



ENGAGED

AND WORKING TOGETHER

WATERLOO REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
2015 DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

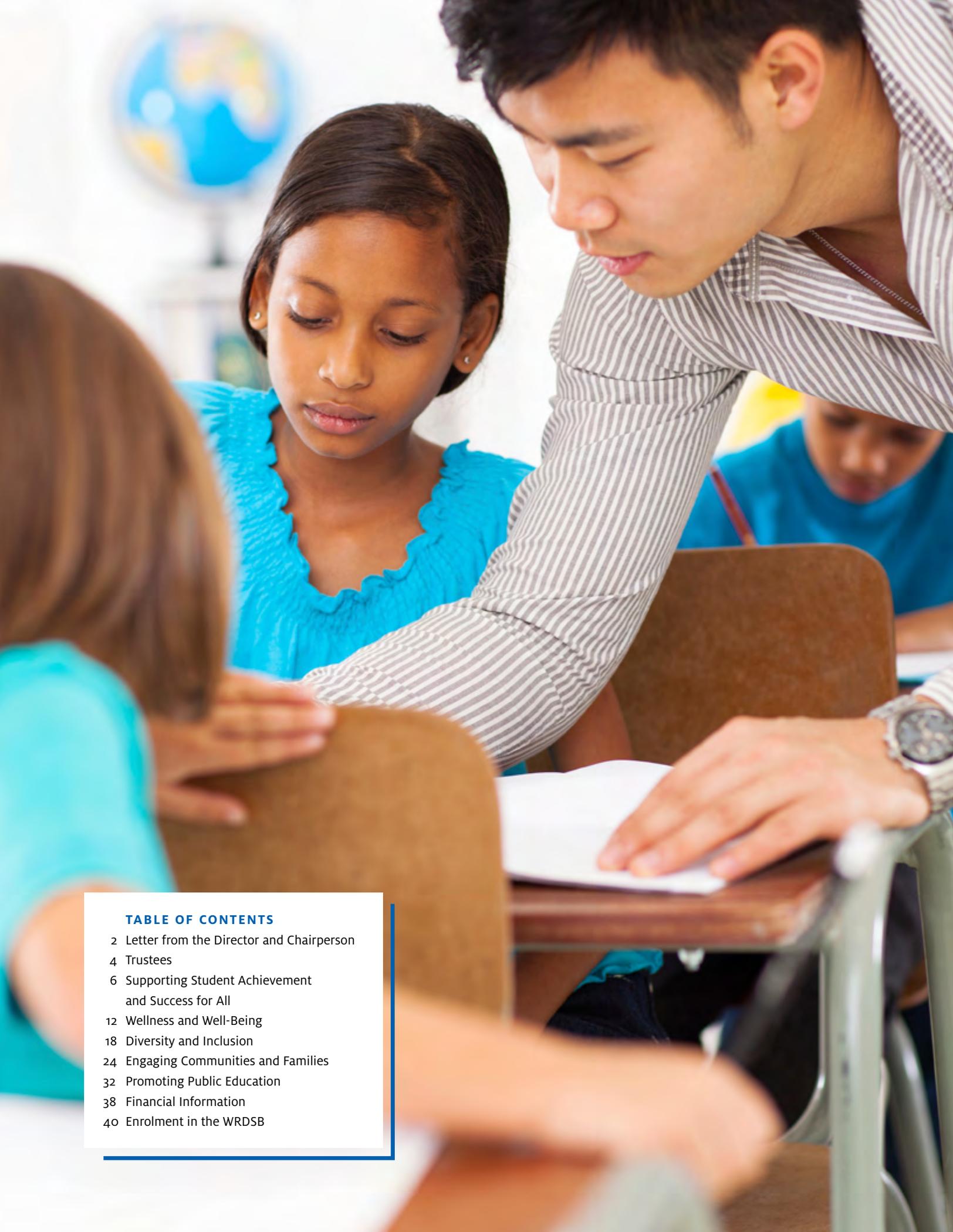


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Successful learning relies on strong partnerships between school, home, and community – encouraging, inspiring and cultivating successful students at all levels. Today's inspired learners become tomorrow's leaders.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR AND CHAIRPERSON



John Bryant
Director of Education



Kathleen Woodcock
Chair of the Board

It is with great pleasure that we share with you the 2015 Director’s Annual Report for the Waterloo Region District School Board. Throughout this report, you will find examples of how engagement impacts student learning and achievement.

Each and every one of us has an important role to play when it comes to engaging our learners.

Our staff enables students to achieve success through a variety of programs and resources that meet the needs of each student. They also make sure that students are learning in a warm and engaging environment – one that has access to technology so students can learn any place, any time and where the school yard is an extension of the classroom and is accessible for all learners and visitors.

Our Board of Trustees ensures that we have the necessary supports in place to make this a reality by providing resources and making sure we are well-positioned financially with a balanced budget.

When it comes to engagement in student learning, our most important partner is our parents/ guardians. Through the work of our Parent Involvement Committee, the Waterloo Region Assembly of Public School Councils and School Councils, there are numerous opportunities and resources available to parents and guardians to become engaged in their child’s learning.

The information presented in this report represents only a few of the successes that we as a district achieved in 2015. There was much to celebrate this past year and even more to look forward to in 2016. Thank you for your continued support as we work together: Inspired Learners – Tomorrow’s Leaders.

John Bryant
Director of Education

Kathleen Woodcock
Chair of the Board

TRUSTEES

TRUSTEES



**Kathleen Woodcock –
Chairperson**
(Waterloo/Wilmot)



**John Hendry –
Vice-Chairperson**
(Waterloo/Wilmot)



Carol Millar
(Waterloo/Wilmot)



Ted Martin
(Kitchener)



Mike Ramsay
(Kitchener)



Kathi Smith
(Kitchener)



Natalie Waddell
(Kitchener)



Colin Harrington
(Cambridge/North Dumfries)



Andrea Mitchell
(Cambridge/North Dumfries)



Cindy Watson
(Cambridge/North Dumfries)



Scott McMillan
(Woolwich/Wellesley)

STUDENT TRUSTEES

2014–15 SCHOOL YEAR



Hayley Birss
*Waterloo Collegiate
Institute*

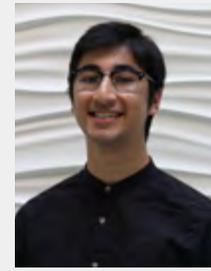


Mark Clubine
*Kitchener-Waterloo
Collegiate Institute*

2015–16 SCHOOL YEAR



Ryan Barnes
*Kitchener-Waterloo
Collegiate Institute*



Andy Takhar
*Cameron Heights
Collegiate Institute*

KATHLEEN WOODCOCK RE-ELECTED AS CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD

At the Inaugural Meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board held December 7, trustees re-elected Kathleen Woodcock as Chairperson of the Board, and re-elected John Hendry as Vice Chairperson.

Trustee Woodcock was first elected in 2000 to represent the area of Waterloo/Wilmot. "I'm eager to continue leading the board and the system in a positive direction, and building a positive governance culture that will be reflected throughout the organization," said Chair Woodcock. "I look forward to working with Vice-Chairperson Hendry to achieve these and other goals."

