

## The End of the School Year

It's hard to believe that we've arrived at the end of the school year 2013-2014. It's a busy time in our schools with elementary students and teachers wrapping up their learning experiences and special year-end activities, and secondary students finishing exams and grade 12 students participating in graduation ceremonies. A huge thank you to our staff in schools and our many parent volunteers who help to make these important events happen for our students.

The end of the year is a time for reflection as well. My senior team and I spent a day together reviewing this year's work towards the OCDSB 2011-2015 Strategic Plan. Here are a few of the highlights:

**Objective #1 – Graduation Rate:** We have developed a methodology for calculating a certification rate that will honor the accomplishments of all students in our school district who successfully complete their program pathway regardless of whether they are heading to post-secondary studies, directly to the workplace, or to community living.

**Objective #2 – Student Achievement:** Our district has an Action Plan for Numeracy clearly stating that a balance between the development of operational skills (e.g. multiplication tables) and problem-solving skills will be the instructional focus in all of our math classes from kindergarten to grade 12.

**Objective #4 – Student Well-Being:** We understand that student well-being is the foundation for student learning. Our district has developed a student well-being framework that focuses on three components – physical well-being, social/emotional well-being, and cognitive well-being (readiness to learn).

**Objective #6 – Full-Day Kindergarten:** This spring, our Board approved two new policies – for the Extended Day Program and for Child Care Programs (toddler/pre-school). We now have 100 schools offering the Extended Day Program to facilitate a seamless day for children and families.

**Objective #7 – Equitable Access to Programs:** Our district has begun the shift to a geographic model for specialized programs. This means that our students with the greatest special needs have access to a designated school. We have added 11 new Autism classes and 2 new General Learning Program classes to meet the needs of these special learners.

**Objective #8 – Improved School Climate:** Annually, most school now administers the Tell Them From Me Survey to students in grades 7 to 12. The intent is to hear from the student voice so that all of us can work together to ensure that all students have a sense of belonging and feel safe in our schools.

These are just a few of the examples of the work taking place in our schools and across the district. We are carefully monitoring the impact of this work on student well-being and student achievement. Our teachers and support staff see the impact on a daily basis in the classroom. We hope parents are seeing it as well, as their children come home after a day of learning in our schools.

We are already in the planning stages for the 2014-2015 school year. But first, it's time for all of us, students, staff, and parents to enjoy the summer weather.

I look forward to continuing our work together in August.

Jennifer Adams  
Director of Education/  
Secretary of the Board