

# HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

*Faith and Learning... Celebrating the Journey*



## Director's 2007 Annual Report



# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It is my distinct pleasure to present the 2007 Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board Annual Report. The preparation of this report has created the opportunity to reflect on the highlights of the many positive developments of the past year.

In our jurisdiction it is difficult to select highlights because of the amazing accomplishments each year. We have attempted in this report to pause and reflect on the following:



- A clearly articulated Strategic Plan that keeps us focused on the future.
- Our response to the Provincial Character Education Initiative which call for us to become a Catholic Community of Caring organization.
- The energy and effort behind the Boards Annual theme, "Stewards of Creation". This initiative has focused us on becoming a more environmentally conscious school board.
- Continued high student achievement levels on all Provincial assessments. This can be attributed to an intense focus on the teaching/learning process and a commitment to high yield strategies and current research on effective schools.
- A number of innovative Student Success initiatives in our secondary schools that have resulted in excellent graduation rates and significant reductions in the number of student suspensions.
- The system celebrations, award ceremonies and recognition programs that happen throughout the year to acknowledge the students and staff in our district.
- Clearly articulated plans to ensure that our schools are safe and that we increase parent engagement levels.
- The many charitable and social justice activities our students engage in over the year. Our school communities donated over \$100,000.00 to 60 charities in the past year.
- The ongoing focus to become a more inclusive system that celebrates the full range of learners in our schools.
- A number of highly successful partnerships such as King's University College, Best Start program, Children's Aid Society, Huron and Perth Health Units and the Huron Perth Centre.
- A very ambitious capital campaign that resulted in a large addition to St Michael Catholic Secondary School, Sacred Heart, and enhancements to Jeanne Sauvé and Mt Carmel Schools.
- Another year of balanced budgets and fiscal responsibility. Our accountability as a school system has been significantly enhanced by the development of a series of new polices dealing with expenses, purchasing, tendering and procurement.
- A large number of staff who give unselfishly of their own time to ensure that our students have a full range of athletics, music and drama activities.
- An amazing leadership team at both system and school level who strive daily to make this one of the best school systems in this province.

As we look forward we are filled with enthusiasm. We have a tremendously dedicated and supportive staff. Our partners in Catholic education - our entire staff, Catholic school councils, parents, volunteers and our parishes, work cooperatively to provide the best for our students. Our trustees continue to provide excellent leadership and guidance, and are very active in the life of our school system. Our schools are vibrant and meaningful today because of the outstanding levels of co-operation and collaboration. We are truly blessed to have such outstanding individuals serve our students. May God Bless you with health and happiness.

# A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF CARING

In the fall of 2006, the Ministry of Education requested that all Boards initiate Character Education programs within their school systems. We in Huron-Perth have adapted the Community of Caring program as our response to this initiative.

Rooted in our Catholic faith, the five core values of caring, respect, responsibility, trust and family are the foundation on which responsible decisions and behaviors are based. In every community, a focus on values contributes to a healthy, positive

learning environment by fostering a Catholic climate in which all members feel safe and valued. The Catholic Community of Caring program is a K-12, whole system, comprehensive character education program. Faith is at the core of the program and the five values of caring, respect, responsibility, family and trust are integrated into every aspect of school life. The program compliments and aligns with Huron-Perth's mission and vision, various system initiatives as well as the Religion and Family Life programs.

## THE SIX KEY VALUES

**FAITH** - in God, in God's incredible love for us, in our Catholic tradition and in ourselves.

**CARING** - thoughtfulness and concern for our own needs and the needs of others and a willingness to help.

**RESPECT** - for ourselves, our communities and our world.

**RESPONSIBILITY** - making good decisions and being accountable for our actions.

**TRUST** - being reliable and knowing you can depend on yourself and others.

**FAMILY** - belonging and contributing to a group.



Student representatives from each school were invited to attend a Catholic Community of Caring Leadership Forum held at the Seaforth Golf & Country Club.

## HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD'S 2007-2008 ANNUAL BOARD THEME IS STEWARDS OF CREATION

"As Christian stewards, we receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them in loving justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord." -Stewardship: A Disciple's Response-

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board is **GOING GREEN** by:

- working to establish common policies, standards and practices for environmental education
- working to reduce the ecological impact of school system operations
- working to adopt and promote the **Ontario EcoSchools** conservation strategies to reduce waste, energy consumption, and ecological degradation throughout schools and school communities.