Trustee Hendry, representing Waterloo/Wilmot, is the board's longest serving trustee, at 29 years. A chairperson and vice-chairperson are elected annually at the December Inaugural meeting. Their term begins immediately. By Board by-law, they may serve for a maximum of two consecutive years.

SUPPORTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS FOR ALL



GRADE 9 APPLIED AND ACADEMIC MATH ASSESSMENT (ACHIEVING AT LEVELS 3 AND 4)

Applied: Results for students taking the applied math assessments decreased four percentage points from 2014, with 40% of students achieving at levels 3 and 4.

93% OF STUDENTS IN APPLIED MATH ACHIEVED A PASSING LEVEL

Academic: Results for academic math decreased two percentage points from 2014, with 81% of students achieving at levels 3 and 4.

99.5% OF STUDENTS IN ACADEMIC MATH ACHIEVED A PASSING LEVEL

A growing number of students are selecting academic over applied math. In 2015, 75% of Grade 9 students are enrolled in academic, and 25% in applied math, compared to 2011 when 69% of students were enrolled in academic and 31% in applied.

GRADE 10 ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL LITERACY TEST (OSSLT)

The efforts of our staff in the area of literacy continue to show that our students are making gains in this area. More students are participating in the test, and we are seeing a high rate of success with 82% of first time eligible students successfully completing the OSSLT.

Highlights:

- a total of 4112 first time eligible students participated in the test
- deferral rates continue to drop, with 3% of students being deferred, compared to the provincial rate of 5%

EQAO data for the WRDSB for grades 3, 6, 9, and the OSSLT for 2015 for the past five years is available for review on the [EQAO website](#).

MEASURES TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR LOW PERFORMING STUDENTS

The WRDSB recognizes that some groups can have common learning challenges. These groups include: English Language Learners (ELL), boys, students with special education needs and students in applied and essential mathematics who are struggling. Measures to support these students are essential for them, but they are also helpful to all students for optimizing learning and achievement. Some of these measures include: The implementation of a web-based mathematics intervention called **DreamBox**. This implementation was expanded to include: all Grade 1 and 2 students; Grades 3 to 8 students requiring intensive supports in number sense and numeration; students in congregated classrooms in elementary and secondary; Fast Forward Programs; as well as in identified ESL settings, including Elementary ABLE classrooms.

A mathematics intervention resource called **Leaps and Bounds** has been made available to all elementary schools to support students in acquiring mathematics support.

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES:

- using technology as a tool to access visual text and collaborate to build knowledge, students read social issue themed visual texts with the goal of becoming informed and developing an opinion about what they read. In partners and in groups they read the text and share their ideas and opinions, while citing evidence from the text. The strategies and texts used meet the needs of all learners, and specifically target those students struggling to read at grade level.
- Grade 9 and 10 applied math teachers collaborating to develop engaging learning opportunities to improve student achievement in mathematics
- professional development sessions with mathematics researchers such as Dr. Marian Small
- teachers apply an inquiry approach to co-create lessons and assessment for learning strategies to enhance student achievement in mathematics

Learning Styles

- allowing students to “show what they know” in a way that matches their learning styles, students are better able to communicate their thinking in a way that shows their strengths
- modelling how Read and Write can be used by students to record their thinking by speaking rather than writing has enabled students who have challenges demonstrating their thinking in writing

E-LEARNING

In the past year, WRDSB e-Learning has worked with student success teachers and credit recovery teachers to offer online support materials. Students have the option of engaging in online credit recovery or learning through a blend of face-to-face and online instruction. Section 23 teachers are also learning how to use online blended learning to engage their students. In addition, e-Teachers are learning to use the tools of the Virtual Learning Environment to differentiate and personalize instruction for e-Learning students. The availability of the online learning resources offers options in instruction to meet all of our students’ learning needs.

As of June 30, 2015,

73% OF WRDSB STUDENTS

had completed 16 credits by their second year in high school.

SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION

In 2015 Special Education Programming continued to focus on optimizing student learning, achievement and well-being. In the WRDSB there has been a long standing belief that meaningful experiential learning opportunities are a way to engage all students and allow them to reach their potential.

Work and Transition Support

The WRDSB currently offers cooperative education opportunities to secondary students enrolled in alternative curriculum. “WATS” (Work and Transition Support) programming has been part of the WRDSB since the mid 1970’s and prepares and supports our students in their transition to adult community living. This year students with special education needs participated in more than 200 WATS placements. These placements are carefully selected, monitored and evaluated to best support the interests and needs of our students. These opportunities are planned with much care, appropriate progressions and supports. The emphasis is placed on students acquiring the knowledge and skills they need to transition into life after secondary schools with a focus on them working towards independence.

Literacy Supports

Early Literacy Intervention (ELI) – supports are continuing for identified Grade 1 students in all JK-6 and JK-8 schools. Ongoing professional learning opportunities will continue for special education resource teachers (SERTs) delivering ELI.



GOOD NEWS

Westmount PS students have an APPetite for learning

Westmount Public School has kicked off their apps4learning project with high school students from Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate & Vocational School (KCI)! Students in Mr. Lloyd’s Grade 5/6 class came up with app ideas to better help students understand certain concepts that are difficult in school. They met with Mr. Papoutsis’ computer class from KCI and presented the storyboards they created. From there, the KCI

students will develop the app in close consultation with the Westmount PS students and create a suite of products. Can an app that has students throwing cheese at aliens teach them more about math? Who knows! But the students at Westmount PS think it will and are giving it a try!

We APPreciate the effort, Wildcats!



MATH STRATEGY SESSION

LEFT TO RIGHT:

WRDSB ADMINISTRATORS TRISH STARODUB, GILLIAN MCKENZIE, KELLY LANTINK, KATHRYN HADDOCK, SHERRI DAVIDSON & ANDREA MICHELUTTI, WITH BRUCE RODRIGUES.

WRDSB LAUNCHES 2015–16 MATH STRATEGY WITH GUEST SPEAKER

As part of the launch for the WRDSB’s 2015–16 Math Strategy, administrators from elementary and secondary schools had the opportunity to hear from Bruce Rodrigues, CEO of the Education Quality and Accountability Office.

Bruce spoke about the challenges of moving policy into practice and the critical role administrators have in leading improvements in learning, mainly in the area of mathematics. He encouraged administrators to move their goals into action, by taking into consideration what they already know about math instruction and learning in their schools and begin a process to address challenges. He stressed the importance of monitoring the impact of their efforts in order to see real change. His comments reinforced the system expectation on our [Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement](#) as

students and educators engage in learning through an ongoing collaborative cycle (Plan, Act, Assess, Reflect).

Bruce emphasized that the challenges facing the province with respect to learning in mathematics are complex. He stated that the problem with mathematics is not a technical problem and therefore a technical solution won’t work. There is no magic solution. Our work at improving results includes engaging families in their child’s learning, as beliefs about who is good at math and who isn’t is a part of the challenge. Concluding his time, Bruce emphasized that we need to move beyond the term “21st Century learning” and focus on understanding global competencies and innovation. This global competency and innovation represents a focus on literacy and numeracy capacity, well-being, as well as passion and compassion for this world. This is the future and he challenged all to think about what the implications for the classroom are.



