



**Message from the Director - Dr. Jennifer Adams**  
*Teaching and Technology in the OCDSB (December)*

There has been plenty of media coverage lately about Wifi environments. Although some concerns have been stated with respect to potential negative impacts, we are convinced that there will be many positive impacts on students and staff at the OCDSB. And that's why, in the very near future, all of our schools will have access to Wifi.

First, to address some concerns that have been expressed in the media...Our school district relies on prominent health organizations, including [Ottawa Public Health](#), who have undertaken or reviewed research, stating that there are no known health risks linked to Wifi environments. We've gathered some links that will help assure parents that Wifi environments are safe for their children. To view these links please click [here](#).

Now for the positive impacts...Wifi environments play an important role in helping us prepare our students for the 21st Century. Our school district has taken a deliberate stance on technology in the classroom. Technology is a means to the end, not the end unto itself. It is simply a tool, that when combined with top-notch instructional and assessment practices, can optimize student engagement and student learning.

So how does this work at the OCDSB? We are very fortunate to have three central departments who work closely with our schools on teaching and learning using technology. Staff in Business and Learning Technologies, Curriculum Services, and Learning Support Services collaboratively plays a role in moving technology into the classroom. Our elementary and secondary schools have access to instructional coaches and technology coaches to ensure that teachers first have an opportunity to work together to enhance and expand their instructional practices, and then are allowed to go deeper through the use of technology. Many of our schools have portable labs, Smartboards, and tablets, all aimed at providing opportunities for students to connect to the world around them.

And of course, this is just the beginning. Soon many more students will walk through our doors willing, able, and expecting to use a variety of handheld devices. Our district will need to be ready for these eager learners. With this in mind, we are currently revising policy P.100.IT – Acceptable Use of Information/Communication Technology. The terminology will shift from *acceptable use* to *appropriate use*, a reflection of how far our learners and society have advanced in the past 10 years. Public consultation on the proposed changes to the policy took place throughout the fall. The Board will make decisions on the revisions to the policy early in the new year.

Parents may have heard that the district is undertaking a four-year, comprehensive review of its secondary schools. Included in the six areas of focus is e-learning. For the past number of years, the OCDSB has offered a wide range of e-learning courses through our link to a consortium of school districts. The Secondary School Review will allow for a working group comprised of staff and external experts to discuss exciting next steps for our school district. Just imagine when all teachers are able to easily access and adapt electronic resources so that all students have opportunities to work in a blended learning environment in their classrooms. We think it's a great strategy for motivating students, developing their skills in an electronic environment, and helping them connect their learning to the outside world. As a parent, on a daily basis, I feel the challenge of keeping up with my children's developing technological knowledge. I hope you'll join me and our staff in opening up our students' world through the use of technology. I am always interested in hearing from you on this topic or any other topic connected to teaching and learning in the OCDSB. Please feel free to contact me at [director@ocdsb.ca](mailto:director@ocdsb.ca).

Sincerely,

Jennifer