# PREPARING OUR STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

We're always looking for ways to improve elementary student literacy and numeracy skills. That's why we've been working closely with the government's Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat to develop and implement some ambitious new strategies to help boost student achievement in reading, writing and math. These exciting new strategies, which are based on solid research findings, have been changing the way our classrooms look – and operate. Here are a few examples:

- **Big blocks of time for literacy and math** – Research shows the less interruptions there are, the better students can focus. That's why all the elementary schools in Huron-Perth now ensure junior students have one hour of uninterrupted literacy instruction every day and primary students have two hours. Math lessons are also given in longer, uninterrupted blocks of time.

- **Non-fiction writing across the curriculum** – Creative writing used to mean writing fictional stories for the teacher. In today's rapidly changing world, students also need to be able to read and write informational text, which is non-fiction writing meant to convey information or knowledge about a subject, which is different than simply telling a story or offering an opinion on something. Anchor charts, which record ideas and information, help students organize their thinking and give a permanent, visible presence to what's being learned.

- **Timely support for struggling students** – We want to ensure all students can read by the end of Grade 2, so we're always watching for those experiencing difficulties. Students in Grade 1 and 2 who are having problems are given a boost to prevent them from falling too far behind the rest of the class. This timely support focuses on phonemic awareness (the ability to hear and separate different sounds in spoken words), decoding words and reading comprehension. The program lasts for 17 weeks, with four schools participating in the fall and another four schools participating in the winter.

- **Math meets real life** - When planning math programs, teachers are infusing real life situations to bring relevance and added interest to problem solving. For example, students might be asked to use geometric properties of shapes to design floor plans for a house. Bringing real life to math is exciting – and leads to real results.



Students use hands-on materials in a math lesson at Precious Blood School in Exeter

"Improving student literacy and numeracy skills is one of our top priorities. Although we measure student success in a number of ways, results from the provincial EQAO tests are very encouraging indeed. They show our students exceed provincial averages in almost every area of testing."

Martha Dutrizac, Superintendent of Education

- **The power of differentiated instruction and assistive technology** – It's important to recognize that all students learn at different speeds and with different levels of abilities. Teachers help students reach their potentials by accommodating these differences. To do that, they might provide textbooks for different levels, teach in smaller groups or use flexible groupings, as needed. This is all part of differentiated instruction, which simply means adjusting teaching methods to suit the learner. Technology (we call it assistive technology) can also help. For example, students might have a textbook read to them by a computer, or conversely the student might read to the computer which then transforms the words into written text. Accommodating student needs invariably paves the way to student success.



Teacher Stacey Rietmeyer demonstrates the use of technology in a differentiated instruction lesson at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Mt. Carmel.

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- **Flexible student grouping** – Since we know students learn much better in groups, teachers are putting them together in different ways. Not only are students learning from their teachers; they're learning from each other in subjects such as language, math, science and social studies. They're also more motivated to learn in these structured 'social' situations.



Students from Jeanne Sauve demonstrate how students work in different types of group settings, from whole class groups to paired reading.

- **'Tutors on the Bus'** - Students from King's University College at the University of Western Ontario in London are bused in over a 10-week period to act as tutors for elementary students at six of our schools. This has turned out to be a rewarding and very effective partnership.



Students from the University of Western Ontario's King's University College, participating in the Tutors on the Bus program, get some tips before working with elementary students.

- **Time out to strategize** – We're always looking for new ways to help students reach their potential. That's why teachers are given time during the day to meet with other teachers to discuss strategies that will help students become more successful. It's true that many heads are better than one, especially when it comes to planning for students.



Teachers Laurie Otten and Angela Schuster participate in a professional team meeting at St. Ambrose in Stratford.

- **Principals and Vice-Principals learning too** - Principals and Vice-Principals in Huron-Perth regularly meet in what we call Professional Learning Communities. This allows them to build co-operative relationships where they can learn from each other, share student success stories, connect best practices and plan important initiatives.



Principals meet to share ideas so that they can work with teachers to improve student learning.

