

## Dr. Jennifer Adams - Director of Education

June-July 2012 Message

The end of the school year is a time for reflection – on what has been accomplished and what our next steps are moving forward. I am pleased to be able to share how incredibly proud I am of what we have done together this year. OCDSB staff, students, parents and community partners have worked side by side to ensure that the OCDSB is a dynamic, creative organization that fosters **well-being, engagement, leadership** and **learning**. As I wrote in September, our new strategic plan is based on those four key priority areas and together they guide all that we do in the District. In this post I want to share with you some of the great successes we have had this year based on those priorities and our excitement as we move forward with our work into another school year.

### Well-being

The well-being of our students, staff, parents and community partners is of the utmost importance to us. We are consistently striving to improve understanding of all that well-being encompasses, increase access to resources and provide support where needed.

### Supporting our Youth

Seeking to foster further dialogue and make resources more readily available, the OCDSB has developed a site for students, parents, staff and community members which focuses on mental health, anti-bullying and fostering safe schools. Learn more about these important issues and the resources available by visiting the [Supporting our Youth](#) webpage.

### AODA Accessibility Conference

The conference was an opportunity for political leaders, senior and administrative staff to learn about strategies to support the successful implementation of accessibility standards, and to ensure that accessibility is an integral part of our everyday business. To learn more about what we are doing to make our schools accessible please visit the [Making our Schools Accessible](#) webpage.

### Engagement

The OCDSB is committed to supporting, encouraging, and enhancing meaningful engagement across the District. We believe that everyone should have an opportunity to contribute their voices, learn from one another and stay informed through meaningful communication provided by the OCDSB.

### OCDSB Speakers' Series

Sponsored by the District's Parent Involvement Committee, the Speakers' Series offers free presentations to the community and seeks to provide parents and educators with access to leading ideas in education that will allow us to work collaboratively to better support student learning. This year we hosted 12 fantastic events, partnering with CHEO, the Royal, and the Ottawa Police, with topics ranging from social media to critical thinking. Want to learn more? Visit the [Speakers' Series webpage](#). Have an idea for a session? Send us an email at [chat@ocdsb.ca](mailto:chat@ocdsb.ca)!

### Student Voice

We want to hear what students are thinking and engage them in the issues that matter to them. This year we sought to do that in two very important ways – the first was by increasing the presence of our student trustees. This was done in part by filming a monthly update in which the trustees shared what they were working on with the OCDSB community. To view the videos please visit the [Student Trustees](#) webpage. Another way that the student voice was fostered this year was through our Student Equity Conference. Held over two days in March and May the conference sought to broaden students' thinking in terms of equity and inclusion, and to provide them with the tools to collect the equity and inclusion stories of their schools. This was done through an Equity audit and a three minute video that tells their school's stories of equity and inclusion. You can view the compilation of all of those videos on our [YouTube channel!](#)

## Leadership

At the OCDSB we believe that leadership is embodied by people who are able to influence those around them in a positive way and that each individual has unique capacities and ideas that need to be recognized.

### Leading the Way

Our leadership initiative began over six years ago and since then it has grown immensely. This year we hosted a number of fantastic events for staff, students and community members featuring amazing speakers such as Sir Ken Robinson and Daniel Pink. The response from these events has been tremendous – more and more we are hearing about the amazing things going on in our schools because of what participants have taken away from our events. We are now more than ever harnessing the unique capacities and ideas of each individual in our community – and are all the better for it. To learn more please visit our [Lead the Way](#) webpage.

### Senior Team Contributions to Education

Over the past year, various senior team members and their staff have had the opportunity to contribute to education provincially, nationally and internationally. Their presentations have been very well received and have demonstrated the wide range of knowledge and talent that we are fortunate to have in our senior team. Please click on the links below to learn more about each of the presentations.

- Walter Piovesan and Janice McCoy - [Cultural Proficiency](#), Toronto, Whistler, Los Angeles
- Dawn Paxton - [Assessment and Achievement in Alternative Areas \(A4\)](#), Toronto
- Pino Buffone - [French as a Second Language](#), Toronto
- Peter Gamwell – National Creativity Network, Oklahoma City
- Neil Yorke-Slader – [Jazz Pedagogy](#), University of Ottawa, Ottawa
- Jennifer Adams and Susan MacDonald - [Improving Student Achievement](#), Stockholm

## Governance

The Board has committed to enhancing its governance practices through a Governance Task Force. The Board approved a new policy on governance, passed a balanced budget for 2012-2013, and developed a new committee structure for the coming school year.

## Learning

At the core of everything we do is learning. We are dedicated to ensuring the success of our students and the professional growth of our staff. Moreover, we are committed to promoting lifelong learning in our community.

### **Full-Day Kindergarten and Extended Day Program**

For the past two years our staff has been working diligently to ensure the success of the new full-day kindergarten and extended day programs. Starting in September, full-day kindergarten will be available in 55 of our schools, with the rest phased in by 2014-15. Our staff has done an excellent job of integrating the new program into schools, along with the extended day portion available before and after school. To learn more about full day kindergarten and to find out if it is offered in your local school please visit the [Full-Day Kindergarten](#) webpage.

### **Improving Mathematics**

Numeracy is a key priority for professional development in the OCDSB, with professional learning networks for all teachers of grades 3 and 6, as well as all teachers in grades 7 to 9. Instructional coaches have facilitated these District-wide networks related to the "big ideas" of mathematics (such as proportional reasoning) and mathematical processes (such as problem solving) to help ensure student success. A Numeracy Committee has also been established this school year, with representation from both community members and educators alike. The committee is currently developing a "parents' guide" to numeracy in the OCDSB - a resource to assist parents/guardians in understanding the approach to mathematics across the district, as well as tips/strategies to help support their children at home. Once completed, the guide will be available on the OCDSB website.

### **2012-2013 School Year**

Looking forward is as exciting as looking back! As always we have a fantastic year ahead of us – keep an eye on our website and social media ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)) for news about upcoming events, programs choices, consultations and much more. The first day of school for 2012-2013 will be September 4 – to view other important dates check out our [school year calendar](#).

If you have any comments, concerns or questions do not hesitate to email me at [director@ocdsb.ca](mailto:director@ocdsb.ca).

Wishing you all a safe and enjoyable summer!

Sincerely,

Jennifer