



AGENDA AND MATERIAL

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2009
7:00 P.M.

SAINT MICHAEL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO

A. ROUTINE MATTERS	Reference
1. Opening Prayer - Frank Fera	-
2. Roll Call	-
3. Approval of the Agenda	-
4. Declaration of Conflict of Interest	-
5. Overview of Special Board Meeting Procedures	-
B. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS	
1. Pupil Accommodation Review Highlights and Recommendation <i>John Crocco, Director of Education</i>	-
C. DELEGATIONS	
PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW (PAR) PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS	
1. <i>Anna Racine</i> - St. Thomas More Catholic Elementary School	-
2. <i>Anna Racine</i> - Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School	-
3. <i>Melissa Hesse</i> - St. Mary Catholic Elementary School	-
4. <i>Shawn Gratton</i> - Father Hennepin Catholic Elementary School	-
D. TRUSTEE ITEMS & OTHER BUSINESS	
1. Correspondence	
1.1 <i>Beverley Riemersma, Wendy Moulton</i> - St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School (NF)	D1.1
E. FUTURE MEETINGS & EVENTS	
1. Special Board Meeting - Pupil Accommodation Review - St. Catharines Elementary Wednesday, February 18, 2009 - 7:00 p.m. Denis Morris Catholic High School	
2. Special Board Meeting - Pupil Accommodation Review - St. Catharines Secondary Monday, February 23, 2009 - 7:00 p.m. Denis Morris Catholic High School	
F. MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION FOR LIFE	
G. ADJOURNMENT	

TO: Niagara Catholic District School Board
Special Board Meeting
Public Session
February 17, 2009

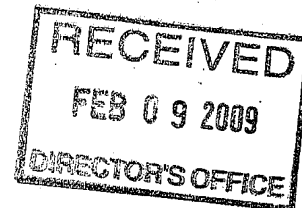
TOPIC: PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW (PAR) PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS
ANNA RACINE - ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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**SENT BY FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION
AND BY COURIER**

February 8, 2009

Niagara Catholic District School Board
427 Rice Road,
Welland, ON L3C 7C1



Attention: John Crocco, Director of Education

Dear Mr. Crocco:

RE: Request for opportunity to delegate in order to make a presentation at the Special Board Meeting regarding the Pupil Accommodation Review for Niagara Falls

On behalf of the Catholic School Council of St. Thomas More Catholic School, I am requesting the opportunity to delegate at the Special Board Meeting to be held on February 17, 2009.

I will be making the presentation on behalf of the Catholic School Council, in my position as Co-Chair of the Catholic School Council of St. Thomas More Catholic School. My contact information is listed above.

Enclosed herewith is a copy of the presentation notes which will speak to a Power Point document that will be presented at the same time. I also enclose a copy of the Power Point Document.

Thanking you in advance for the opportunity to delegate.

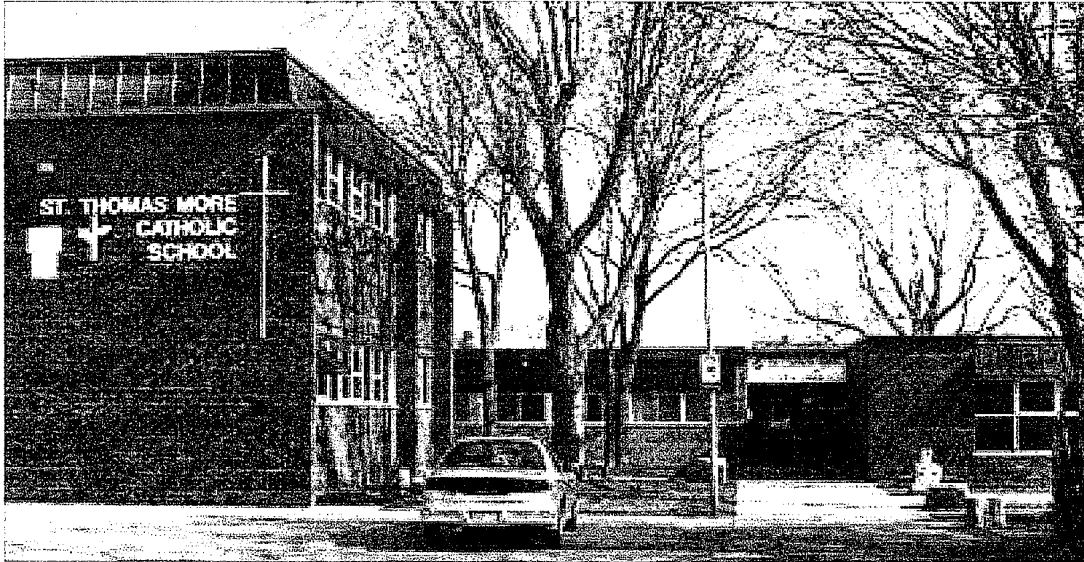
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anna Racine".

Anna Racine,
Co-Chair

St. Thomas More Catholic School Council

St. Thomas More School



*We aim to create
and maintain
an environment that is
inviting, collaborative
and secure.
Our school is Christ-centred
and is peopled by
teachers and support staff
who are dedicated
to empowering all children
to achieve success.*

- School Mission Statement

Introduction

In the past, the St. Thomas More community has been bombarded with comments such as:

“It is a sign of the past,” or “There is only one other school like yours,” and the all time favorite, “It’s so close to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.”

“Other schools have K-8, it’s worked for them, so why is your school so special?”

Sit back, listen and we will show you just how special our unique little school is.

Purpose of Presentation

The purpose of our delegation tonight is to give you a glimpse into the life of a primary school, a school we love to fight for, St. Thomas More.

It is About the Kids and Not About the Money

Our hope is that children are not being used as a commodity and that the decisions that are made are not primarily based on dollar signs.

The future of our school is partially dependent upon the building of a new school in Warren Woods. Our parents feel that students do not necessarily need new fancy buildings with marble floors and a fountain in the lobby. These superficial features can never replace the reputation that our school has earned over the years for being one of the best schools in the Board. Any updated equipment and technology that a new school could offer can be installed in an older school just like it can be in a new school. Many of us over the years, when being asked what school our children attended, have been met with comments from other parents, such as “you are lucky, I have heard that is such a great school”.

The fact that the District School Board has recently built a new school near the Warren Woods subdivision should not be the deciding factor, in making this decision. The reality is that there are already two top notch schools in St. Thomas More and Our Lady of Mount Carmel that can accommodate the future Warren Woods children, in an atmosphere that is unique to other schools.

Little Kids Need More

As we all know, the needs of younger children are so much different than older children, and the younger they are, the more impressionable they will be.

When children start JK, it is a frightening time for many students, as well as their parents. In a K to 8 School, there are a higher percentage of older kids than in a primary school, and as a result, many more adults in terms of teachers and staff.

Many young children can feel intimidated by this, rather than in a primary school where the oldest child in attendance is at the most, only 5 years older than the youngest child. This reduces the worry that these young children may feel inhibited, forgotten, and become withdrawn as can happen in a regular elementary school. This is not as likely to happen in the primary setting, because as the younger children will say there are no "big kids here". There is less chance that these little children will feel like they are being swallowed up in a larger school, because of the presence of older students and many more adults on staff.

The primary "whole school expertise," helps students develop intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. There is a very tight commonality in instruction, skill based and extra curricular activities. A primary school grants more opportunity for specialized primary instruction because all staff will be administering the same division of teaching and assessment strategies. Greater staff commonality results in improved student achievement and improves the teachers' ability to deal with classroom management, organization, use of space, instructional focus, and delivery.

Keeping in mind that all schools have good teachers, we feel that the qualities of the primary teachers are better in a primary school setting than in a regular elementary school. When teachers move around a school to a different grade (because of leaves and other reasons), in a K to 8 School you could have a grade 8 teacher who is now teaching Kindergarten or Grade 1 if the need arises. In a primary school, no matter where the teachers move within the school, they have the advantage of being trained to teach primary grades and to deal with primary children exclusively. We feel that the effect of this experience is immeasurable, and provides for more quality teachers in the primary grades.

The Broken Triad

St. Thomas More School and Our Lady of Mount Carmel are fortunate to have a church in their own backyard which we feel is a blessing to our students. This close proximity is paramount to reinforcing the triad between home, school, and church. What can strengthen the children's faith more, than being able to look across their school yard to see their school parish? This would not be available to the Warren Woods students if they were not afforded the opportunity to attend our school.

St. Thomas More School is built on over 50 years of faith from the early teachers and principals of the school, as well as the families that have gone through over the years, which cannot be replaced by a new school. The faith development that has happened in this primary setting over the years is second to none. There are no older kids around who can unfortunately act like "it is not cool" to participate in the religious activities. Grade 3 students do not feel embarrassed to participate which is a strong influence on the faith development of the younger children.

As a result, when the primary students of St. Thomas More attend weekly mass they are very well behaved and respectful of where they are. This chain of faith carries over when they graduate and go to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

If a new school is built for Warren Woods, those students would have to be bussed to St. Thomas More Church which would result not only in a cost, but the children may not attend mass as often, as it is not within walking distance. As St. Thomas More is in close proximity to the church, even in inclement weather, the children are able to attend weekly mass; if students had to be bussed, safety becomes a concern.