## SMOOTH TRANSITION INTO GRADE 9 KEY TO FUTURE SUCCESSES

The provincial Student Success Strategy emphasizes the importance of creating a successful experience for every student – and a strong and positive start to high school is a crucial part of the equation. That's why students, teachers, and parents all need to play a role in ensuring the successful transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9. Recent research by Dr. Kate Tilleczek and Dr. Bruce Ferguson, of Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, confirms the importance of a positive transition. If we help to create the right conditions for Grade 8 students, their successful transitions into high school greatly increase their chances of success in the years that follow.

At the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board we're making progress in creating the conditions for positive transitions. Student performance in subsequent years is what reassures us: In 2006-07, 88 per cent of our Grade 10 students passed all 16 of their courses. By comparison, the provincial average is only 66 per cent.

"When students first enter high school, it's key they start off on the right foot. This success lays the groundwork for all future successes."

Dan Parr, Superintendent of Education

### TRANSITION STRATEGIES THAT WORK:

- **Caring Adult:** A staff member is partnered with students to mentor and assist with the transition.
- **Student Profiles:** These personalized reports are used to highlight students' strengths, needs, and interests as they move from Grade 8 to Grade 9. The profiles include academic, emotional, social, and/or physical details.

- **Individualized Timetables:** All Grade 9 student timetables are built with the student's strengths and interests in mind.
- **Board Transition Plans:** This includes orientation activities, interventions and strategies, including monitoring student progress in Grade 9.
- **Transition Training:** Grade 8 teachers all receive training in how to contribute to a positive transition process.

### TRANSITION TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- Talk to your child's teacher about his/her abilities, especially in literacy and numeracy, and help your child choose courses that are compatible with his/her abilities. Picking courses that are too demanding used to be thought of as 'keeping all the doors open'. Now we know it's more often a case of 'setting them up for failure'.
- Review with your child the board's Pathways to Success transition-planning guide. It's available from their Grade 8 teacher, or you can view it on-line at <http://www.yourmission.ca> (Click on "Check This Out".)



Grade 8 teachers participating in a Pathways to Success transition planning workshop.

## IT ALL BEGINS WITH SAFE SCHOOLS

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board is committed to safe schools because that's what students need to learn, grow and develop. Safe schools are prerequisites for student success and academic achievement. Our goal is to ensure that every one of our schools offers a safe, orderly and Christ-centered learning environment. Our Safe Schools Task Force provides system-wide direction by updating and implementing a number of policies that support this goal. Our Safe School policies are listed on our website. For details, go to [www.hpcdsb.edu.on.ca](http://www.hpcdsb.edu.on.ca)

(Click on About HPCDSB, choose Board Policies, then go to section 3-D, Student Services.)

Parents can also contribute to safe schools; in fact their involvement is essential. That's why the board sent home two brochures with the September newsletter, outlining what parents can do to help (Imagine a School Without Bullying: A Guide for Parents, and Cyberbullying: A Guide for Parents). Additional copies of these brochures are available from school principals.

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In June 2007, the provincial government passed Bill 212, The Progressive Discipline and School Safety law. This legislation requires further changes around school safety and student discipline. Bill 212 took effect February 1, 2008. At the core of

these changes is the requirement that school principals and educators look at each student individually and each action separately, then match the consequences accordingly. More information on these changes will be forthcoming.

## FAITH IN ACTION ALIVE AND WELL AT ST. ANNE'S AND ST. MIKE'S

Last year, students at St. Anne's embarked on a new initiative to promote and maintain a safe and positive learning environment at school. Called Peace Mentors, the group was chosen by staff, students, and campus ministry as role models of peace in the school. Under the direction of teachers Katherine Demarest and Laura Blackmore, the Peace Mentors facilitated support for students in conflict, created classroom training programs, welcomed new students to the school and challenged the entire St. Anne's community to "dare to care".

Meanwhile, St. Michael students and staff continued their annual tradition of canvassing Stratford during the annual Christmas Canned Food Drive, replenishing the shelves of the St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank at St. Joseph's Church Parish Hall. This tradition, now in its 16th year, is an inspiring partnership between the school and parish dedicated to serving less fortunate families in Stratford.

"Peace Mentors are doing important work. Having a formal group that exemplifies the kind of behaviour we want to see in all students helps to set a clear example for others to follow."

