

"Some of the conditions for creating a positive and supportive climate are the following: that everyone agree with the educational goals and cooperate in achieving them; that interpersonal relationships be based on love and Christian freedom; that each individual, in daily life, be a witness to gospel values; that every student be challenged to strive for the highest possible level of formation, both human and Christian."

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 1988, #103

Various resources are available to help school staffs prepare for a successful and effective Open House/Curriculum Night. Schools, divisions and individual classrooms may find useful resources from the list below that can be adapted to their specific circumstances in helping them plan.

<http://www.dpcdsb.org>

Our Board website provides important links to student and parent resources.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>

The Ontario Ministry of Education provides online resources and information to parents, including "Back to School" tips that could also be printed and distributed to parents at an Open House/Curriculum Night.

<http://www.oapce.on.ca>

The Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education provides information from across the province on the importance and opportunity for involvement in Catholic Education.

<http://www.oecta.on.ca>

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association provides many resources for teachers that support healthy partnerships between home and school. Parents can be directed to the website or parent information materials such as Home Reading Guide – Literacy for Life, How Can I Help my Children do Better in School, and Parents and Teachers as Partners may be printed and distributed during an Open House / Curriculum Night.

<http://www.peopleforeducation.com>

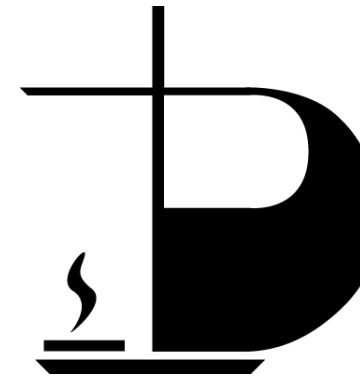
Includes information on Starting School, Solving Problems at School, Three Easy Steps for Effective Parent-Teacher Interviews, Answering Parents' Questions About Grades 3 and 6 EQAO Tests, and Special Education Tip Sheets. Much of the information is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, Farsi, French, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish and Urdu.

<http://www.ilc.org>

The Independent Learning Centre is part of TVOntario. It offers FREE online tutoring with certified teachers five nights a week (Sunday through Thursday) and even has a free essay feedback service.

While many families have computers in their homes we should remember this is not always the case. Since the internet can be a valuable resource for students and parents in supporting learning, all families should be made aware that computer access is available, free of charge, at all community libraries. You might also consider making your school computer lab available, with support, to the community at your Open House/Curriculum Night. If parents are introduced to the learning support available they may be more likely to use the resource.

*"Community is at the heart of Christian education
not simply as a concept to be taught but as a reality to be lived."
To Teach as Jesus Did, 1972, #23*



**Dufferin-Peel
Catholic District
School Board**

Curriculum Night

Fall 2008

Guidelines and Suggestions

"The Catholic school's proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith."

Declaration on Christian Education, #8, 1965

As a new school year begins we welcome students and their families to form communities that nurture the spiritual, intellectual, social and physical capabilities of each individual. Our initial interactions with families in our communities can be crucial in setting the climate for the school year. Establishing school culture and creating an environment where parents/guardians and their children feel welcomed and hopeful can make a vast difference in the start of a pleasant and productive school year.

In creating a school climate we should be mindful of the Board Plan to Improve Student Achievement. Do our plans for our Open House/Curriculum Night clearly reflect the values of our community?

Building and Enhancing Opportunities for Student Achievement

In addressing the needs of all students attending schools in Dufferin-Peel, we are guided by the following principles, beliefs and practices, which are fundamental to the task of enhancing the quality of Catholic education. They summarize the key messages of this year's improvement plan for student learning and achievement.

We believe that ...

- All students are created in God's image and called by God to become fully human and fully alive as contributing members of the family of God.
- The mission of Catholic education is to nurture the faith lives of all of its members with a particular emphasis on providing a Catholic world-view with a preferential option for the most vulnerable members of our community.
- The Catholic school is a dynamic faith community rooted in the person of Christ and guided by gospel values as expressed in Church teaching and traditions.
- All students can learn and succeed in light of their God-given gifts.
- Student achievement extends beyond the academic and includes the physical, social, emotional and spiritual well-being of students, as well as increased citizen participation within communities.
- Every student's potential must be nurtured to develop his/her highest levels of intellectual, practical and social competence.
- Every student is entitled to receive a positive outcome from schooling that is reflective of each student's interests, abilities and choice, whether it is an apprenticeship, job placement, transition to the community or admission to college or university.
- Literacy is the key to life-long learning.
- Student success is fostered by the family, supported by the parish, linked to the exemplary practice of teachers, administrators and supervisory officers, and is predicated by responsibility for one's own learning.
- Effective leadership and meaningful relationships are critical elements of student achievement and school success.

We are committed to ...

- Building communities of faith in collaboration with school, home and parish that are motivated by gospel values, animated through prayer and sacraments and guided by Church teachings.
- Instilling in students a love of learning and responsibility for learning.
- Improvements in learning that develop both the individual and the individual's ability to contribute to society.
- Learning goals and expectations set by and with individual students and parents/guardians.
- Affirming physical, social, emotional and spiritual development goals, as well as the intellectual and career aspirations of students.
- Promoting the concept of schools as inclusive Catholic learning communities under the leadership of the school principal.
- Promoting high standards, strong motivation, effective discipline and a safe atmosphere of caring to foster excellence, and a commitment to high quality student performance for sustained student achievement.
- Providing resources that identify and support future leaders, serve staff in their roles and build capacity to improve student achievement.
- Fostering leadership at all levels.
- Ensuring that literacy instruction is embedded across the curriculum from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and that all teachers of all subjects are teachers of literacy.
- Developing and implementing school plans that are data-driven, research-based and evidence-informed to determine learning priorities, monitor and guide progress and sustain continuous improvement to ensure quality Catholic programs and services.
- Providing teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to model and teach effective skills in their subject area.
- Providing effective professional development opportunities that are grounded in best practice research for superintendents, administrators, teachers, and support and special services staff.
- Fostering effective instructional strategies and the creation of learning communities where professionals study, discuss, practise, gather data and critique teaching practices and programs as critical for impacting student achievement.
- Promoting "assessment for learning" as well as "assessment of learning."
- Promoting collaboration and effective communication between and among elementary and secondary schools and involving families, church and community partners.
- Offering educational programs that promote a high standard of achievement that provide all students with the learning opportunities and support that they need, and that is relevant to society's needs and expectations.
- Celebrating a wide range of student abilities and identities, which allows for the creation of the conditions for multiple possibilities.
- Promoting and implementing a curriculum that represents diverse communities in our schools.
- Addressing the learning needs of students at risk of academic failure through differentiated instruction for all students.
- Raising the achievement levels of students who are not experiencing success, as well as the achievement levels of students who are already excelling in the system; and, narrowing the gap between the highest and lowest performing students by targeting supports for students who are struggling and are at risk.
- Providing pathways for success for all students at risk of academic failure with ongoing opportunities to change and revise goals, directions and destinations, which include a broad range of experiential learning opportunities.

The school should try to involve the family as much as possible in the educational aims of the school - both in helping to plan these goals and in helping to achieve them. Experience shows that parents who were once totally unaware of their role can be transformed into excellent partners."
The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 1988, #43