

Back to class in Acton

There were tearful good-byes, happy reunions and a sense of festive fun at Acton's public schools on Tuesday as students headed to class – Acton's Catholic students began school on Wednesday at St. Joseph's, where major construction over the summer created space for Junior and Senior Kindergarten students enrolled in the new All-Day Early Learning program.

The Halton District School Board operates 81 elementary and 17 high schools in Halton with 39,174 elementary school

students and 17,780 high school students, including a projected enrolment of 561 students at Acton High.

There was a lot of facility works done at Acton schools over the summer, including at McKenzie-Smith Bennett School, where Principal Sharon French said some of the money from the school board's sale on land fronting Churchill Road to the Town, helped pay for upgrades which will be complete within a week or two.

"We upgraded the 50-

year-old electrical capacity right across the school. We had a lot of rooms with one electrical outlet – not enough to run computers and equipment," French said last Thursday, adding extensive painting was done, and a new bank of lockers was installed at the south end of the building.

MSB is now totally accessible with automatic door openers, ramps and an elevator to the second floor. With a projected enrolment of approximately 700 students, a portable was added to the rear of the school. MSB welcomes a new Vice-principal, Tony Churchill, a Rockwood resident who taught at MSB years ago, and most recently was VP in Milton.

Principal French said the goal of the year is to "stay the course." "We had a fabulous year last year and we're on the right path for success with a tremendous increase in our kids' achievement, so we are going to keep pushing," French said, adding she can't talk about the latest EQAO test results until next week, but they are "very good."



TEARS & CHEERS: There were mixed emotions at Robert Little School on Tuesday morning before the first bell as parents and students prepared for the first day of class. – Marie Shadbolt photo

New program allows students to focus on interests

The Halton Catholic District School Board will offer a new Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program for the 2011-2012 school year, in addition to the 15 programs that are currently offered. Christ the King Catholic Secondary School will offer a Sports – Performance SHSM program in 2011-2012.

"Through the Specialist High Skills Major program, students are provided with a unique opportunity to focus their learning on a specific economic sector which interests them, while simultaneously working towards their Ontario Secondary School Diploma," said Jacqueline Herman, Superintendent of Education, Curriculum Services. "The various SHSM programs offered promote individual engagement in

learning and benefit each student by helping them to develop essential skills and work habits, which will prove to be an invaluable asset as they pursue the various post-secondary pathways."

A Specialist High Skills Major is a ministry-approved and career-focused program that allows students to acquire technical knowledge and skills that are of particular importance, and of particular interest, to each individual student. In 2011-2012, there will be over 1,000 Specialist High Skills Major programs in more than 530 secondary schools in the province, with 28,000 students enrolled altogether.

SHSM programs require completion of the following components:

- A defined bundle of Grade 11 and Grade 12 credits for each of the four pathways to post-secondary destinations: apprenticeship training, college, university and workplace

- Compulsory certifications and training

- Experiential learning and career exploration, including job shadowing, work experience and job twinning

- Reach ahead opportunities which allow students to experience their intended post-secondary environment

- Development of essential skills and work habits and use of the Ontario Skills Passport (OSP)

Students and parents are encouraged to seek more information by visiting schooltocareer.ca for a list of all regional programs. Interested students can apply through onsorts.ca.



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21 Churchill Rd., South
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Saturday Sept 17

Breakfast served in the Main Hall
7am to 11am

Adults \$5 Kids (10 & under) \$3

The Rocking Sounds of

BAD WEATHER

Light up the "Patio by the Lake"
From 5pm to 10pm

Free shuttle bus between the Legion and the Fair Grounds

Everyone Welcome