Dan Parr, Superintendent of Education



**St. Anne's Peace Mentors. Front, L to R:** Kelly Verberne, Mike Hogan, Shauna Regier, Ryan Essex, Katie Mathonia, Lisa Miller.  
**Second Row, L to R:** Brandon Dykxhoorn, Adam Hogan-Cann, Pierre Lapaine, Meagan Lapointe, Anna Lambert, Stephen VanAaken.  
**Third Row, L to R:** Kyli Lane, Kelsey Merner, Blake Moore, Stacie VanMiltenberg, Michaela MacGinty.  
**Back Row, L to R:** Nathan Bles, Aaron Bedard, Jennifer Scholten, Dean Reynolds, Phil Schraeder, Heather Thompson.  
**Absent:** Morgan Godwin, Sam Romijn



St. Michael students delivering food they collected to the St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank at St. Joseph's Church. L to R: Danny Houben, Brock Moorehead, Kevin Parr.

### Check this out...

See what students, parents, and alumni are saying about St. Michael and St. Anne's Catholic secondary schools. Go to [www.hpcdsb.edu.on.ca](http://www.hpcdsb.edu.on.ca) and click on St. Anne's Information Video or St. Michael Information Video under the heading Check This Out (look for the moving banner!)

# TALKING ABOUT CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND ITS FUTURE

Last year, school boards all across the province held forums to discuss the priorities and issues facing Catholic education. These forums were initiated by the Institute for Catholic Education and in August 2007 the findings were summarized and published in *Our Catholic Schools 2006-2007, A Discussion on Ontario's Catholic Schools and Their Future: A Summary Report*.

"First and foremost, our Catholic schools are places where our Catholic faith is promoted and celebrated in prayer, learning and school activities among staff and students."

Board Discussion Panel

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board participated in this important discussion, holding its forum in February 2007 to solicit comments and ideas from schools, parishes and members of the community. The topics discussed included:

- The distinctiveness of Catholic schools
- The value of Catholic schools
- Our hopes for Catholic schools
- Major issues facing Catholic schools now and in the future
- Promoting and protecting Catholic education for the future



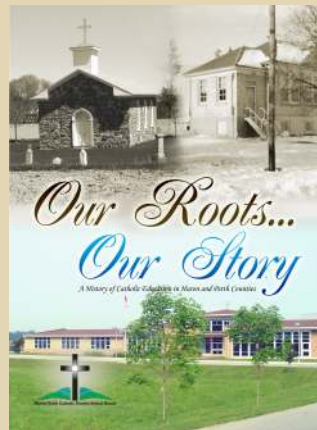
Staff, parish and community members from St. Ambrose School take part in the Catholic Education Forum Feb. 28, 2007 at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Stratford.

## MOTHER TERESA FAITH IN ACTION AWARDS



The Mother Teresa Faith in Action Awards were presented in May during the Education Week system Mass. Established by the Catholic Education Team at the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board, the award recognizes individuals who witness their faith, create nurturing and Christ centered learning environments, promote social justice, awareness and action, and celebrate the gifts, self-worth and potential of every student. This year's nine recipients were, from left, Marg Brickman, Mary Chisholm, Larry Cook, the late Lynne Flynn (whose daughters Kaleigh, Emily, Stephanie and Ainsley accepted on her behalf), Dara Hartman, Father Peter Keller, Mary McGlynn, Dianne Miller and Cathy Rops.

## TELLING OUR STORY



The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board recently published a book entitled, *Our Roots...Our Story*. It's a fascinating look at the origins of Catholic education in Huron and Perth counties.

The cost is \$20. To order this wonderful keepsake, please contact Elaine DeCorte at the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board:

**1-800-265-8508 or 519-345-2440**  
**elaine\_decorte@hpcdsb.edu.on.ca**

# EQAO PROVINCE-WIDE TEST RESULTS IMPRESSIVE

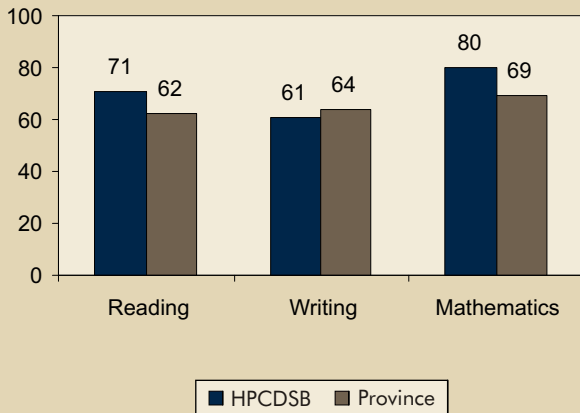
The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board surpasses the rest of the province in almost every area of provincial testing.