The Benefits of a Sheltered Environment

The experts say that from birth to 5 years old is when a child's personality is formed, thus making this their formative years. A primary setting benefits the children as it allows them to stay children a little longer, without the influence of older children as long as possible. Being away from older children allows them to build personality and self esteem, and lets them find out who they are, without the pressures and influences that can be felt when older children are present.

Playground Atmosphere

The stresses that older children can present in a playground environment, such as bullying, fighting, and misbehaving, do not become a part of the younger children's day in a primary environment.

Primary children are a lot easier to redirect when older children are not involved. Younger children are more apt to ask a teacher for help if not feeling pressured by older children.

Younger children may feel that they will be bullied by older children if they report a problem to the teacher. Grade 3 children will still report bullying problems if they are in a primary setting, and this sets a good example for the younger children so they will feel comfortable in doing so also.

It seems to make sense that where there is less of a variance in ages, there are fewer problems and confrontations on the playground.

Uniqueness of our School Setting

If you have been in our school, you will see the handprints on the walls and on the ceiling tiles of every single student who has graduated from the school. These symbolic memories leave an impression on our students and years later when these children return to the school for various reasons, the first thing they do is to find their handprint. This has been part of our tradition at St. Thomas More, and is a reflection of how important each and every student's time was at the school. We will fight with all the strength in our hands to continue this legacy.

When walking through the school, you will also see the primary type hallways which tweak the children's imagination. All the walls in the school are geared to a primary environment, and create an atmosphere which is conducive for young minds to learn and grow. Even the gym walls are brightly painted and are inspiring to the children.

In addition, our primary school offers more enriched opportunities and individualized learning centers.

Insofar as St. Thomas More is a primary school, all of the furniture and accessories in the school are geared to primary. Blackboards, cupboards, chairs, desks are all the right size and height for our students. In a regular elementary school, because the classrooms are interchangeable in that a grade 1 class might become a grade 6 class, this is not always possible. In a primary school, the classrooms and their contents will always be age and size appropriate.

Growing up in Steps and Stages

As kids progress to grade 3, they see what its like to be a senior in a school and when they experience the transition to enter Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Grade 4, they experience what it's like to enter a new school again and be the youngest in the school. Students learn what it's like to climb up the ladder on their way up to high school and beyond. Parents also experience what it's like to support their children when transitioning to a new school.

Children that are in a K to 8 School never get to experience this again until they go to high school, which to many can be frightening, but less likely for those that have attended a senior elementary school and experienced what this is like.

A primary school gives the children ways to develop skills of leadership. In a normal elementary school the senior grades take on the leadership roles and do most of the work as far as planning masses, faith services, and special school activities. In a K to 8 School, the primary children aren't given as much of an opportunity to plan and participate in these events.

A primary school creates more opportunity for better spiritual enrichment and self esteem. When the children are reading at mass and participating as gift bearers, this promotes a sense of independence and self confidence, especially with public speaking. It has been proven that the opportunities of participating in these events would promote further faith development.

The added responsibilities that children receive in a primary setting as there are no older kids to take on most of these jobs, results in there becoming more self sufficient and independent.

Community Building

The families of a primary school have a closer community as the children at the school are of similar ages, and have similar needs and expectations. Parents have

more in common because of this and work well together for the good of the school and the students.

Increased Parental Involvement

Parents of primary school students want to volunteer more, both because the children are little, and also because the children want their parents there. As children get older, parents go back to work and are not as readily available to volunteer. In a K to 8 School, parents are not needed as much because grade 7 and 8's do much of the activities normally done by parents (such as Pizza, Milk, reading to younger children, etc.). This makes the parents feel less connected and less welcome in the school.

Cost Savings to the Ministry

By keeping the boundaries the same, future students from Warren Woods would attend St. Thomas More and Our Lady of Mount Carmel and therefore there would be no cost to the Ministry to build a new school, at a cost savings of approximately 6 million dollars, along with a savings of approximately 2 million dollars to renovate Our Lady of Mount Carmel to accommodate St. Thomas More students. This would save approximately 8 million dollars that could be spent elsewhere. This would also result in eliminating or greatly reducing the surplus space at St. Thomas More School and Our Lady of Mount Carmel by accommodating the Warren Woods students.

Bus Rides from Warren Woods

Despite having to bus children from Warren Woods to St. Thomas More School and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, such a ride would only be minimal.

Children would be traveling on major roads along this bus route, and the buses would not be crossing any railway tracks. This keeps the ride short and safe, as McLeod Rd and Dorchester Road are major roads, and are highly maintained in the winter season.

Classroom Libraries and School Library

Our students are fortunate that the reading materials in the classrooms and in the library are geared only to primary grades, therefore the money received by the school to purchase the reading materials is divided only between 5 grades instead of 10 grades; this results in the students having a larger selection of materials to choose and learn from, which can only add to increasing their literacy skills.

Physical Education Time

Insofar as St. Thomas More students range from JK to Grade 3, they do not have to share the gym with the intermediate and senior grades. This means that they have a

longer gym time and have gym more often. Even with the inclusion of Warren Woods's students, the students would all be of primary age, and they would still have the increased amount of physical activity, because they could participate together and would be doing similar activities.

Reading Recovery Training Area

The Reading Recovery Training Area has already been established at St. Thomas More School and is used by teachers and families throughout the Board. This would have to be moved to another location as a result of the possible school closure.

Use of the Property if the School is Closed

As the school is located next to St. Thomas More Church and adjacent to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the property is not as viable as others, insofar as the Board will have to ensure that any future use, must be appropriate for the area.

This property is also located in an older neighborhood and the residents are used to having the school there. There is a great concern among the neighbors that the new use may not fit in with the neighborhood.

A consideration would also have to be that if the building is torn down or undergoes extensive construction that the students walking to Our Lady of Mount Carmel past the St. Thomas More property while construction is underway, the safety of the children would not be at risk.

Conclusion

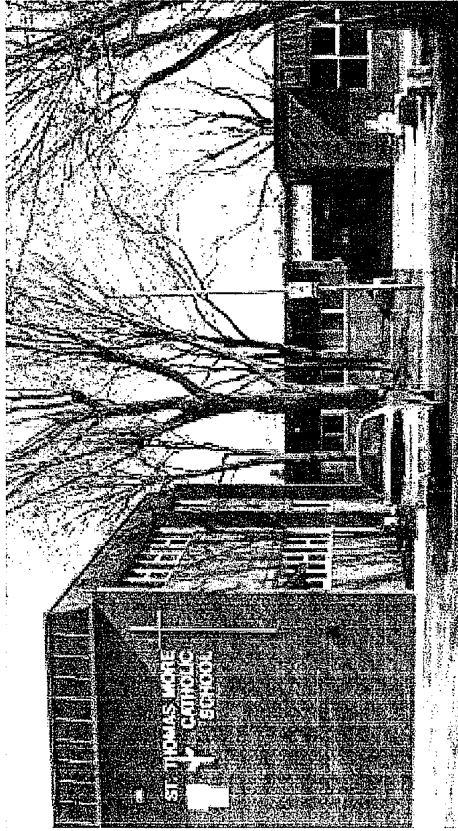
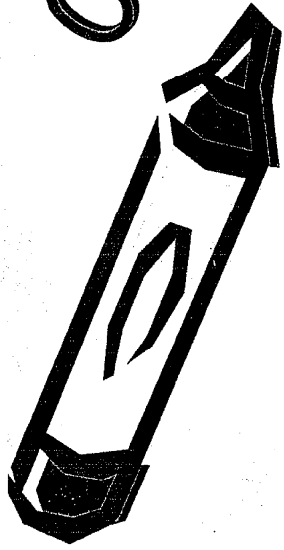
Our schools motto has been "the school of great kids" and "the school with a little more"

I hope you will continue to allow our future St. Thomas More Cubs the opportunity to experience the uniqueness that is St. Thomas More for many years to come,

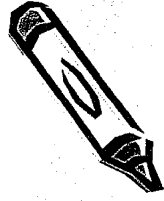
The old saying is "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!"

The sister schools of St. Thomas More and Our Lady of Mount Carmel have worked side by side educating students in their own special environment by offering a primary and senior elementary experience for their students. The system is definitely not broken and it does not need to be fixed!

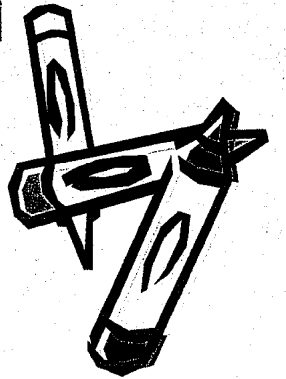
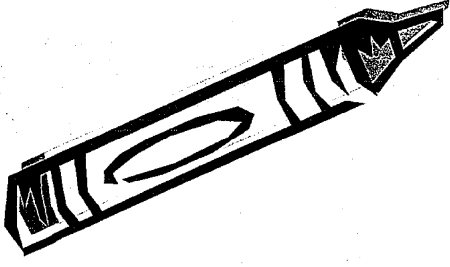
St. Thomas More
Catholic School



The School With A Little
"More"

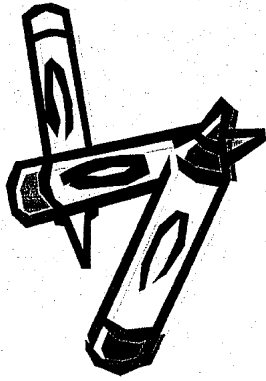
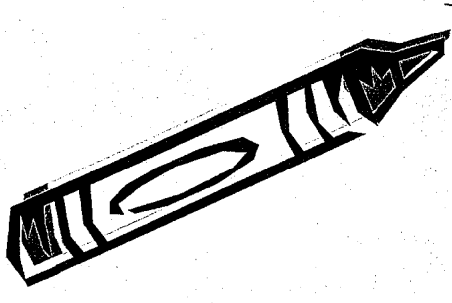


Why is our school so special?

