

# Fairness and Certainty Drive School Review Process

## An Open Letter from your Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board Trustees

Over the past few weeks, trustees have been asked why we are not attending the current round of public meetings on potential school closures or sitting on local school community review committees (called *Accommodation Review Committees* or *ARCs*).

It's a good and fair question – and one that we ourselves thought about carefully.

The closure of a school is the most difficult and emotion-laden activity a board can undertake and we understand the potential impact on families. We also believe that the multi-stage process developed by the Province is a sound and effective approach to this difficult task. It is a community-driven process that empowers local school communities to directly influence their future development.

We care deeply about your children...our students. As trustees, we seek to make informed decisions that we believe will best serve, not only our students, but our communities, and the partners to whom we are accountable.

Still, at the end of the day, some members of the community might be disappointed and may choose to challenge a decision in court, as has happened in other communities. And so, an additional consideration for trustees is to ensure that our process provides our own school community with the confidence that our decisions would stand up in a court of law.

We have obtained legal opinions from two sources. Both are consistent in their advice that trustees not sit on the ARCs or attend public meetings where we might be hard-pressed to maintain our neutrality, thereby giving cause for a successful court challenge on the grounds of bias.

As a community, we need to complete this process with certainty. As trustees, we are accountable to you for ensuring the integrity of the process. The last thing any of us would wish is for the courts to find bias and require us to undertake the entire process all over again.

### Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board Trustees and Wards Represented

<b>Mario Pascucci</b> Mississauga 1,3	<b>Sharon Hobin</b> Mississauga 2,8	<b>Anna Abbruscato</b> Mississauga 4
<b>Thomas Thomas</b> Mississauga 5	<b>Luz del Rosario</b> Mississauga 6,11	<b>Bruno Iannicca</b> Mississauga 7
<b>Esther O'Toole</b> Mississauga 9,10	<b>Frank Di Cosola</b> Caledon/Dufferin	<b>Tony da Silva</b> Brampton 1,3,4
<b>Linda Zanella</b> Brampton 2,5,6	<b>Joyce Anderson</b> Brampton 7-10	

### Our Statement of Principles

As your trustees, we are committed to provide strong leadership by ensuring a fair, open, transparent, and accountable process – one that will lead to the best possible results for our students and their families.

**FAIR** – All members of our school community will be heard equally, and all trustees will remain neutral throughout the public consultation process.

**OPEN** – Parents, guardians, teachers, school staff, students and Board and parish representatives will be part of this public consultation. Trustees will refrain from taking part in the process or forming opinions until the final recommendations have been submitted and community reaction has been heard directly by the Board.

**TRANSPARENT** – No decisions will be made until AFTER there has been community consultation. ALL submissions and reports will be publicly available BEFORE any decisions are made.

**ACCOUNTABLE** – Final decisions will be made by the Board of Trustees, based on a fair, objective evaluation of the facts.

### We Remain Fully Involved in the Proceedings

Although trustees have agreed to protect the integrity of the process by not taking part in this phase of the public consultations, we are very much engaged in the proceedings – closely monitoring the work of the local Accommodation Review Committees and regularly consulting with the chairs (superintendents) responsible for each of the three affected areas. As well, we receive and review minutes of all ARC meetings and community meetings.

Our decision to remain at arms-length from the current public consultation process in no way prevents us from hearing from community members at the Board's formal Accommodation Review Process public meetings that will take place in the future. We are committed to ensuring that these meetings provide ample opportunity for community members to present their views directly to all trustees.

For on-going updates on local school community committee meetings (ARCs) and their recommendations, please visit our website regularly  
<http://www.dpcdsb.org/CEC/About+Us/Departments/PLN/S>