At the elementary level, the 2007 EQAO Grades 3 and Grade 6 assessments show our students exceed provincial averages in both reading and mathematics and come very close with the Grade 3 writing results. Using details from these provincial assessments, we continue to focus on improving student literacy and numeracy skills, with a specific emphasis on student writing. Professional learning development this year will also be focusing on the writing process, strengthening links between students' reading and their writing.

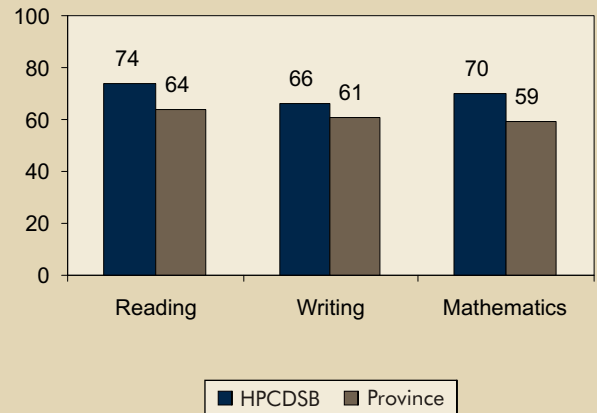
And at the secondary level, our efforts have been focused on greater achievement in mathematics, particularly for students studying at the applied level. Our school-wide, cross-curricular literacy strategies in Grade 10 continue to bear impressive results. In fact, the success rate of our Grade 10 students on the provincial literacy test is the highest in the province.

Student achievement results are key indicators of educational quality. They also provide critical information which we use to refine teaching strategies and identify areas for academic improvement. We also use the results to tailor professional development opportunities for our teachers.