GOOD NEWS

Suddaby PS hosts learning skills workshop

The staff and school council at Suddaby Public School teamed up to host their first-ever Learning Skills Night for their families.

Learning skills is an area of focus at Suddaby PS for this school year as part of the school improvement plan for student achievement. Students have been setting goals, taking steps to work towards them and reflecting on their progress. Recognizing that children do best when schools and families work together, school council volunteers and staff worked together to plan and create a learning skills carousel. Families got to visit, ask questions, learn how learning skills are practiced and measured at school and how they can be nurtured and developed at home. In addition, representatives from Carizon joined the event to highlight the connection between Suddaby's Tools for Life Program and learning skills.

As families left, each child took home a key ring with the six learning skills explained in family-friendly language, along with suggestions on how to support learning skills and work habits at home.

Suddaby PS had a great turn-out, welcoming over 120 families, and looks forward to offering similar opportunities in the future.

WELLNESS AND WELL-BEING





SAFE, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL TEAMS (SCIS)

School-based Safe, Caring and Inclusive School (SCIS) Teams support the promotion of a positive school climate within their school and school community. The team also operates in an advisory capacity to the Principal in supporting a positive and engaging school climate.

The teams consist of up to seven members, such as: an administrator, a teacher, a paraprofessional (e.g., Child Youth Worker, Education Assistant, etc.), a parent, a community member and two students.

Safe, Caring and Inclusive School Teams are responsible for monitoring data collected from SCIS Climate Surveys. Based on the data, teams are expected to create manageable goals and integrate the achievement of these goals into their annual planning. All stakeholders on SCIS teams are engaged in this and goals are submitted centrally for monitoring and review.

SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEYS

Before schools can build or strengthen a safe, caring and inclusive school culture, they need greater insight into the existing culture. Safe, Caring and Inclusive School Surveys assist schools in understanding and describing the current school culture while identifying areas for improvement.

There are four surveys available:

- One for students in Grades 3 and 4
- One for students in Grades 5, 7, 9 and 11
- One for school staff
- One for parents and guardians



In 2015 we were pleased to receive funding from the Ministry of Education to start a new Section 23 program called Temenos. Working with our agency partner Carizon, the program focusses on delivering a blended program of treatment and education for students ages 13 to 17 that are formally identified with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

HARMONY MOVEMENT PARENT ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS

The **Harmony Movement** was successful in obtaining a Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant and will be facilitating four workshops for WRDSB parents/caregivers in 2016. The series is titled “Creating Safe and Inclusive Schools and Communities: Building Parent/Caregiver Capacity.”

WITS AND FOURTH R HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS PROGRAMS

Two research-based programs were introduced to schools to support bullying prevention and healthy relationships. These programs will continue to be supported in the 2015–16 school year.

- **WITS** stands for Walk away, Ignore, Talk it out, Seek Help. The WITS Program engages school staff and community partners as part of a whole school approach. Its mission is to provide violence prevention

programs to children and youth, from kindergarten to Grade 6.

- The **Fourth R Healthy Relationships Plus** program is an evidence-informed, small groups program, based on the core principles of skill-building and awareness. The program equips students with the skills they need to build healthy relationships and to help themselves and their peers reduce risky behaviours. This program was introduced to our alternative program sites.

SECTION 23 PROGRAMS

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program, located at Waterloo Collegiate Institute, allows students to continue with their education while having their treatment needs supported.

In addition, we received approval to re-allocate resources to open up a transitional education program for high school students who are transitioning out of custody. Working with our agency partner, **Ray of Hope**, the program supports the student's academic needs and provides important skills that will allow them to successfully transition back to high school.

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

Our **U-Turn** program continues to diversify to provide learning opportunities to meet the needs of a wide range of secondary school students. The program provides disengaged students with learning opportunities that will encourage behaviours that enable successful transitions back into mainstream school or the workplace.

A student can choose between three different U-Turn programs:

- the *diversion program* is tailored for students who are involved with probation or the courts and struggling with issues such as truancy, low grades, low self-esteem, lack of motivation, poor work habits or social behaviour;
- the *co-op program* is designed for students who are transitioning to the work force and need additional support to gain work experience before entering the workforce full time;
- our regular *U-Turn program* provides students with the skills and knowledge they require to reintegrate into mainstream high school.

GOOD NEWS

Southwood SS spreads the love

For the month of February, staff and students at Southwood Secondary School put on various events as part of their Safe, Caring and Inclusive Schools wellness project, "Spread the Love."

The first week was designed to "Spread the Love" through a variety of different daily activities, such as Hold the Door Day, Give someone a High-Five Day, Give a Compliment Day, but the school community was encouraged to not stop at just those acts. The purpose was to be inclusive, show compassion for others, and show how easily acts of kindness can be embedded in everyday life, no matter how big or small.

However, love isn't only shared through acts of kindness but is felt in the embrace of family. Orphan 32 speaker, Thanh Campbell, is a Vietnamese orphan who came to Canada in 1975 as a baby and was adopted by a Galt

family. Southwood SS invited Thanh to speak about his amazing story of the value of family, life and the power of love.

To wrap up the month, Southwood SS hosted an hour-long information session on Wednesday, February 25 for parents of tweens and teens to discuss anxiety and stress – what's considered 'normal' anxiety and when/how to know when you might consider getting extra support/assistance. The event was presented by the **Family Counselling Center of Cambridge and North Dumfries** and is open to the public.

Southwood SS has done a tremendous job at spreading the love to its school community and making everyone feel included and connected!



GOOD NEWS

WRDSB teacher wins ETFO Rainbow Visions award

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) has awarded Debbie Samson, a teacher at Sunnyside Senior Public School, with the Rainbow Visions award at the 2014 Annual Meeting for her work in establishing one of the first gay-straight alliances (GSA) in Ontario middle schools.

For 20 years, Debbie has been an advocate of social justice and equity in education. In 2008, she started a GSA at Sunnyside PS with the belief that teachers have a responsibility to create classrooms and schools where the knowledge and life experiences of all students and their families are celebrated and valued.

We congratulate Debbie for her ongoing work and advocacy as she continues to cultivate a safe, inclusive, equitable learning community through social responsibility.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



RAISING AWARENESS OF FAITH AND RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

A Faith and Religious Accommodations DVD was created to help support schools in providing accommodations to students and families. The purpose of the video is to raise awareness regarding faith and religious accommodations and to build capacity on how to identify when accommodations are required, how to provide a safe and inclusive environment and how to support staff and students while addressing the accommodations. A resource guide to accompany the DVD is currently being produced and will be introduced to the system in 2016.

GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCES CONTINUE TO GROW IN OUR SCHOOLS

The Waterloo Region District School Board's partnership with **OK2BME** continues to be vibrant as the introduction of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) becomes more familiar in elementary schools.