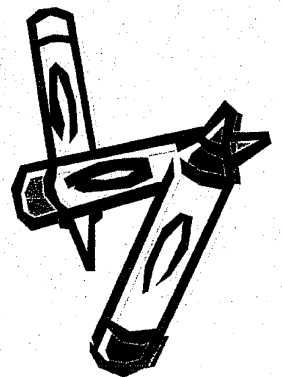
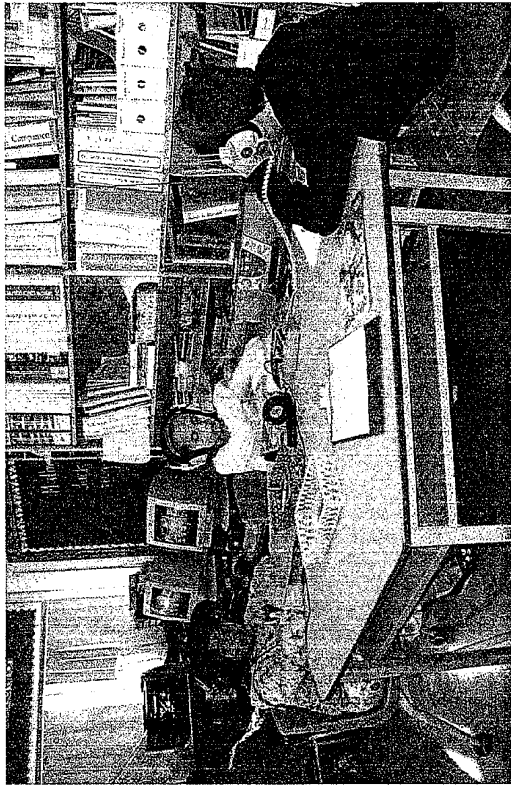
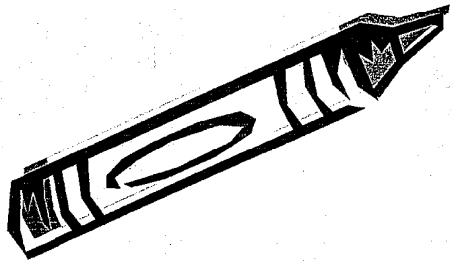


It's All About The Kids

- ✂ "You are so lucky! I've heard that it's such a great school"
- ✂ Fancy buildings can't teach a child, specialized primary instruction does.
- ✂ Technology is great but knowledge, faith, and wisdom are better.



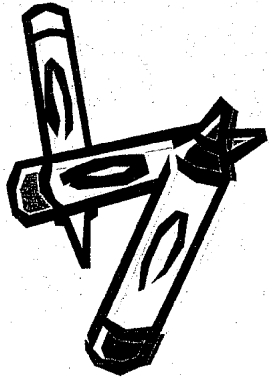
Instructional Opportunities



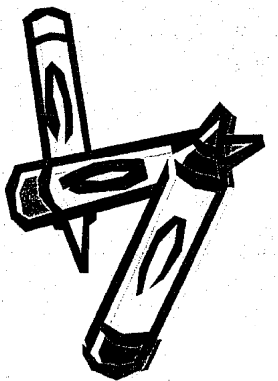


Little Kids Need More

- ✂ All teaching and activities are age specific
- ✂ Our teachers are all primary specialists
- ✂ Only 5 years separates our oldest to youngest

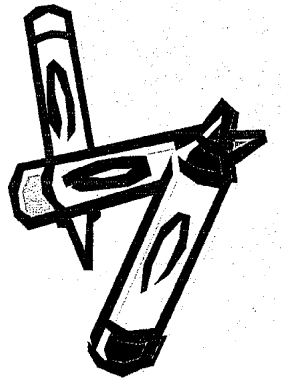
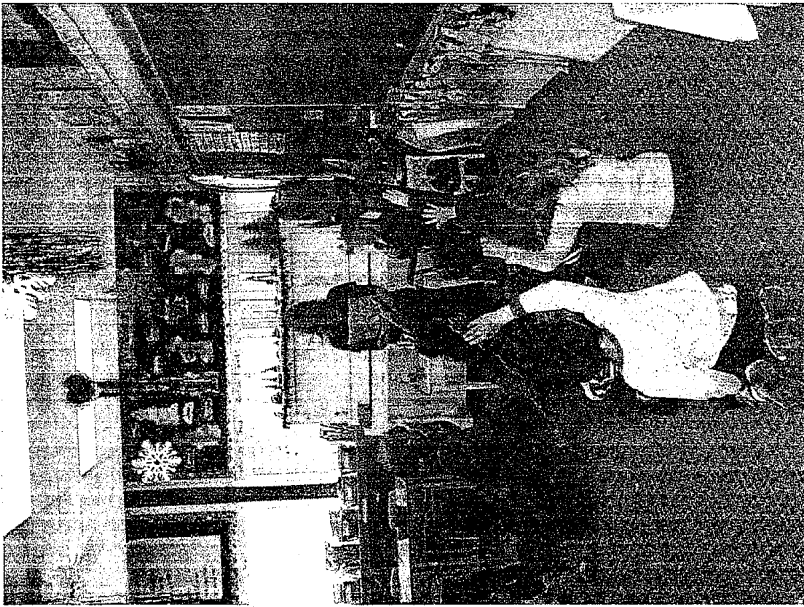
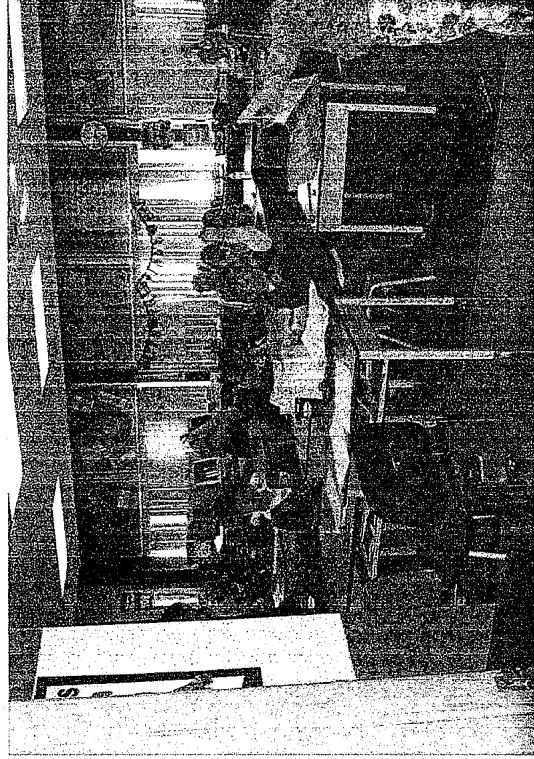


I think I can, I think I can

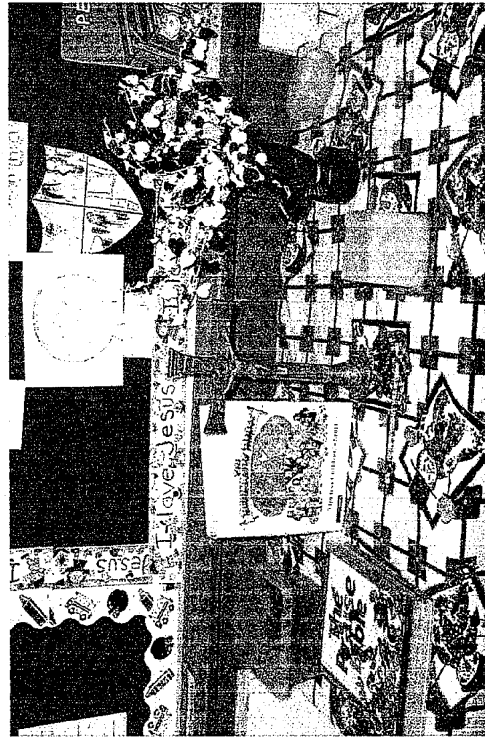




Caution: Minds Under Construction

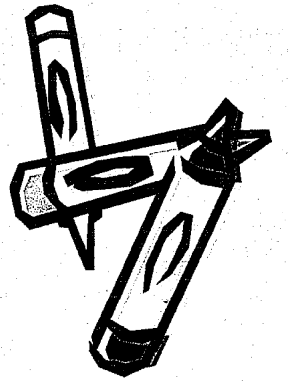
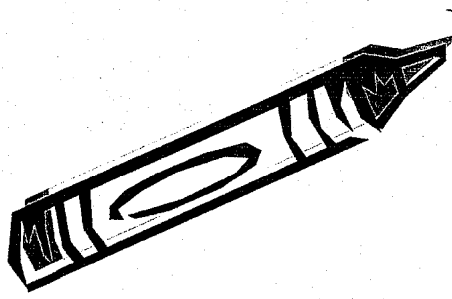


