

Message from Halton District School Board Acton Trustee Gerry Ockenden

As we wrap up another school year for the Halton District School Board, it's time for reflection on our individual trustee contributions, as well as those of the Board on our public school system in Halton.

As the trustee for Acton/Halton Hills, I believe it is important to bring a local approach to the table, but equally valuable to contribute to the overall direction of Halton's public education system.

A key piece of work in which trustees have participated is addressing the goals of the Board's 2007-2010 Strategic Plan. It is a very important blueprint that sets out the objectives of the Board – a process I have been very honoured to be a part of.

It is especially important because it is a firm commitment to student achievement, which is something I truly value. It states the Board inspires and supports learning; creates safe, healthy and ongoing learning/teaching environments; and provides opportunities for challenge and choice.

Witnessing the Board implementing literacy and numeracy objectives and moving forward with technology in the classroom has made the role of trustee all that more fulfilling.

The Board acknowledges that in order to fully realize its goals, parents/guardians play a huge role.

The Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) has become an invaluable tool for trustees and Board staff to reach out to parents/guardians as well as the community

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to improve student learning.

The PIC provides a regular opportunity for parents to network, share ideas, offer input and enjoy informative presentations on education and related topics throughout the school year. It is a conduit to provide consultation opportunities to staff, superintendents, and the Director of Education and Board trustees

Student achievement is a driving force behind the Board's many decisions. That's why programs that help our students reach their potential, like the Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP), differentiated instructional strategies and the Pathways programs for secondary students, have been extremely helpful.

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Success comes in many forms. I'm pleased the Board

has maintained a commitment to opening students' eyes and hearts to better understanding the environment and how they can, will and do play an integral role in its protection through classroom learning and field trips. The increasing number of our schools becoming certified as ecoSchools each year is a testament to that emphasis as a means to help students learn the value of Mother Nature early in their lives.

The Active and Safe Routes to School initiative is valuable because it is providing a way for students



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to arrive at school – safely – by walking rather than relying on the automobile. By limiting the number of vehicles arriving at school property, we are helping reduce everyone's exposure to exhaust pollution and teaching our students the benefits of green, healthy thinking.

This initiative also reinforces to students the value of staying fit.

I also want to add that I understand the sensitivity around the proposed sale of the McKenzie-Smith Bennett property. The Board is continuing negotiations for the sale of the property with the Town of Halton Hills. I want to assure the community that we will ensure the best interests of MSB students are addressed through any potential sale.

Meanwhile, the Board is saying goodbye to Education Director Wayne Joudrie, who is retiring this year. I want to wish him all the best. He has been a pleasure to work with. I think he will be remembered for his total commitment to the strategic plan, and always striving to do what's best for students and staff.

As a trustee, I share in the tremendous pride of parents, staff, friends and community members when our

students are recognized for their achievements. We have had occasion to celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of many Acton and area students this year.

Halton Hills schools, once again, demonstrated wonderful success and results in numerous events this year including Halton Music Showcase, Halton Technical Skills Competition, Elementary and Secondary Art Shows, Public Speaking, The Eddies, plus athletic accomplishments of each school including the Special Athletes Track Meet.

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Students and school communities also continued to lend their support to many worthwhile causes such as Relay for Life, Jump Rope for Heart and UNICEF, and many other fundraisers, demonstrating their commitment to good citizenship. Students, staff, parents and community have a great deal of which to be proud!

While the Board continues its focus on student achievement, we would be remiss if we did not applaud those who collectively support our students in Halton.

From the outstanding staff in the classrooms of our community schools to the leadership of our school administrators; from the support staff in our schools or at the Board office and other Board workplaces, we all contribute to provide rich learning experiences for our students. Thank you to all who work tirelessly to support the Board's commitment to students.

Thank you is also extended to those who give freely of their time and effort to support their School Councils. Volunteers are also to be commended, as our schools could not operate as efficiently without their commitment and dedication. We are indeed fortunate to have many community and business partners who provide tangible support to our students and school communities. Thank you!

With summer fast approaching, I would like to offer congratulations to those students and staff who are moving on to new schools, new careers, and new challenges. Acton High School will sadly miss Principal Bert O'Hearn, Guidance Head Dave McConnell, and Manager of School Administrative Operations, Marlene Bogart, who are retiring, after many dedicated and successful years of service to our community.

Whatever pathway you choose, best wishes for continued success in all you do.

Once again, congratulations to staff, students, and all community partners on a very successful school year. Have a safe and happy summer!

Congratulations 2010 Graduates!

Good Luck in your future endeavours

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