GSA leaders of each school continue to take part in regularly scheduled meetings facilitated by the equity and inclusion officer. The purpose of the GSA meetings is to give the leaders an opportunity to receive updates from local community supports, share ideas and have conversations pertaining to their own GSAs.

Each year, in partnership with OK2BME, the board also takes part in hosting the Annual GSA Conference. The Conference will be held on February 11, 2016, and the board expects to have over 100 participants register for the day, including staff and students. Members of the community participate as workshop presenters.

All WRDSB High Schools have a GSA or similar club, which support LGBTQ students and their allies. There are GSA's in at least 14 elementary schools.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO IDENTIFY AS TRANSGENDER

In the past few years, several students from JK to secondary school, have come forward identifying themselves under the transgender umbrella. A draft Guidelines and Administrative Procedure for the Accommodation of Persons Who Identify

as Trans has been created and will be launched in 2016.

An information and networking session was held on October 29, 2015 for parents/caregivers of children who identify as transgender. **OK2BME** and **SPECTRUM**, two local organizations who support the LGBTQ+ community were in attendance to provide information and answer questions.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP

The Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group (EIAG) – is an advisory group to staff and trustees. They provide input and feedback to support the work of the equity and inclusion officer in helping to create inclusive environments.

FIRST NATION, MÉTIS & INUIT (FNMI)

Students "Rock Their Mocs"

This year, in conjunction with the annual "Rock Your Mocs" Day that encourages Indigenous North Americans to show their pride by wearing their moccasins, a moccasin making workshop was offered to any First Nation, Métis or Inuit student who wished to make their own pair. Fifteen FNMI students between Junior Kindergarten and Grade 11 participated and several family members attended this workshop to support their children.

Waterloo Region Aboriginal Academic Advisory Committee (WRAAAC)

A joint initiative between the **Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB)** and the WRDSB is now in its third year of operation. The WRAAAC has taken steps toward building trust among local Indigenous organizations and service providers and providing transparency to First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) education initiatives within both school boards. The collective purpose of the WRAAAC is to allow Indigenous community organizations and service providers to provide informed advice and guidance to both school boards in developing positive practices and supports to FNMI students, families and community within the broader Waterloo Region. WRAAAC members consist of representatives from local Aboriginal community organizations, agencies, service providers, parents, community members, teachers and students. Meetings are held monthly.



The total number of self-identified FNMI students within the WRDSB is currently 623, an increase of 208 self-identified students from the first year of data collection.

Voluntary Self-Identification

In 2011, the board passed the Voluntary First Nation, Métis and Inuit Self-Identification Policy. Data analysis is ongoing, and we are currently embarking in the development phase of a comprehensive response plan that will positively impact the learning outcomes for FNMI students.

The total number of self-identified FNMI students within the WRDSB is currently 623, an increase of 208 self-identified students from the first year of data collection.

New Partnership Provides Cultural Counselling Services

In partnership with **White Owl Native Ancestry Association (WONAA)**, whose mandate is to provide child mental health supports to Indigenous children in the Waterloo Region, we are now able to offer culturally specific counselling services to First Nation, Métis and Inuit students through a WONAA program called

Wholistic Child and Youth. As a result of our partnership last year (April 2015), WONAA's client intake has more than doubled. Through this agency, a clinician is available to support FNMI students in the form of counselling, group therapy and/or crisis intervention, which would encompass a range of culturally competent traditional teachings and ceremonies for the 2015–16 school year.

Native Studies Courses (NDW4M or NDA3M)

The WRDSB continues to offer Native Studies courses for students in Grades 11 and 12. The majority of our 16 secondary schools offered Native Studies during the 2015–16 school year. 24 sections of Native Studies courses will run this year. The evolution of these program offerings has been welcomed and supported by the Board, various local Indigenous communities and other education institutions within Waterloo Region.

WATERLOO COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE (WCI)
STUDENT EMMA COHEN

Ongoing professional development and student leadership opportunities are offered throughout the year to support the improvement of these courses. Supplemental funding opportunities for Native Studies teachers are available to support teachers' use of authentic First Nation, Métis and/or Inuit perspectives/experiences in classrooms.

A.R.T. FOR LEADERSHIP

A.R.T. stands for Aboriginal and Racialized Teachers. As part of the Board's Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS), this initiative seeks to remove systemic barriers to equality outcomes, with the aim of equitable representation of designated groups within roles of responsibility and leadership. The goal of this initiative is to establish a leadership and mentoring program for racialized and aboriginal teachers, and to increase representation in positions of responsibility, including principal and vice-principal positions.

The first A.R.T. for Leadership program ran bi-weekly from September 25, 2014 to November 20, 2014 for a total of five sessions. There were 14 participants who completed the program.

WATERLOO CI STUDENT NAMED TOP RBC BLACK HISTORY MONTH SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Waterloo Collegiate Institute (WCI) student Emma Cohen for receiving the top scholarship award of \$5,000 from RBC for their 2015 Black History Month Student Essay.

Emma is a strong social justice advocate with a passion for writing, politics and social justice issues. Making a difference and learning as much as she can about the world around her motivates her to be an informed citizen, something she believes every youth her age should embrace. She is an active member of the



WCI student council, FedProv team and committed to the development of her online magazine 'Plasma Dolphin' which she co-founded with a friend. The inspiration for her RBC essay entry came from taking an American history course and a novel study on "The Book of Negroes." She enjoyed learning about African American and Canadian history and their rights so much that it sparked her interest to enter the contest. The essay she submitted was about a pair of storytellers, a slave in the 1800's who escaped to Canada and an author, generations apart, who made a lasting mark on society and inspired her to be the best she can be.

Hoping to have a career in writing and attend university to study creative writing, the prize money will help her focus on her studies and achieve her dream.



GOOD NEWS

Sunnyside PS welcomes new Canadians to their mothers' group

At Sunnyside Public School, it's not unusual to hear students speaking in many languages as they move throughout their day, both in class and out, to support their learning. In the last few years, this phenomenon has spread to include a multilingual approach with families as well.

On January 15, Sunnyside PS hosted their second Newcomer Mothers' Group meeting of 2014–2015. The Mothers' Group was started seven years ago by a mother who was looking to connect with other mothers from her community. Approximately 50 mothers, grandmothers, and female family members of Sunnyside students, all recent immigrants to Canada, meet to learn together, support each other and socialize. The women sit with others who share a common language, along with interpreters, and enjoy the chance to interact with others from their cultural background. While their children play games, participate in arts and crafts, or have fun in the gym, the mothers hear from speakers on topics chosen by them to help meet the needs of their family and themselves: medical care, the school system, housing, creating resumes and preparing for interviews, etc. — all translated into their mother tongue. Afterwards, everyone enjoys a delicious dinner catered by many of the mothers!

The school is so thankful for the volunteers, families, staff and their school settlement worker from the YMCA Immigrant Services who help make this wonderful, community building event such a success!