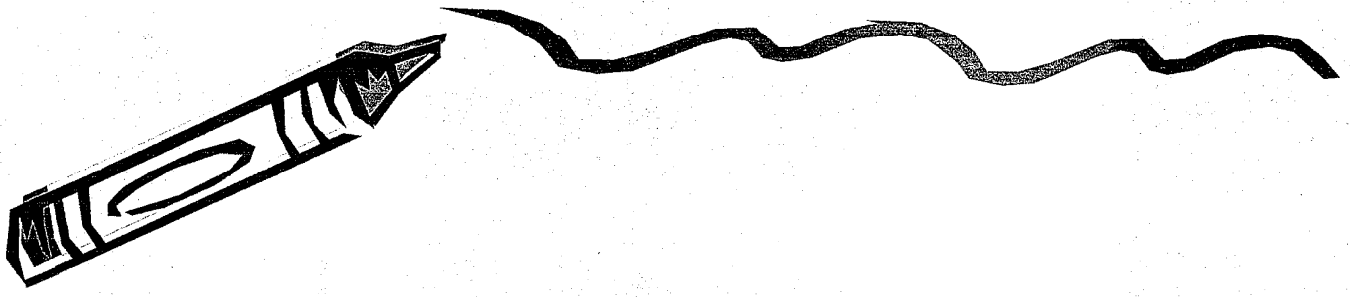
The Broken Triad



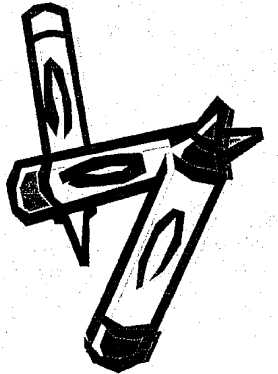
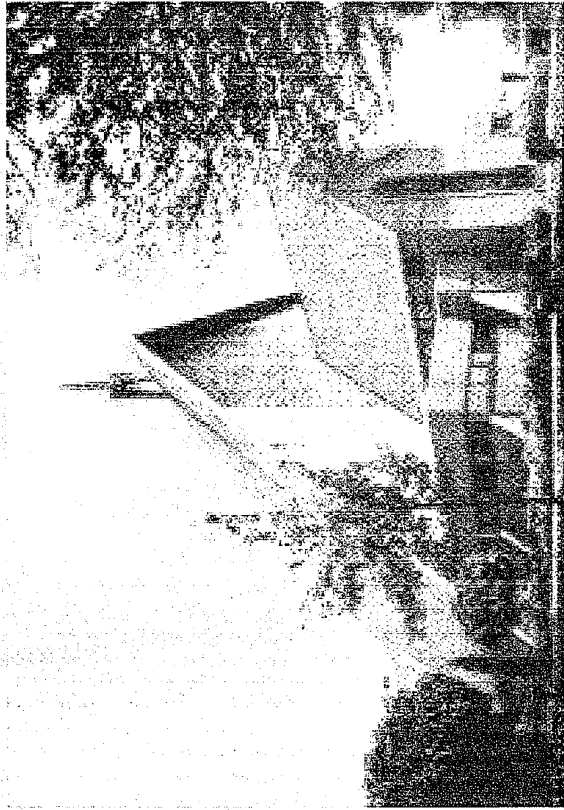
- † The chain of faith carries over when students graduate
- † 50 + years of faith

- † Our church is our blessing
- † Our children are our angels
- † God Bless St. Thomas More School



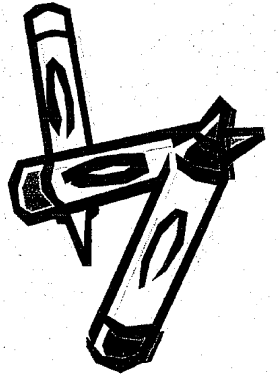
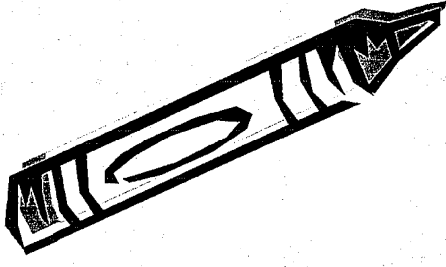
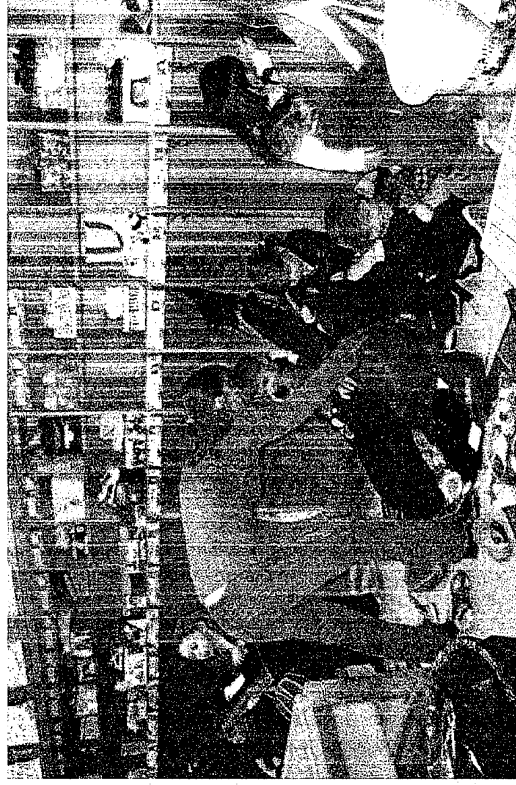


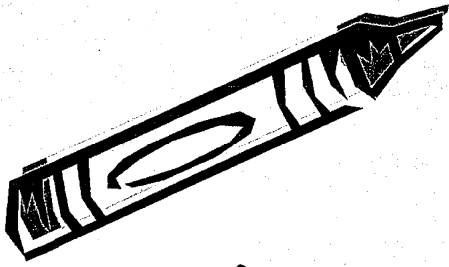
St. Thomas More Catholic Church



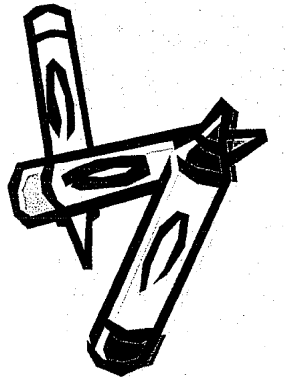
The Benefits of a Sheltered Environment

- ✂ Birth - 5 years old are the formative years
- ✂ Let kids be kids
- ✂ Build personality and Self Esteem





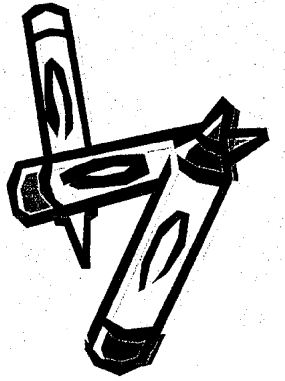
Thank you for taking the
Time!





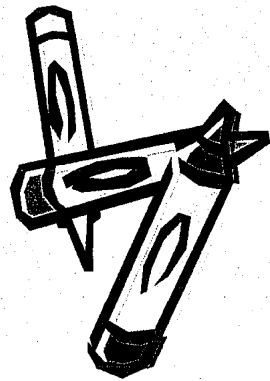
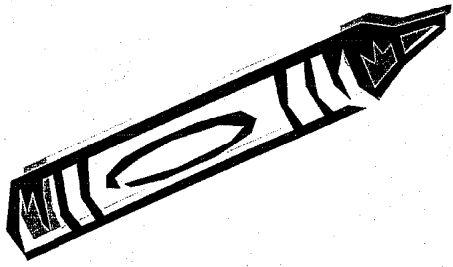
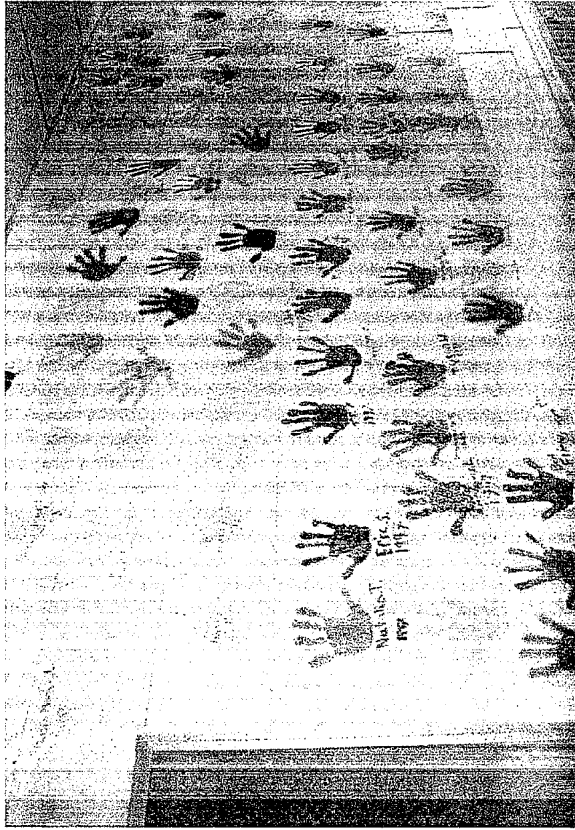
Playground Atmosphere

