



## Strategic Directions



This, our fourth installment of Strategic Directions, focuses on Student Achievement. I love that this direction is highlighted during the Easter season, when we celebrate jubilantly and recall anew the hope of the resurrection.

Every day, I am assured that there is reason to celebrate where our Board's work in student achievement is concerned. One of the greatest joys I have as director is to spend time in our schools and witness firsthand what is happening in them. This is equal to the joy I feel when our students and employees present at Board meetings. Often, these presentations are the highlight of the evening and a rejuvenating force. Trustee, administrator, educator, parent, and student engagement is high. Pride fills the room, and we remember why we do what we do.

In what follows, I will provide a tiny glimpse into what I have seen and heard over the past few months that has contributed to student achievement and well-being. Regrettably, space will not permit me to highlight everything happening in our Board. I can only give you a taste of the good work I see happening all around me. I know you will share in my delight.

- **STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math)** – HSCDSB is really gaining STEAM! Early in February, I attended a session related to coding and computational thinking for **Grade 4 teachers**. At our April Board meeting, we learned about **3D printing at St. Mary's College**. I look forward to learning more about Sacred Heart's Makerspace project in a future Board meeting. All of these STEAM projects highlight the skills and innovation growing in our Board and in our students.
- **Literacy interventions in our Board** – At our February Board meeting, we learned about two powerful literacy interventions happening in our schools – Reading Recovery and Empower Reading. Both interventions focus on narrowing the gap for those most in need. The day before March Break, I had the pleasure of seeing Empower Reading in action at Holy Family. It was a treat to see students making exciting breakthroughs in their reading!
- **Made for More Conference** – In late February, I had the pleasure of attending the Made for More diocesan conference. This event gathered youth from across the northeastern region – including many students from St. Mary's College – and allowed them to learn and grow in their faith. The link between home, school, and church was evident in this conference that had a true impact on our youth.
- **Elementary basketball tournament** – Athletics are an important part of students' experiences in school. This became obvious, as I watched boys and girls from our city and eastern schools battle it out on the court at the elementary basketball tournament. Sitting on the sidelines and cheering for everyone reminded me of the strong connection between physical activity and student achievement and well-being. This is a connection we seek to strengthen on a daily basis in our schools.
- **Visits with Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP)** – Over the past month, our Board hosted NDP MPP Mike Mantha at Our Lady of Fatima in Elliot Lake (top photo link), and **Conservative MPP Ross Romano at St. Basil in Sault Ste. Marie**. Both MPPs were treated to interactions with staff and students that highlighted student achievement and well-being within our uniquely Catholic context.
- **Truth and reconciliation** – Since March Break, I have listened to the experiences of residential school survivors. One survivor spoke to our staff at Algoma University, the site of a former residential school. In early April, author Edmund Metatawabin stunned our administrators and Board Office staff with accounts of what transpired at St. Ann Residential School in Fort Albany. Also in early April, **Ted Nolan inspired St. Mary's College** staff and students with his life story. The experiences of these three men reinforced the amount of work our board still needs to do with our partners to ensure the success and well-being of our Indigenous students.

In closing, I share one sentence in Ted Nolan's talk that resonated particularly with me: "There is no substitute for hard work." What I saw throughout the past few months is that phrase in action.

Thank you and God bless you for all of your continued hard work.

*Rose Buta Spoh*

Quoi de neuf!



What's New!



Minwajjimo!



Click on any image to see the story behind the photo.