WRDSB proud to be part of Rainbow Community Council

The Waterloo Region Rainbow Coalition (WRRCC) is proud to announce the Formation of the Rainbow Community Council (RCC), which had its inaugural meeting at the Region of Waterloo Public Health Building (99 Regina Street South, Waterloo) on Thursday, May 7, 2015. Over twenty individuals and local community, social service and governmental organizations have made a commitment to work together to foster a connected, welcoming, integrated, and supportive community in Waterloo Region that is inclusive of members of the Rainbow (or LGBTQ) Community.

Member organizations in the RCC work collaboratively to support each other to address gaps in service provision, avoid duplication of services and resources, collaborate on grants/proposals, and engage in other supportive and collaborative initiatives as they relate to the Rainbow community in Waterloo Region.

The RCC is an initiative of the WRRCC designed to bring together existing community organizations (allied with the Rainbow community) to develop a truly community-wide, sustainable framework for supporting the Rainbow community as a whole.

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES





PIC-WRAPSC EVENT PROMOTING PARENT ENGAGEMENT

LEFT TO RIGHT:
JOHN BRYANT, LAURIE TREMBLE, LESLEY ANDREW, KATHLEEN WOODCOCK
ATTENDING THE PIC-WRAPSC EVENT TO HELP PROMOTE PARENT ENGAGEMENT

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

The Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) supports, encourages and enhances meaningful parent involvement at the board level to improve student achievement and well-being. The PIC acts as an advisory body and provides an important link between parents, the director of education and trustees.

DIRECTOR'S TOWN HALL

In November, PIC and the Waterloo Region Assembly of Public School Councils (WRAPSC), with the support of the office of the Director of Education, ran the first annual Director's Town Hall. This event, hosted over two nights at Eastwood Collegiate Institute and Bluevale Collegiate Institute, invited principals and school council chairs to network and share best practices with other principal/council chair teams. The goal of the town hall was to improve the ability of all school councils in the WRDSB to engage their parent communities.

Director Bryant spoke about his belief in the importance of parent engagement in student success and well-being based on his personal experiences and on research being conducted by scholars such as Dr. Ken Leithwood. The highlight of the evening was the panel Q&A session. Panelists who were all current or former principals or school council chairs answered questions about the role of school councils and their officers, how to communicate with the school community, how to run effective meetings and more. Participants left energized and armed with new ideas to engage parents in their schools. In addition, WRAPSC and PIC provided everyone with an electronic copy of the revised School Council Handbook, full of practical tips and links to further information to help school councils fulfill their mandates.

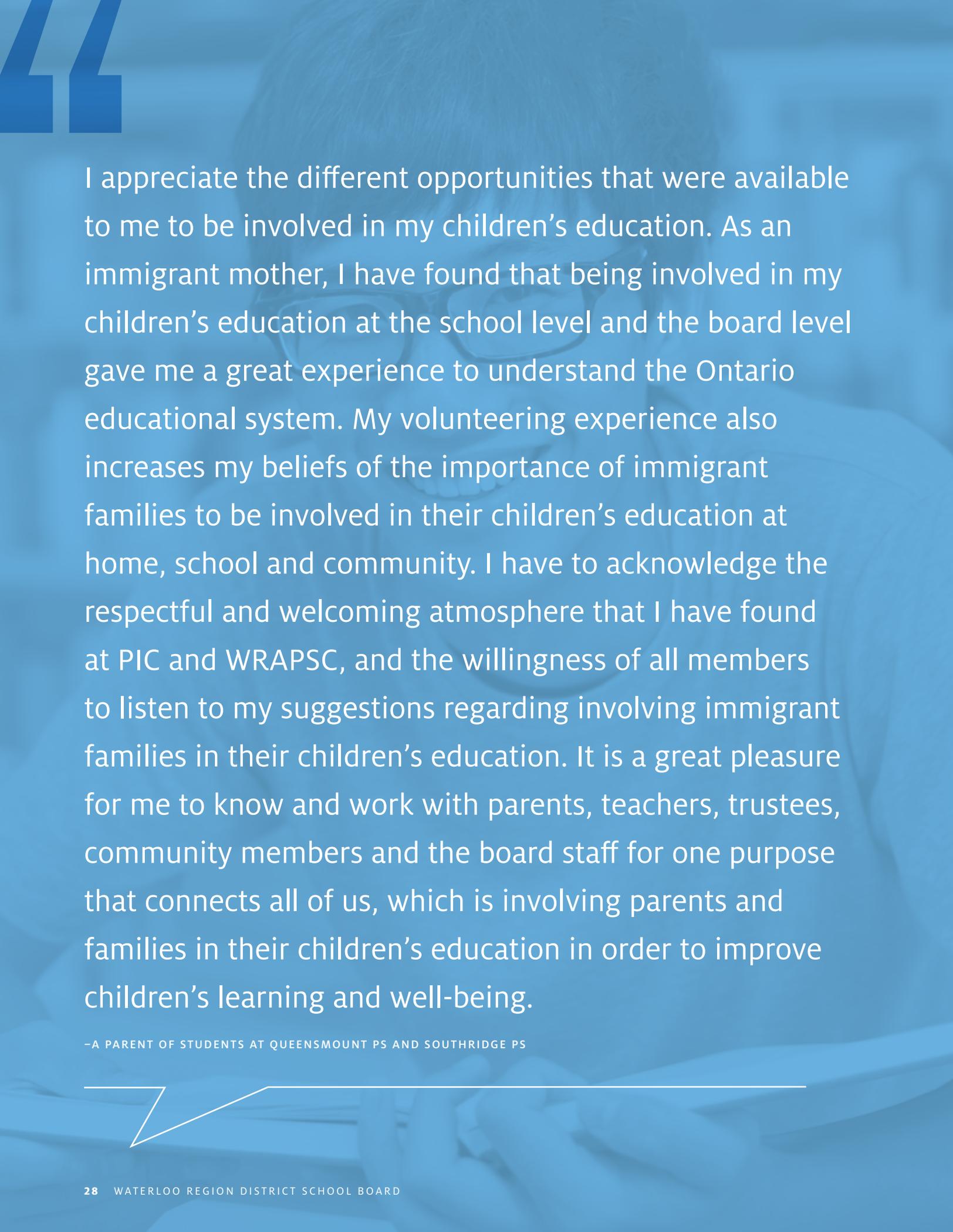


PIC-WRAPSC EVENT PROMOTES PARENT ENGAGEMENT

In April, PIC and WRAPSC hosted an annual event for parents/guardians of the WRDSB at Bluevale Collegiate with close to 300 attendees registered. The event kicked off with a keynote speaker, Lesley Andrew, inspiring parents about how they can motivate their children. Following the keynote, parents/guardians attended workshop sessions throughout the day with fulfilling topics, ranging from getting ready for kindergarten, easing the transition from high school to university, anxiety in children, emotional intelligence, nurturing the scientists in your family, math enrichment and many more. This event was free of charge and the purpose was to enhance student achievement and well-being by encouraging parent engagement. The event was made possible with funding by a Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Regional Grant from the Ontario Ministry of Education.