- ✂ Safer playground environment
- ✂ Less bullying, fighting, and misbehaving
- ✂ Fewer problems and confrontations
- ✂ Social freedom among peers

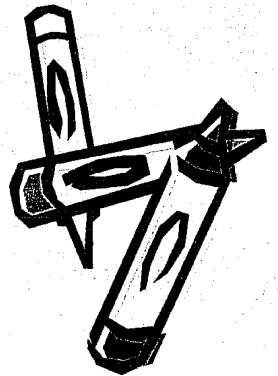
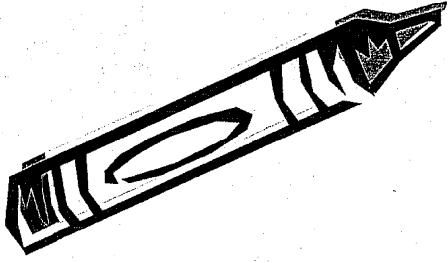


Uniqueness of Our School Setting

- ✂ Handprints leave an impression
- ✂ Primary halls stimulate imagination
- ✂ Atmosphere conducive to young learners

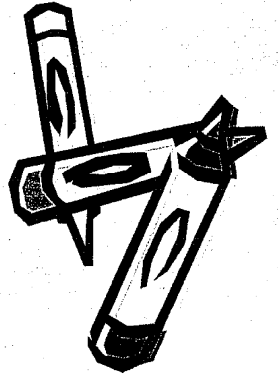
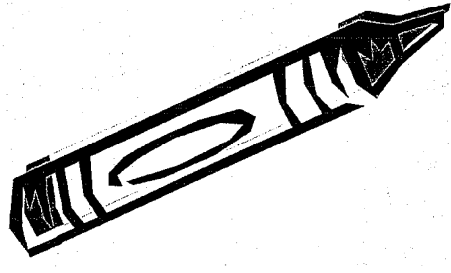


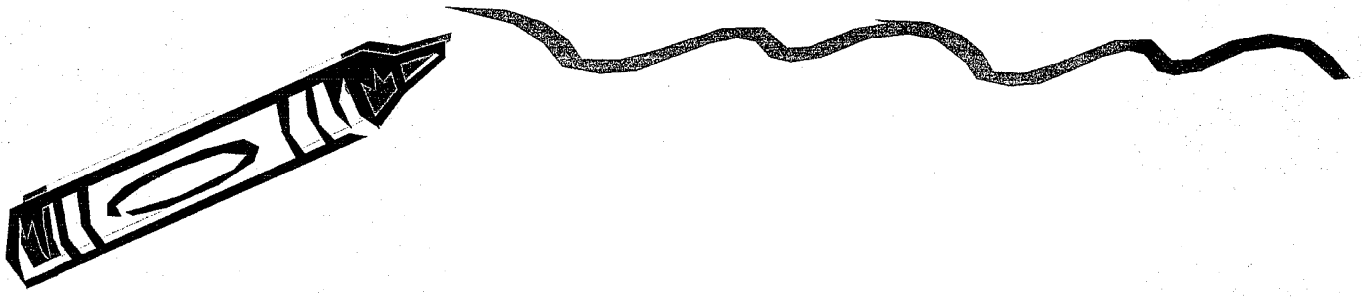
History in The Making



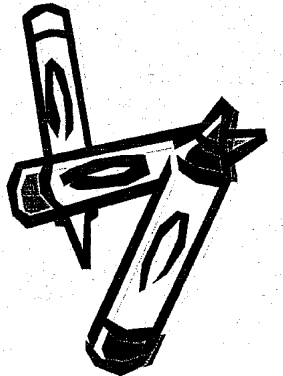
Growing Up in Steps & Stages

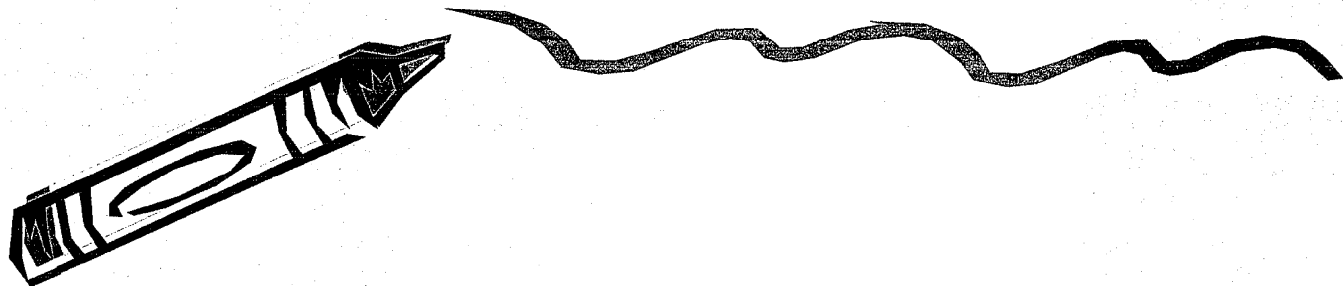
- ✂ Transitioning into Grade 4 and a new school
- ✂ New experiences for students and parents
- ✂ Develop skills of leadership
- ✂ Growth in spiritual enrichment and self esteem
- ✂ Learning to be self sufficient and independent



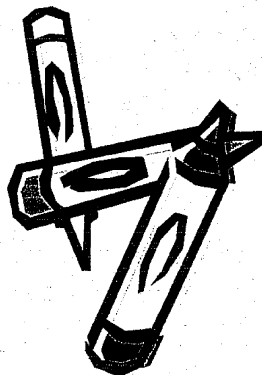


JK Graduation



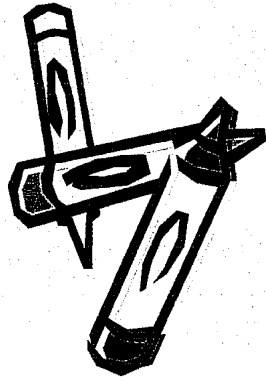
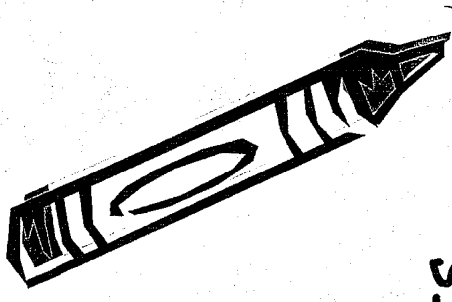


Community Building

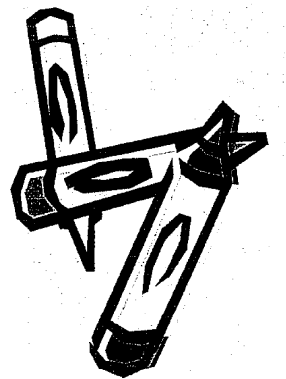
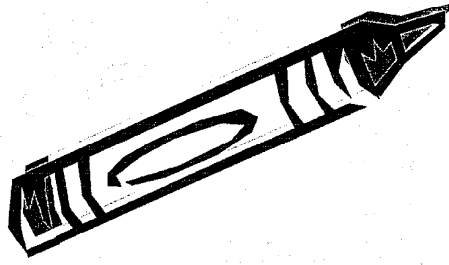
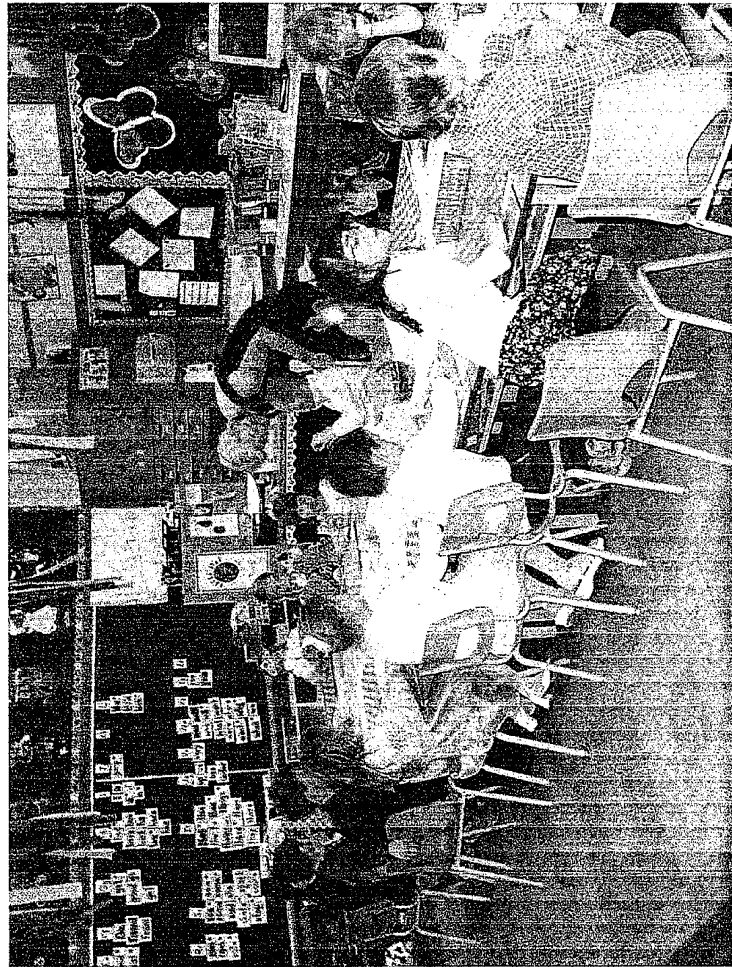