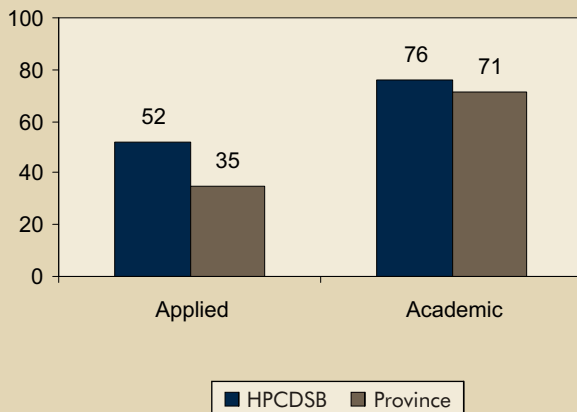
### Grade 3 2006-2007



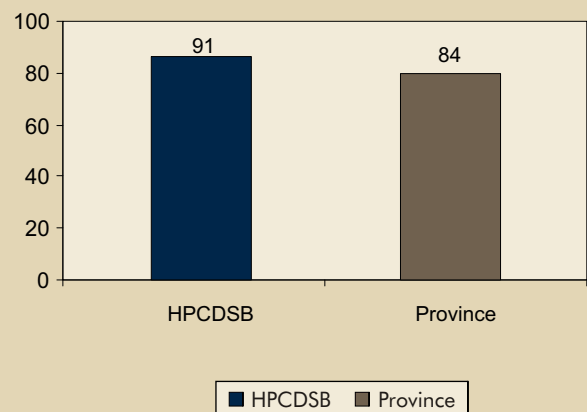
### Grade 6 2006-2007



### Grade 9 Mathematics



### Grade 10 OSSLT March 2007



# ANOTHER BALANCED BUDGET IN 2006-2007

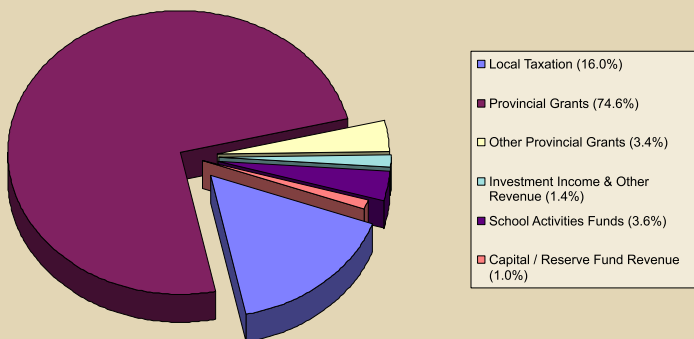
## 2006-2007 Operating & School Activities Sources of Funds

Local Taxation (16.0%)	\$7,880,972
Provincial Grants (74.6%)	\$36,682,186
Other Provincial Grants (3.4%)	\$1,650,073
Investment Income & Other Revenue (1.4%)	\$695,783
School Activities Funds (3.6%)	\$1,756,049
Capital / Reserve Fund Revenue (1.0%)	\$479,181
	<b>\$49,144,244</b>

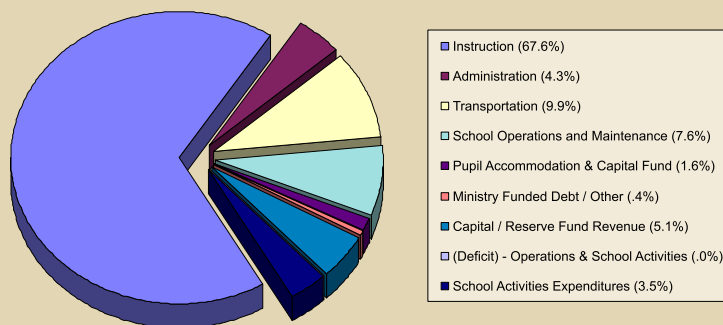
## 2006-2007 Operating & School Activities Application of Funds

Instruction (67.6%)	\$33,198,932
Administration (4.3%)	\$2,102,793
Transportation (9.9%)	\$4,853,584
School Operations and Maintenance (7.6%)	\$3,754,415
Pupil Accommodation & Capital Fund (1.6%)	\$781,174
Ministry Funded Debt / Other (.4%)	\$191,780
Capital / Reserve Fund Revenue (5.1%)	\$2,525,919
(Deficit) - Operations & School Activities	(276)
School Activities Expenditures (3.5%)	\$1,735,923
	<b>\$49,144,244</b>

### 2006-2007 Operating & School Activities Revenues



### 2006-2007 Operating & School Activities Expenditures



## SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR:

- The Board received \$44.6 million, or 91% of its revenue, from provincial grants and local taxation. This sum is primarily determined by the number of students the Board educates, as well as by specific funding geared to local circumstances.
- Most of the budget is spent on instruction, which reflects the labour intensive nature of education. The cost of salary and benefits for our approximately 500 full-time equivalent teaching and non-teaching staff amounts to 76% of the budget.
- The Board completed a number of exciting capital projects in 2006-07. A new gym, fitness room, science room, transportation lab and seven classrooms were built at St.

Michael Catholic Secondary School at a cost of \$3.3 million. The Board also spent \$1.6 million on the Ministry of Education's Good Places to Learn funding initiative. As a result, Jeanne Sauvé, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Ambrose all received significant upgrades to windows, roofing, heating and ventilating systems.

- In 2006-07, the Board received \$1.6 million in special one-time grants. For example, we received \$230,000 to implement the province's 'Education for All' initiative, which provides literacy and numeracy programs for students with special education needs in Kindergarten to Grade 6.