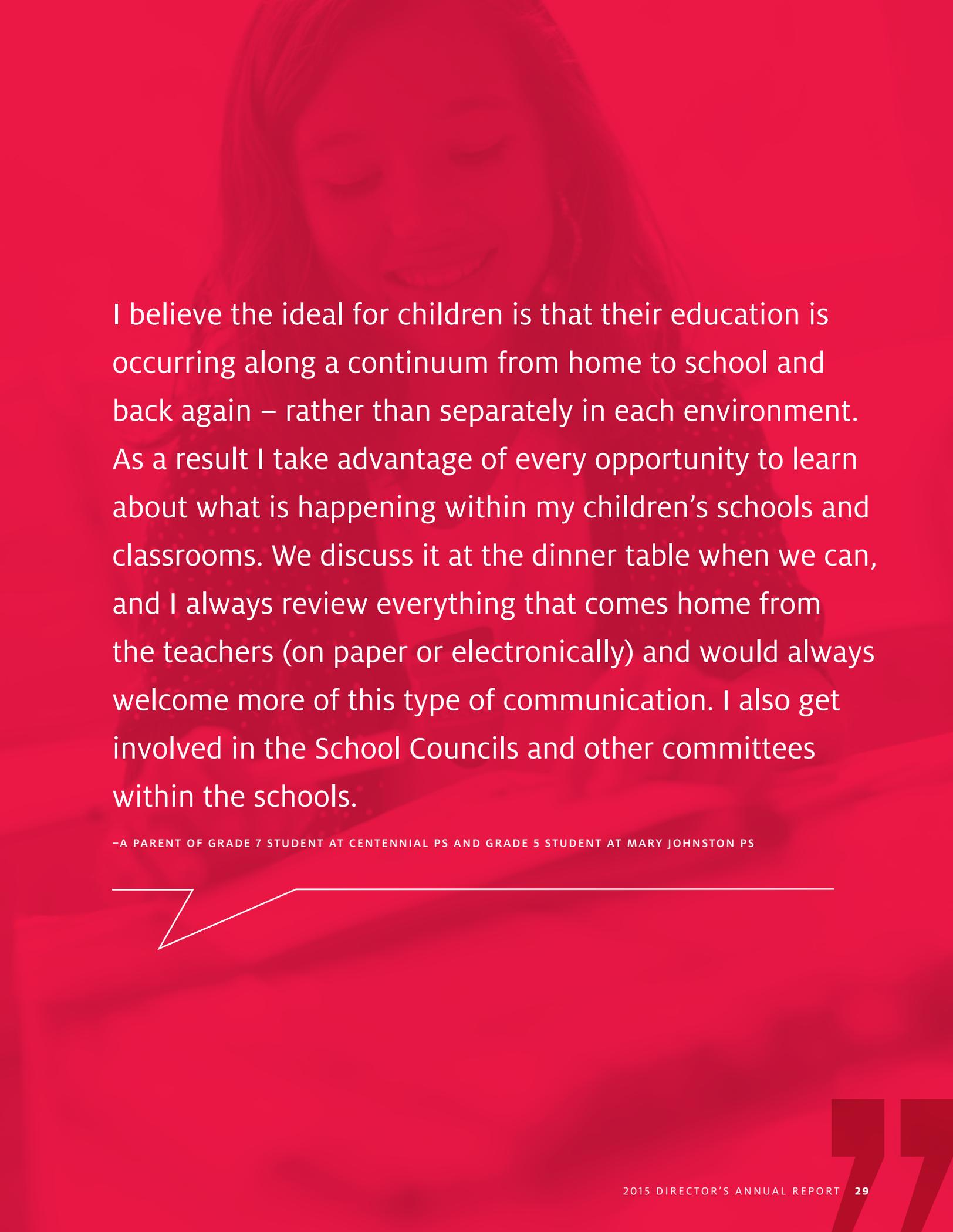
OUTDOOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

We operate five Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres (OEEC), which offer a wide variety of programming to students in both elementary and secondary schools. Four of the centres – Blair, Camp Heidelberg, Laurel Creek and Wrigley Corners, operate throughout the school year and provide programs for students across all grades. The Huron Natural Area OEEC operates seasonally (fall and spring) and focuses on environmental education for students in the primary grades. All programs align with curriculum expectations for science, social studies and geography, as well as health and physical education. Through our programs, students, teachers and parents/guardians learn about the natural world and the critical role that we as humans play in its preservation.



I appreciate the different opportunities that were available to me to be involved in my children's education. As an immigrant mother, I have found that being involved in my children's education at the school level and the board level gave me a great experience to understand the Ontario educational system. My volunteering experience also increases my beliefs of the importance of immigrant families to be involved in their children's education at home, school and community. I have to acknowledge the respectful and welcoming atmosphere that I have found at PIC and WRAPSC, and the willingness of all members to listen to my suggestions regarding involving immigrant families in their children's education. It is a great pleasure for me to know and work with parents, teachers, trustees, community members and the board staff for one purpose that connects all of us, which is involving parents and families in their children's education in order to improve children's learning and well-being.

-A PARENT OF STUDENTS AT QUEENSMOUNT PS AND SOUTHRIDGE PS



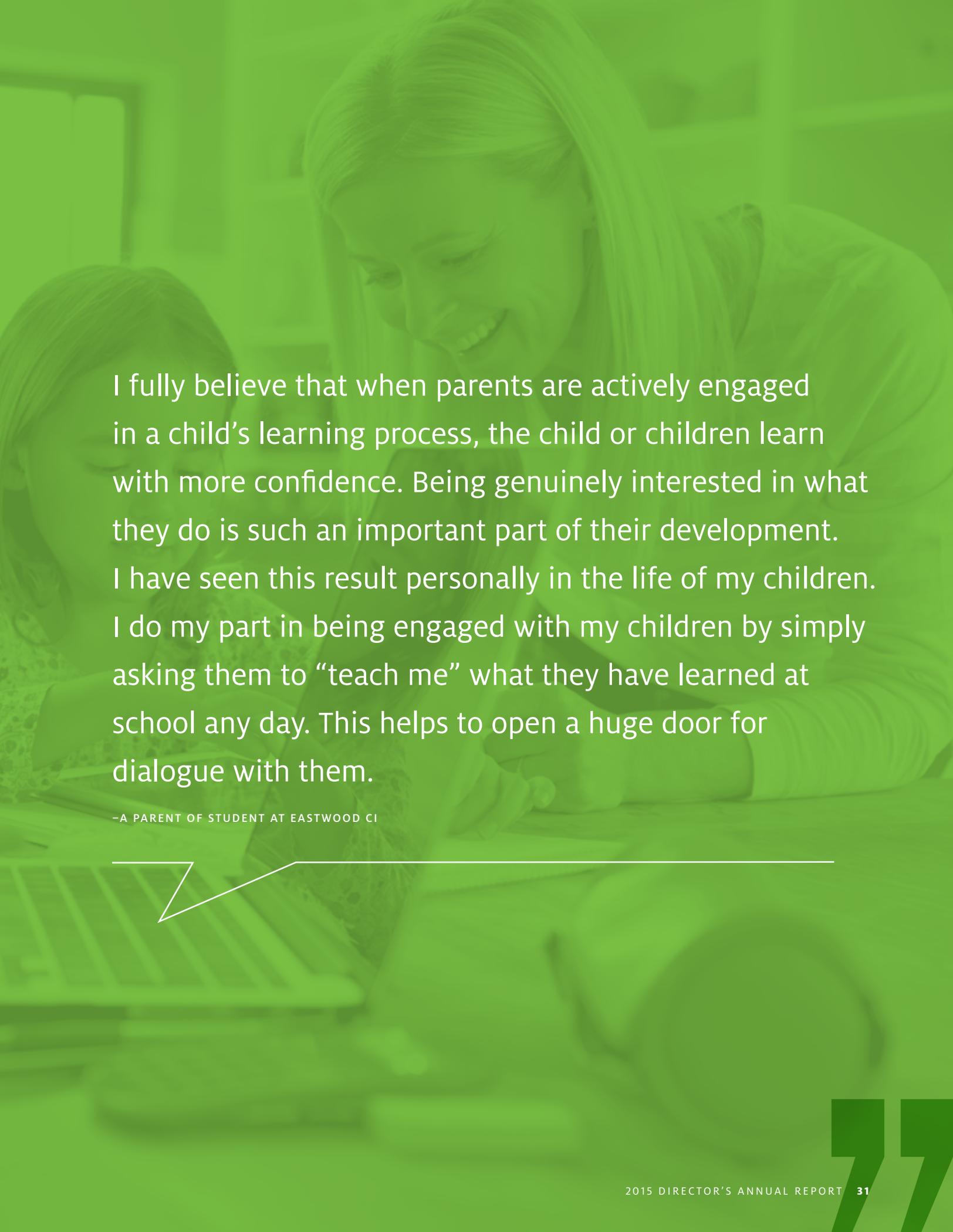
I believe the ideal for children is that their education is occurring along a continuum from home to school and back again – rather than separately in each environment. As a result I take advantage of every opportunity to learn about what is happening within my children’s schools and classrooms. We discuss it at the dinner table when we can, and I always review everything that comes home from the teachers (on paper or electronically) and would always welcome more of this type of communication. I also get involved in the School Councils and other committees within the schools.

