministry of Education - a major milestone in the project planning cycle.
- Undertook numerous construction and renovation projects utilizing approximately \$10M of Ministry funding in 2019-20.
- Implemented energy savings initiatives through the installation of LED lighting in Board facilities, resulting in reduced utility costs.
- Installed approximately 600 protective plexiglass barriers in schools to improve distancing between staff and students.
- Increased frequency of replacing filtration in HVAC units.

The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board operates 32 elementary schools, 1 virtual elementary school, 3 middle schools and 8 secondary schools, as well as an adult education program that provides quality Catholic education to 20,150 students. The Board employs 1206 full time equivalent elementary and secondary teachers as well as 871 support staff, which includes principals, vice-principals, educational assistants, psychologists, mental health workers, child and youth workers, early childhood educators, sign language interpreters, speech pathologists, IT technicians, campus ministers, school office support, custodial and maintenance staff, as well as board office administration and other professional staff.

The Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan along with the Board's Mission, Priorities and Goals can be found at the following link: <https://wecdsb.on.ca/about>

## Message from the Chair

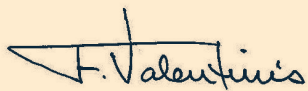
If it's true that there is no education quite like adversity, then 2020 has been one of the greatest learning experiences ever.

Although this has been a year that has tested our collective fortitude like no other, we can look back in hindsight and see there were still many positive aspects about it. Perhaps chief among them is what we have learned about ourselves - about our resiliency, our capacity to adjust, and our ability as a school board to continue to meet and exceed the needs of our students and their families.

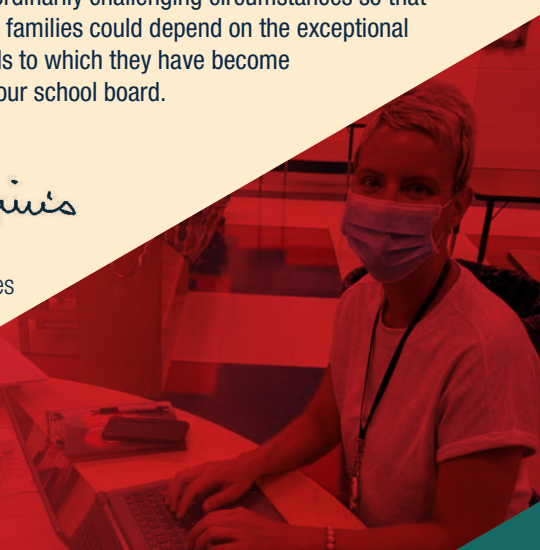
Of course it hasn't always been easy. Many of our students and our staff had to overcome considerable challenges in order for learning to continue. Whether it was through developing alternative schedules, meeting technology accessibility requirements to support online learning, or outfitting our buildings to create safe environments all while ensuring that we were complying with various levels of government regulations, everyone of us was forced to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances.

And although we have learned a great deal about ourselves and each other, we have also recognized that we still have much to learn. Throughout this last year, I have been inspired by our Director's emphasis on focusing on what we can do, and I look forward to seeing what else we can learn and how we can all continually improve together.

On behalf of my fellow Trustees, I want to express my sincere gratitude to our senior team, our school administrators, our educators and all of our support staff who have gone above and beyond during extraordinarily challenging circumstances so that our students and our families could depend on the exceptional educational standards to which they have become accustomed to with our school board.



**Fulvio Valentinis**  
Chair, Board of Trustees



Rev. Larry Brunet  
Board Chaplain

## Board Trustees 2018-2022

### FRONT ROW FROM LEFT:

- Mary DiMenna (Essex County – Area 2)
- Lisa Soulliere (Essex County – Area 3)
- Mary Heath (Essex County – Area 4)
- Kim Bouchard (City of Windsor - Wards 6 & 7)

### BACK ROW FROM LEFT:

- Fred Alexander (City of Windsor – Wards 5 & 8)
- Bernie Mastromattei (City of Windsor – Wards 3 & 4)
- Fulvio Valentinis (City of Windsor – Wards 1 & 10)
- Frank DiTomasso (Essex County – Area 1)
- Tony Polifroni (City of Windsor – Wards 2 & 9)
- Jada Malott (Catholic Student Trustee 2020-2021)
- Roman Oglan (Catholic Student Trustee 2020-2021)

## Senior Administration

- Terry Lyons, Director of Education
- Emelda Byrne, Associate Director of Education Student Achievement K-12
- Penny King, Executive Superintendent of Business
- John Ulicny, Executive Superintendent of Education / Human Resources
- Joseph Ibrahim, Superintendent of Human Resources / Education
- Melissa Farrand, Superintendent of Student Achievement K-12
- Rosemary Lo Faso, Superintendent of Student Achievement K-12
- Colleen Norris, Superintendent of Human Resources
- Joumana Tawil, Superintendent of Student Achievement K-12
- Dan Fister, Executive Superintendent of Innovation and Experiential Learning (Retired December 2020)