

Director of Education - November 21, 2014

Looking Forward – Developing a New Strategic Plan for the OCDSB

It's hard to believe that we're in the very last year of our current strategic plan. In addition to our district's focus on W.E.L.L. (Well-being, Engagement, Leadership, and Learning), the current plan features ten objectives for completion by 2015. Recently, Committee of the Whole received a progress report describing our accomplishments within each of the ten objectives as of the end of year three of the strategic plan. We're very pleased with the work that has taken place in the first three years. When looking across the ten objectives, much of the work is centred on the Board's focus on well-being. The district now has a framework and Board Improvement Plan for student well-being, full day kindergarten programs for four and five year olds, a process for hearing from students and parents on school climate and their sense of belonging in our schools, and a second methodology for calculating a graduation rate that includes acknowledging the accomplishments of all learners in our district. There is a close link between student well-being and student achievement and we're confident that we are on the right track for our students.

So what comes next? Over the next few months, our Board will be in the process of developing the 2015-2019 OCDSB Strategic Plan. The consultation process will be known as: EverySchool_Every Voice. We are hoping to hear from large numbers of students, staff, parents, school councils, and community members. We want to know about what is going well in our schools as well as the challenges.

Throughout this process, our hope is to maximize the number of stakeholders providing input. To this end, the consultation process will be enhanced by the use of technology. During the SHARE stage in December, submissions will be collected online. These ideas will be clustered and then moved on to the STAR stage in January when stakeholders will have the opportunity to prioritize the ideas put forward in the first phase of the process. In early February, trustees and senior staff will work on developing a draft strategic plan. This draft plan will then be shared with focus groups of the various stakeholder groups. We intend to have the new strategic plan approved by the Board before the end of June.

Saying Goodbye and Hello

The 2011-2015 Strategic Plan was developed by the current Board of trustees. During the election in October, six of the twelve current trustees decided not to put their names forward. In many ways, these trustees have been the ultimate 'volunteers' in our school district. While they have received a small trustee honoraria, they have dedicated countless hours each week to serving the needs of our students, parents and staff. It has been a privilege to work with Jennifer McKenzie (Chair), Rob Campbell, Pam Fitzgerald, Bronwyn Funicello, Katie Holtzauer, and John Shea. These six trustees have contributed many years of service on the Board as trustees, and many additional years supporting public education in their communities. Our most sincere thanks to all of you.

The 2015-2019 Strategic Plan will be developed by our new Board. Joining veterans Donna Blackburn, Christine Boothby, Mark Fisher, Theresa Kavanagh, Shirley Seward, and Lynn Scott will be our newly elected trustees Erica Braunovan, Chris Ellis, Anita Olsen Harper, Shawn Menard, Keith Penny, and Sandra Schwartz. How lucky we are to have community members who are willing to play such an important role in the political leadership of our school district. One of their first tasks will be developing the strategic plan. Please join us in that important work!

Sincerely

Jennifer Adams
Secretary of the Board