—A PARENT OF GRADE 7 STUDENT AT CENTENNIAL PS AND GRADE 5 STUDENT AT MARY JOHNSTON PS



The relationship between home and school is such a necessary role in a child's total school trajectory and personal development. If engaged regularly, parents are, and should be a very large asset to teachers in how learning can be nurtured in the home. Strong communication from teachers of how students are being taught the curriculum (e.g. learning strategies) should be a fundamental and mandatory approach to home/school engagement.

-A PARENT OF GRADE 1 AND 2 STUDENTS AT LINWOOD PS



I fully believe that when parents are actively engaged in a child's learning process, the child or children learn with more confidence. Being genuinely interested in what they do is such an important part of their development. I have seen this result personally in the life of my children. I do my part in being engaged with my children by simply asking them to "teach me" what they have learned at school any day. This helps to open a huge door for dialogue with them.

-A PARENT OF STUDENT AT EASTWOOD CI

PROMOTING PUBLIC EDUCATION





VISTA HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOL SOD TURNING

LEFT TO RIGHT:

TIM SCOTT, KEVIN CHURCH, ELAINE RANNEY, ALAN VANDERGAAG, KATHLEEN WOODCOCK, DON OBERLE, MATT GERARD, JOHN BRYANT, CAROL MILLAR, MATT POTSMAN, AND TODD MCDUGALL TURN THE SOD FOR THE NEW VISTA HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOL.

GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE NEW VISTA HILLS PS

In June 2015, WRDSB staff, local dignitaries and future students celebrated the construction of our newest elementary school with a sod turning!

The new school, located on Sweet Gale Street in west Waterloo, was named Vista Hills Public School this past April. The school name relates to the geographical area of the school. The hills in the area were developed over time by the Laurentide Ice Sheet and the Waterloo Moraine, which provides drinking water for people throughout Waterloo Region.

The school is scheduled to open in September 2016 and will accommodate approximately 646 students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8.

TURNING SOD FOR THE NEW RIVERSIDE PS

The Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) held a groundbreaking ceremony at the new Riverside Public School site on Wednesday, September 9, 2015. Representatives from the WRDSB, Region of Waterloo, Kingsland + Architects, and Tambro Construction, along with local dignitaries were all on-site to celebrate the reconstruction.

The new JK – 6 school will be built in the new development west of the present school building, located at 250 William Street. It will serve approximately 557 students and have a child care centre operated by the Region of Waterloo. Construction for the new Riverside PS started this Fall, and is scheduled to open in September 2016.



Did you know?

Our new schools are built with sustainability and a commitment to the environment in mind. Examples of some of the environmental features include:

- LED lighting inside and outside to conserve energy
- Motion controlled lights and daylight sensors are used to auto dim lights in spaces with ample natural light
- Spots flooring used in gymnasiums and kindergarten classrooms are made from 20% recycled materials and are certified asthma and allergy friendly
- Low flow units are installed throughout to conserve water
- Upgraded windows and overhangs help to reduce solar heat gain
- Using sustainable building materials is taken into consideration during the design process

THE BELL RINGS AT THE NEW WESTMOUNT PS

It is, without a doubt, going to be a spectacular year. Our students are going to learn, make new friends and explore who they are, while our dedicated staff help to guide, teach and support them however they need.

The first day of school always marks a fresh start and the chance to set new goals, but as the staff and students of Westmount Public School walked down the hall, it also marked a new beginning.

Over the summer, the old Westmount PS was torn down and replaced with a two-story building located behind the previous school. While the landscaping and some of the paving still needs to be complete, the inside was learning ready. The school now has a full size gym, an elevator and a bus bay to make getting on and off the bus easier and safer.

The students were filled with excitement as they said goodbye to their parents and stepped foot inside for the very first time. For one Grade 2 class, they were so

curious, their got to start their day off with a tour of the building.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS EXPAND IN THE WRDSB

The Waterloo Region District School Board is pleased to announce that 84 schools will offer Extended Day Programs for the 2015–16 school year. This means that 98% of the board's Junior Kindergarten to Grade 2 students will have access to high quality, affordable child care in their school. In addition, 53 schools will operate Youth Development Programs for Grades 3–6.

This program supports development through programming that combines student interests and activities including creative arts, physical activity, and social and emotional development. In 2010, before the implementation of Extended Day Programs, only 9% of students in JK-Grade 2 had access to licensed child care programs in their school.



RIVERSIDE PUBLIC SCHOOL SOD TURNING

LEFT TO RIGHT:
TOGETHER REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE WRDSB, REGION OF WATERLOO, KINGSLAND+ ARCHITECTS, TAMBRO CONSTRUCTION,
AND LOCAL DIGNITARIES TURNED SOD FOR THE NEW RIVERSIDE PS AND REGION OF WATERLOO CHILD CARE CENTRE.

The Waterloo Region District School Board is pleased to announce that 84 schools will offer Extended Day Programs for the 2015–16 school year. This means that 98% of the board’s Junior Kindergarten to Grade 2 students will have access to high quality, affordable child care in their school.