Increased Parental Involvement

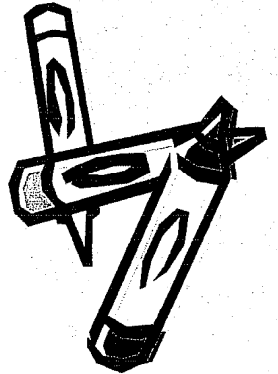
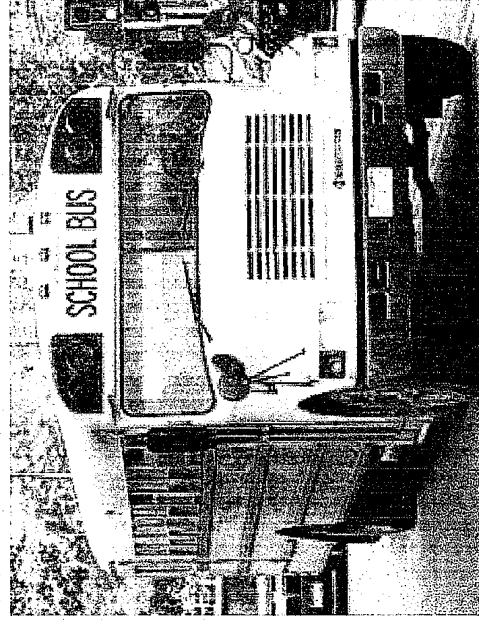
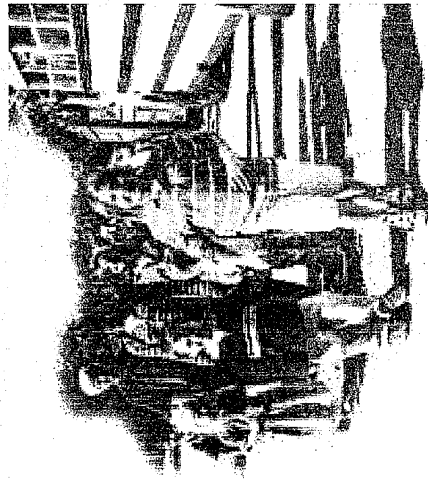
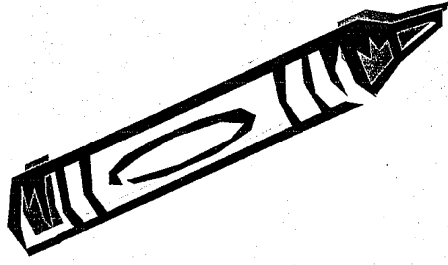
- ✂ Small children like to have their parents visible in the school. It makes them feel secure
- ✂ As children get older, parents aren't as readily available to volunteer
- ✂ In a K to 8 School parents are not needed as much because the grade 7 & 8 students do much of the work.

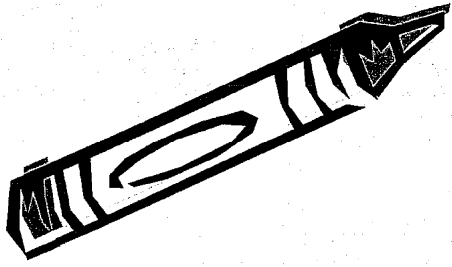


Cost Savings to the Ministry

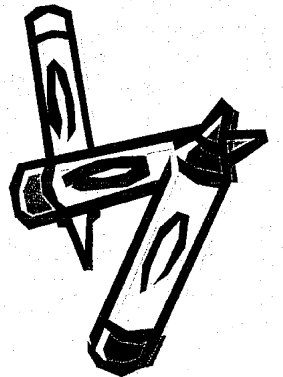


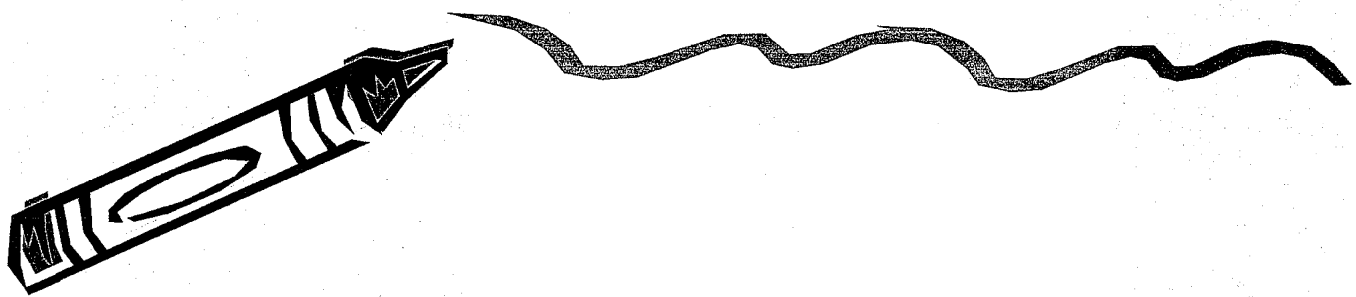
Bus Rides from Warren Woods



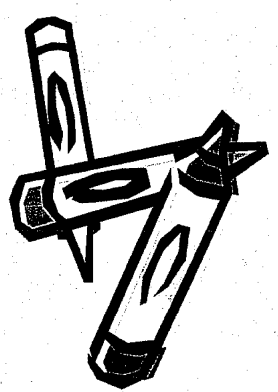


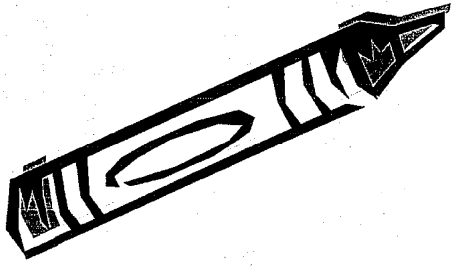
Library



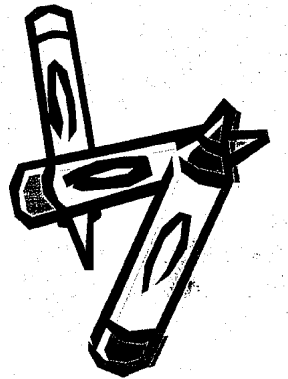


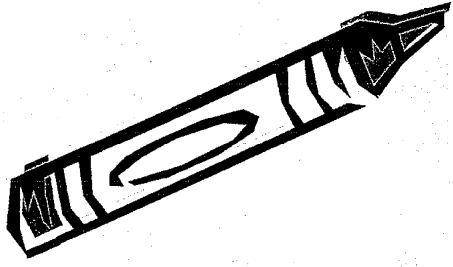
Physical Education Time



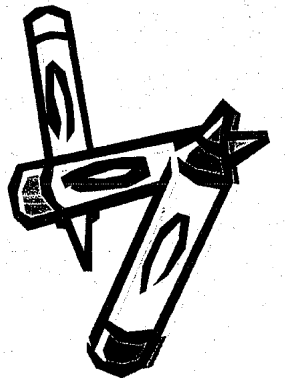


Reading Recovery & Training Area





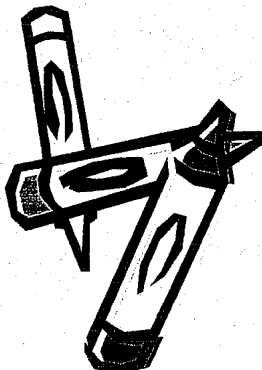
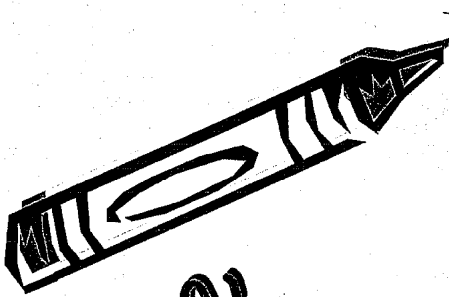
Use of the Property if The School is Closed



The School With A Little "More"

We aim to create
and maintain
an environment that is
inviting, collaborative
and secure.
Our school is Christ-centred
and is peopled by
teachers and support staff
who are dedicated
to empowering all children
to achieve success.

