



Acton High School

Principal Darlene White greeted fresh, nervous Grade nine students in the cafeteria, and then briefed some of their parents in the library – outlining what is in store for the of 2017.

“I want to create a great school where everyone feels safe where they belong, and a school that we can all feel proud of, in terms of our community and our students and what we’re accomplishing,” White said, noting the Grade nines met with LINK (peer) leaders and the remainder of the students arrived at noon for a half-day of classes.

Quoting from the movie *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, White extolled the new students to make Grade nine whatever they want it to be. “We can make the best, or the worst of it. I hope you make the best of it, and I hope you see things that startle you. I hope you feel things you never felt before – I hope you meet people with a different point of view...” White said.

New this year is a class set (30) of iPads which will be signed out to students through the library, and there’s technology available in all classrooms, along with the Board’s *Bring It IT* program to help make student savvy with their own technology as a learning tool, not just a social device.

Acton High school has an enrolment of approximately 531 students.

Halton Catholic District School Board

Incoming Director of Education, Paula Dawson, said the excitement of a new school year “offers the prospect of a clean slate and a fresh opportunity to renew and identify our goals, and achieve our fullest potential.”

St. Joseph

The Acton school’s website identifies it as a faith centred community, strong on developing



students’ unique potential through social, environmental awareness and pursuit of academic excellence.

Principal Sonia Bien welcomed approximately 460 students and 45 staff. “We welcome new Vice-Principal Doug MacDougall, as well as a few new teacher and educational Assistants,” Bien said in an email. “This year promises to be an exciting one as we work together - home, school and parish - to inspire our students to develop the self-discipline and commitment necessary to reach their potential as citizens and lifelong learners.”



FIRST DAY EXCITEMENT: Grade one, rural Acton twins Saiesha (left front) Saioni, and parents Hina and Rijash Bhalsod, joined Limehouse Public School Vice-Principal Mark Hyall and Grade three student Austin Wilcox for a first day photo before the bell rang. – Frances Learment photo

Expanded school security measures

The back doors of Acton’s public elementary schools, used mainly by students in portables, are now locked, just like the front doors as the Halton District School Boards expanded its Safe Welcome Program for the 2013/2014 school year.

Reacting to school massacres in the United States, school

security in Ontario now includes video camera monitored, remote locking systems for all doors, not just those that can not be seen from the office, which were funded by the province in 2005/2006.

Last year, the Halton District School Board looked at the ability to close or lock school doors, and funded what Gerry Cullen, the

Superintendent of Facilities Service called a card access system – a card swipe, or proximity sensor, at the front door and rear doors.

Cullen said in addition to cameras at the doors, an expanded program of using cameras for supervision and security throughout schools will be implemented system-wide in both

elementary and secondary schools in the next two years, with a fine balance between supervision and privacy issues.

The 42 Catholic elementary schools in the Halton Catholic District School Board installed front-door security systems, including at St. Joseph in Acton, during the past five years.



WELCOME CLASS OF 2017: Acton District High School Principal Darlene White welcomed Grade nine students to an orientation session on Tuesday morning. She also spoke to some of their parents about high school expectations. – Frances Learment photo