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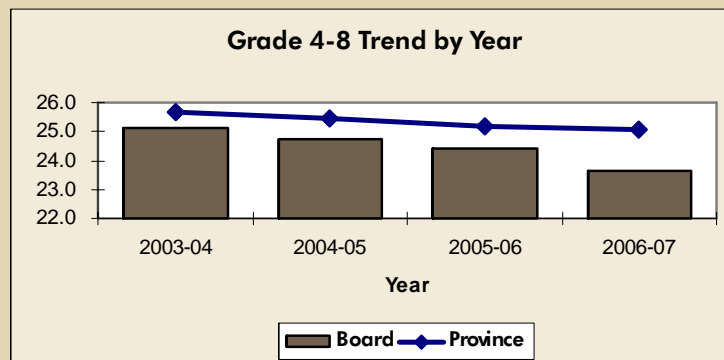
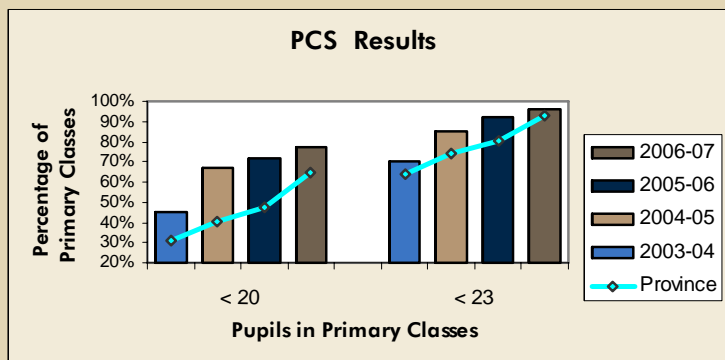
- The Board spent \$4.8 million, or 10% of its budget, on student transportation. In May 2007, the Board entered into an agreement with the Avon Maitland District School Board which combines transportation departments. This will result in greater efficiencies and improved transportation services for all students in Perth and Huron counties.
- In 2006-07, \$1.7 million was raised by our elementary and secondary schools. To ensure accountability for these funds, in

2006-07 the board adopted a new School Generated Funds Policy which outlines how these funds are to be recorded, reported and administered.

- The Ministry of Education has a four-year initiative to reduce the class sizes in the JK to Grade 3 classes. This graph shows the Board has made significant progress in this area between 2003 and 2007. We've also been able to reduce the average class sizes for Grades 4 to 8.

"As administrators and trustees, we take a diligent approach to managing taxpayers' dollars. We're always looking at how we can use our resources to the ultimate benefit of students, but at the same time we have to live within our means. We believe we succeeded on both counts in 2006-07."

Gerry Thuss, Superintendent of Finance



(This data represents the operating and school funds for the fiscal year ended August 31, 2007. It excludes New Pupil Places, Facility Renewal and Debt Charges. The full budget and audited financial statements are available online at [www.hpcdsb.edu.on.ca](http://www.hpcdsb.edu.on.ca), or by calling 519-345-2440.)

**QUICK FACTS**

Elementary Students:	3,044
Secondary Students:	1,650
Total:	4,694
Elementary Schools:	16
Secondary Schools:	2
Employees:	505
Board Area:	6,000 sq. km.
Total Board Budget:	\$49,144,244

## Catholic education in Ontario... just the facts

<b>Catholic population in Ontario:</b>	3.6 million (approx. 33%)
<b>Number of Catholic District School Boards:</b>	29
<b>Number of Catholic school authorities:</b>	5
<b>Number of Catholic trustees:</b>	245
<b>Number of Catholic schools:</b>	Approximately 1,500
<b>Enrolment in Catholic schools:</b>	Over 600,000 students

Catholic schools are a successful part of publicly funded education in Ontario. We consistently meet or exceed provincial expectations in student achievement, program delivery, class size and character development. Our curriculum is purposely designed to produce graduates with good moral characters who are responsible citizens, caring family members and who contribute to the common good of Ontario society. These are the values we celebrate and share with all Ontarians.

Ontario's publicly funded Catholic schools are part of a 160-year-old tradition that has enriched many generations. With the support of all of our Catholic partners and peers in education we'll continue to educate and inspire generations to come.

We encourage parents, neighbours, community leaders and all those supporting the English and French Catholic school systems in Ontario to promote the good works and achievements of our students and teachers.

**Speak up for Catholic education!**



### BOARD TRUSTEES

Back row left: Jim McDade, Vincent McInnes  
Front row left: Mike Miller, Ron Marcy, Bernard Murray



### LEADERSHIP TEAM

Back row left: Martha Dutrizac, Dan Par  
Front row left: Gerry Thuss, Larry Langan



### STUDENT TRUSTEES

Left: Juliet Veens, St Anne's CSS  
Rebecca Myers, St. Michael CSS