- School Mission Statement



TO: Niagara Catholic District School Board
Special Board Meeting
Public Session
February 17, 2009

TOPIC: PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW (PAR) PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS
ANNA RACINE - OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CATHOLIC
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

6247 Kirkland Drive
Niagara Falls, Ont.
L2H 2A7
(905) 358-3412
Wk – (905) 354-1611, Ext. 263
Fax – (905) 354-5540
E-mail: racine@martinshep.com

**SENT BY FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION
AND BY COURIER**

February 8, 2009

Niagara Catholic District School Board
427 Rice Road,
Welland, ON L3C 7C1



Attention: John Crocco, Director of Education

Dear Mr. Crocco:

RE: Request for opportunity to delegate in order to make a presentation at the Special Board Meeting regarding the Pupil Accommodation Review for Niagara Falls

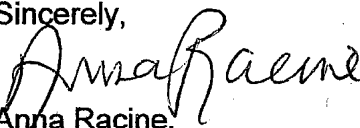
On behalf of the Catholic School Council of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School, I am requesting the opportunity to delegate at the Special Board Meeting to be held on February 17, 2009.

I will be making the presentation on behalf of the Catholic School Council, in my position as Community Representative of the Catholic School Council of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. My contact information is listed above.

Enclosed herewith is a copy of the presentation notes which will speak to a Power Point document that will be presented at the same time. I also enclose a copy of the Power Point Document.

Thanking you in advance for the opportunity to delegate.

Sincerely,


Anna Racine,
Community Representative

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School Council

Our Lady of Mount Carmel School

*We create a Christ-centered
environment within which
people will grow
and learning will flourish.*

- School Mission Statement

*"T COLA"
Improvement that is
continuous
and never ending."*

- School Motto



Introduction

"I CAN", which stands for Improvement that is Continuous and Never Ending. This is the motto of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School. Our school not only has wonderful students and teachers, but its programs and the special features cannot be taken for granted or taken away.

Purpose

The purpose of our delegation is to speak on behalf of our students to ensure that if St. Thomas More School is closed and the students are moved to Our Lady of Mount Carmel that our school and our students will not suffer with this change.

Just My Size

Keeping in mind that our school does not have facilities to accommodate 4 and 5 year old children, extensive renovations would have to be made to accommodate these children. Obvious things such as washrooms, sinks and water fountains which are size appropriate would have to be installed. In addition, all the furniture, cupboards, blackboards, library and computer centers would have to accommodate the younger children.

J.K. and S.K. Wing

As the needs of J.K. and S.K. children have to be met, a wing of classrooms would have to be constructed, ensuring that these students would be separate from the rest of the school. Currently, there are 3 classrooms for J.K. and S.K. grades at St. Thomas More.

A separate entrance would be required to ensure that the children would have easier access in and out of the school. In this way, these children would not be entering and exiting with the older students. This would also assist with fire drills and emergency procedures.

A fenced in playground would be required, not only for safety purposes but also to assist with teacher supervision. Age appropriate play structures and play areas would be contained within this playground.

Transporting Primary Children

It is obvious that construction would be required in the drop off area to accommodate the extra 200 plus students; all of which will range from age 4 to 8 years of age. At present, the current arrangements would not be suitable to ensure child safety insofar as when the buses drop off, there is not enough room for 500 students to walk through a crowded parking lot to the back of the school. Staff and visitor parking areas would have to be moved from the bus area to allow for a proper walkway for the children to walk to the back of the school.

Also for parents dropping off their children off on Carlton Street, this could turn into a nightmare insofar as this street is crowded enough now with parents dropping their children off. There is very little room on the street and there are cars everywhere, which is unsafe for small children crossing the road. There would have to be a separate entranceway from a different road to accommodate this. Alternatively, the back portion of the St. Thomas More School's playground could be turned into an extra parking lot, as the current parking area of St. Thomas More Church cannot accommodate all these extra cars.

Our Beautiful French Rooms

Currently our school has 2 French classrooms and 2 French teachers. That means all children receive their French instruction in a classroom conducive to learning. When they look around the room, everything on the walls is written in French which reinforces what they are learning every day.

Our children need to continue to have this, as well as the students coming from St. Thomas More, who also currently have a separate French classroom.

"French on Wheels" is not the way for children to learn and definitely not what they have been used to at these two schools.

Music Music Everywhere

For those who have been lucky to be in our school, they have seen our awesome Music Room. The room has amphitheater seating for the students to sit and play their instruments. Again, the walls of the classroom are geared to a music classroom. The room contains a large closet area to store all of the musical instruments; it also has sound proof features which a regular classroom does not have.

If the students were to take music in their regular classrooms; this would result in moving the instruments back and forth from their storage area; and in addition there would be inadequate space to place the music stands.

Our students should not be forced to give up their music room and have to take music in their regular classroom. It is not fair to them or to the teacher.

Cyberquest

As you know, our school has a very large Cyberquest teaching area which accommodates not only our students, but all other Grade 7 and 8 classes within the Board.

This is an essential teaching space that should not be removed from our school in order to accommodate the St. Thomas More students. Our students should not have to be bused to another school for Cyberquest when it has been provided in their school all these years, not to mention the cost involved to construct this room in another school, and to turn the present room into a regular classroom.

Increase in Library Use

The current library space and computer lab are inadequate to accommodate an extra 10 classes of students from St. Thomas More School. As the library is the focal point of literacy in a school, it would have to be enlarged to include another reading area for primary children, as well as an extra computer lab with size appropriate furniture.

Extra shelving would be required for all of the primary books that the children have at St. Thomas More School., and which would then be incorporated into our library. The primary children are also read to by their librarian at St. Thomas More School, which requires a special reading area to be constructed for the children.

Larger Staff Room

The current staff room barely accommodates the teachers and staff of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The addition of approximately 15 new people certainly will require a larger staff room for everyone to fit.

Learning Strategies Room

Our school has a Learning Strategies Room for certain students that require this given their special needs. This room is used for instruction such as physiotherapy, speech and occupational therapy. It must be maintained for the children who require it.

E.R.T. Room

The children of St. Thomas More have a large E.R.T. room where they are taken for intervention classes on a regular basis.

There are various centers for the children to work at; this includes an area for meetings to be held between parents, and educations. This centre is also used for staff conferences.

The current E.R.T. room at Our Lady of Mount Carmel is very small with room for only one meeting table.

Obviously, this room will need a large expansion to accommodate the needs of the primary children, while still serving the older students of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. This room would also need to be upgraded to include a meeting area that would meet the needs of all students, staff and parents.

We Don't Want Portables

As you may know, Our Lady of Mount Carmel currently does not have portables. Our parents will strongly resist the addition of portables as a result of the closure of St. Thomas More School. The parents of both the primary and the senior students will not accept having their child in a portable, as a result of the additional students. Enough classrooms would have to be available for every child to be taught inside the walls of the school and not in a portable.

Currently, there are only 5 empty classrooms at Our Lady of Mount Carmel. This does not take into account all the specialty rooms our school has; which are not considered to be empty rooms but teaching classrooms. These are rooms that our students have had for years, which are not to be taken away due to lack of space.

Without including the J.K. and S.K. students, which we have recommended having a separate wing for, there are currently 7 other classes at St. Thomas More which translates into 7 extra rooms being required, none of which should be taken from the specialty classrooms our students currently use. Presently Our Lady of Mount Carmel has 5 empty classrooms, 2 of which are used to form double classrooms; the other three are used as a drama, storage and a teacher's resource and book room. Out of these 5 classrooms, the teacher resource and book room is an essential room which is used daily by staff and will soon be used by students.

There will only be four empty classrooms, keeping in mind that a storage area for the schools' large equipment will have to be constructed.

In the end, without the J.K. and S.K. rooms St. Thomas More's students would require 7 classrooms and Our Lady Of Mount Carmel only has 4 empty rooms, therefore three additional rooms would need to be added.

Construction

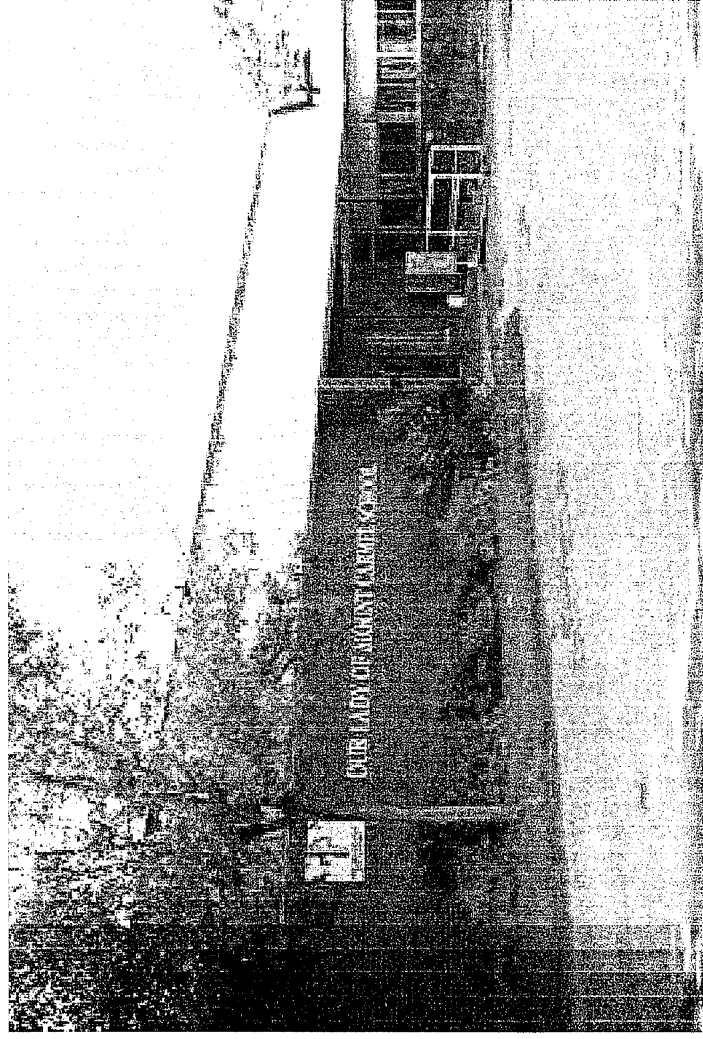
As you can see, extensive renovations and additions would have to be made at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, none of which should be attempted during the school year. Not only is this a safety issue, but it would be overly disruptive to the learning that goes on every day.