GOOD NEWS

Jacob Hespeler SS teacher receives Beaumier Award

Congratulations to Jacob Hespeler Secondary School teacher Yvonne Clifford who has won the Beaumier Award for High School/CÉGEP Chemistry Teachers sponsored by the Chemical Institute of Canada. This National award recognizes excellence in teaching chemistry and Yvonne has proven to be the most deserving recipient. Everyday she finds new ways to make the world of chemistry more engaging and fun for her students and encourages all high school students to try at least one chemistry class throughout their secondary school studies.

"Yvonne Clifford is proud to teach at Jacob Hespeler Secondary School in Cambridge, Ont. She received her formal post-secondary education at Queen's University. Her informal (though no less valuable) education has come from the following: learning from her many wonderful mentors, visiting many museums, reading professional journals such as Chem 13 News, and by attending a variety of conferences, including and especially Chem Ed and Science Teacher's Association of Ontario (STAO)." To read her full profile and view the other award winners, visit the CIS Award web page.

Yvonne was presented her award by Dr. Pierre Beaumier at the Mike & Ophelia Lazaridis Quantum-Nano Centre at the University of Waterloo.

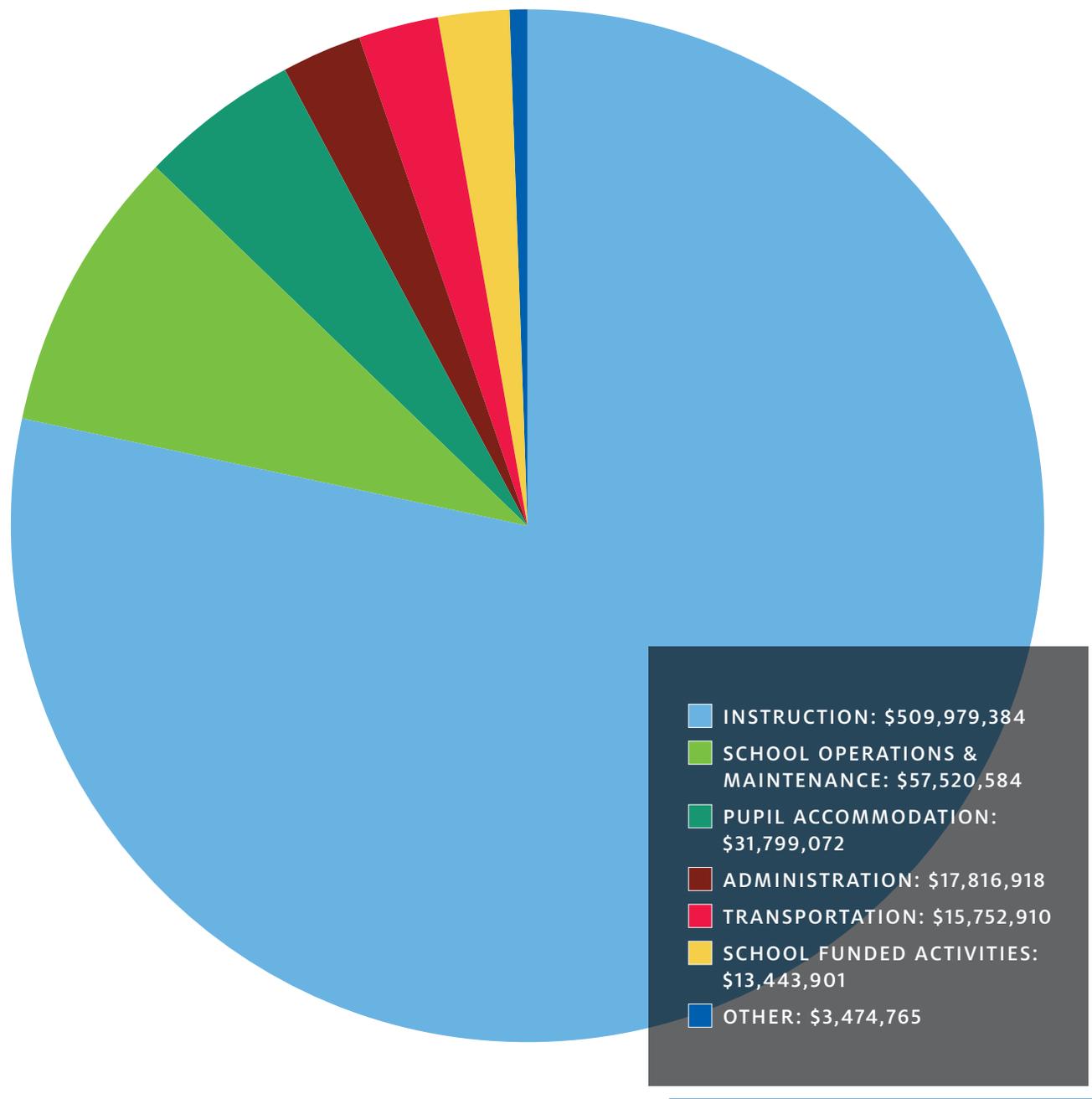
We are so proud of her accomplishments and excitement for teaching!

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

TRUSTEES APPROVE A BALANCED BUDGET FOR 2015-16 SCHOOL YEAR

On Wednesday, June 24, 2015, Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) trustees approved a balanced budget for the 2015-2016 school year. Trustees approved a balanced operating budget of approximately \$681.5m, plus a capital budget of \$57.1m.

Building off of the system fiscal review that took place last year, a thorough review of department spending trends was analyzed and budgets were adjusted accordingly. Despite increasing cost pressures, the board benefited from this initiative, which ensures that we will be positioned well fiscally to address future challenging issues.



Student instruction includes: classroom teachers, occasional teachers, teacher assistants, textbooks and classroom supplies, computers, professionals and para-professionals, library and guidance and staff development.

Figures represent actual expenses for the 2014-15 school year.

ENROLMENT IN THE WRDSB

ENROLMENT IN THE WRDSB

<p>Total Number of Students:</p> <p>62,383</p> <p>(61,841 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT)</p>	<p>Total Number of Elementary Students:</p> <p>42,360</p> <p>(42,324 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT)</p>	<p>Total Number of Secondary Students:</p> <p>20,023</p> <p>(19,517 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT)</p>
<p>Number of Elementary Schools:</p> <p>100</p>	<p>Number of Secondary Schools:</p> <p>16</p>	<p>Percentage of primary classes at 20 students or less:</p> <p>90%</p>
<p>The number of students whose first language is not the language of instruction*:</p> <p>13,331</p>	<p>The number of self-identified First Nation, Metis and Inuit Students**:</p> <p>623</p>	<p>The number of students enrolled in WRDSB operated Extended Day Programs:</p> <p>2,294</p>

* The language first spoken at home other than English or French

** Only those that volunteer this information are counted
Enrolment numbers as of October 2015

The WRDSB serves a population of approximately 507,000 (2011 census)

WWW.WRDSB.CA



Waterloo Region District School Board
51 Ardelt Avenue
Kitchener, ON N2C 2R5
PHONE: 519 570 0003