



Message from the Director - Dr. Jennifer Adams

Engaging our Community (April-May 2012)

Recently I had the opportunity to speak at a conference for the Ottawa Economics Association. It was a relatively rare experience to speak to a crowd that is not comprised primarily of educators. I was struck by how each and every person in the room was connected to K-12 education. Collectively, as economists, all were interested in the role public education plays in the development of human capital for our country. But as individuals, each participant had experienced a school system as a child. Many had children and grandchildren in the OCDSB. Those who spoke to me throughout the day expressed a keen interest in learning and education, and a willingness to be involved. That's why engaging our community is a key component in the Board's strategic plan. Research clearly links parental and community engagement with improved student achievement.

At the OCDSB we are constantly seeking out ways to further engage our parent and community members. We have a number of upcoming events which we hope will not only provide necessary resources and information, but will also engage our community in a broader discussion about well-being, engagement, leadership and learning in our District.

Speaker's Series - "Nurturing Critical Thinkers"

Nurturing children's capacity for effective problem solving is one of the most important ways both teachers and parents can help ensure success in school and beyond. On **Tuesday, May 8th 2012**, Professor Garfield Gini-Newman will explore some of the key findings in brain research that shed light on learning and will share practical tips parents can use to work with their children to help them become good critical thinkers.

Education Week – "Public Education – it all starts here"

Education Week is an annual event celebrated by school boards and schools across the province. It is a time for students, teachers and parents to celebrate teaching excellence and student achievement. This year it will be celebrated during the week of May 7-11 and we will feature the outstanding work of staff who not only work diligently inside our schools, but also do fantastic things in our community.

Mental Health Week – "Mental Health for All"

The Canadian Mental Health Associations' Mental Health Week is an annual national event that will take place from May 7th – 13th this year. The purpose of the week is to encourage people from all walks of life to learn, talk, reflect and engage with others on all issues relating to mental health. Earlier this year we developed "Supporting Our Youth" a website for students, parents, staff and community members which focuses on mental health, anti-bullying and safe schools. To learn more about Mental Health week visit the [CMHA website](#) or check out the resources available on the [Supporting Our Youth site](#).

I also want to profile some fantastic events that have taken place in the last month that have engaged our students, staff and community members in a variety of ways.

Rainbow Spring Fling Dance – The dance brought together students from across the district. It is a safe space for GLBTTQ students where they can dance, laugh and have the freedom to be themselves. Thank you to all who attended and to those who were involved in making the event a success.

Earth Hour – Various schools from across the district participated in this annual event that focuses on the importance of environmental stewardship and sustainability and the impact of climate change.

Day of Pink – The International Day against Bullying, Discrimination, Homophobia and Transphobia in schools and communities. Students and staff around the District wore pink and participated in Day of Pink themed activities.

[CHEO Connects Series](#) – This year the OCDSB partnered with CHEO to provide parents with trusted information and access to local experts. Sponsored by our Parental Involvement Committee with financial support from the Ministry of Education we have worked with CHEO to hold several free information sessions over the past 8 months each covering key physical & mental health topics for a specific age group.

There are always a number of other initiatives and events going on in the District. To stay informed, connect with us! Check the website often, follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) or [LinkedIn](#), and as always, send me an email if you have any comments, concerns or questions at director@ocdsb.ca.

Sincerely,

Jennifer