

Catholic board hires first female director

By **TIM WHITNELL**
Metroland Media Group

The Halton Catholic District School Board has hired its first female director of education.

The appointment of Paula Dawson to the top administrative role was announced at Tuesday's public board meeting, where she was briefly introduced to trustees and senior staff.

Dawson will replace current education director Michael Pautler, who announced his retirement earlier this year after five years with the board.

Currently a superintendent of education with the Wellington Catholic District School Board, serving Guelph and Wellington County, Dawson will assume the head administrator's position with the Halton Catholic board on Aug. 31.

She becomes the board's sixth director of education.

"The board is confident that her extensive experience, commitment to excellence and devotion to working with all stakeholders will provide the ongoing vision, caring and direction to ensure that our Catholic schools continue to thrive and serve the needs of our students, our families and our community," said Diane Rabenda, chair of the board.

Dawson is coming from a school board with just 17 elementary and four high schools, serving about 8,700 students, to oversee the Halton Catholic board's more than 29,000 pupils at 43 elementary and eight secondary schools.



PAULA DAWSON

In an interview, Dawson said she doesn't see the move up to the top job at a much bigger board as an intimidating task.

"It's bigger but the work is the same. It's more people to help you. It's exciting. It's not daunting because I know the people in there and what they can do."

As she made the remark the president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA) Halton elementary unit, Richard Brock, walked by and said, "It's an outstanding selection," he said of Dawson.

For the past 26 years Dawson has served in a variety of education roles including the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, the London

District Catholic School Board, the Halton Catholic District board and the Wellington Catholic board.

She was vice-principal at St. James School (2000-01) and principal at St. John (2001-05)— both in Oakville. She also was an education officer with the Ministry of Education (2005-07) and has been at the Wellington County Catholic board since.

"It's nice coming back here because I still know a lot of people. A lot of the senior (administrative) team were previously with me as principals," when she worked at the Halton board as a curriculum consultant in information and communication technology

She describes her management style as "very collaborative. I'm open to suggestions. I'm not quick to judge. You have to garner trust."

Dawson, 50, is single with no children and lives in Guelph. She just had a home built in the south end and said she is not that far from the board's main office in Burlington.

Dawson attended St. John's College in Brantford, completed her undergraduate degree in religious studies at McMaster University, her teaching degree at Brock University and obtained her master's degree in educational technology from Charles Sturt University.



Tee time



At the recent Mayor's Heritage Golf Tournament longtime volunteers Bill and Kathy Sanford took a novel approach to sinking a putt at the Blue Springs Golf Course. A total of 97 golfers took part. (Right) John Dack of Acton lines up a putt while Christina Carere looks on during a putting contest at the recent Paul Murr Memorial Golf Tournament at Blue Springs. This year's event drew 175 golfers and raised approximately \$55,000 for the Canadian Cancer Society and Cancer Assistance Services Halton Hills.

Photos by Ted Brown/Eamonn Maher

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R.H.A.D.

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