Plans would have to be made that the construction does not commence until after the school year ends and end at a minimum, a few weeks before school begins in order that the teachers can organize their classrooms.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that the families of Our Lady of Mount Carmel will not allow their children to be affected negatively as a result of the addition of the primary students. Our current students deserve not to have things taken away from them, but to be granted new and better offerings with the inclusion of the students from their sister primary school.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School





I CAN

- Improvement that is continuous and never ending
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel has wonderful teachers and students
- Programs with special features



Just My Size

- There are currently no facilities to accommodate 4 or 5 year old students.
- Extensive renovations to accommodate
- Installation of washroom facilities and fountains



JK and SK Wing

- Separate wing to be constructed
- Separate entrance from the rest of the school
- Easier access in and out
- Assist with fire drills and emergency procedures
- Fenced playground required

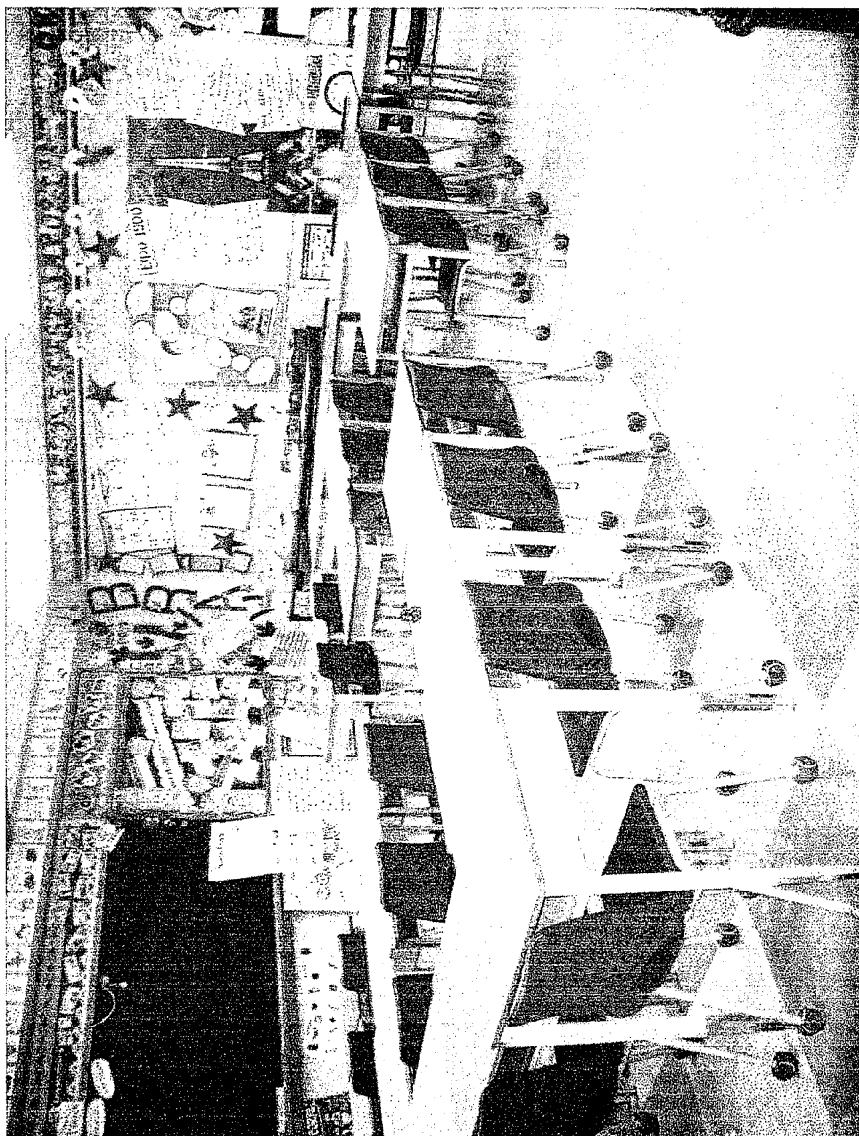
Transporting Primary Children

- Construction required for drop off area
- Must accommodate and extra 200 + students
- Present arrangements not suitable for child safety
- Crowded Parking Lot
- Renovations needed for staff, visitor, and bus parking

Our Beautiful French Rooms

- Currently there are 2 French Classrooms and 2 French Teachers
- All students receive French instruction in a classroom
- Set up is conducive to learning
- Neither school has French on Wheels

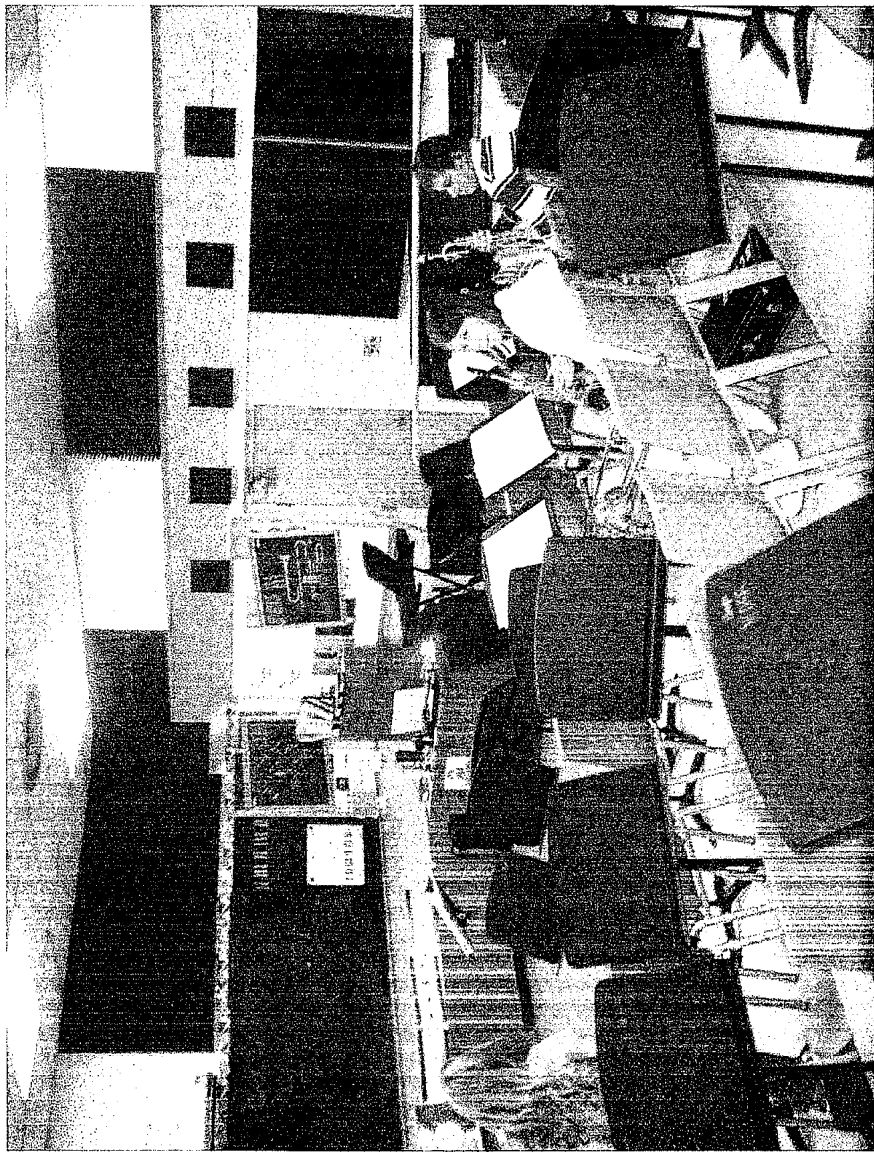
Excellent Learning Environment



Music, Music Everywhere

- Music room has amphitheater seating
- Room contains large closet area to store instruments
- Room contains sound proof features

Music Room

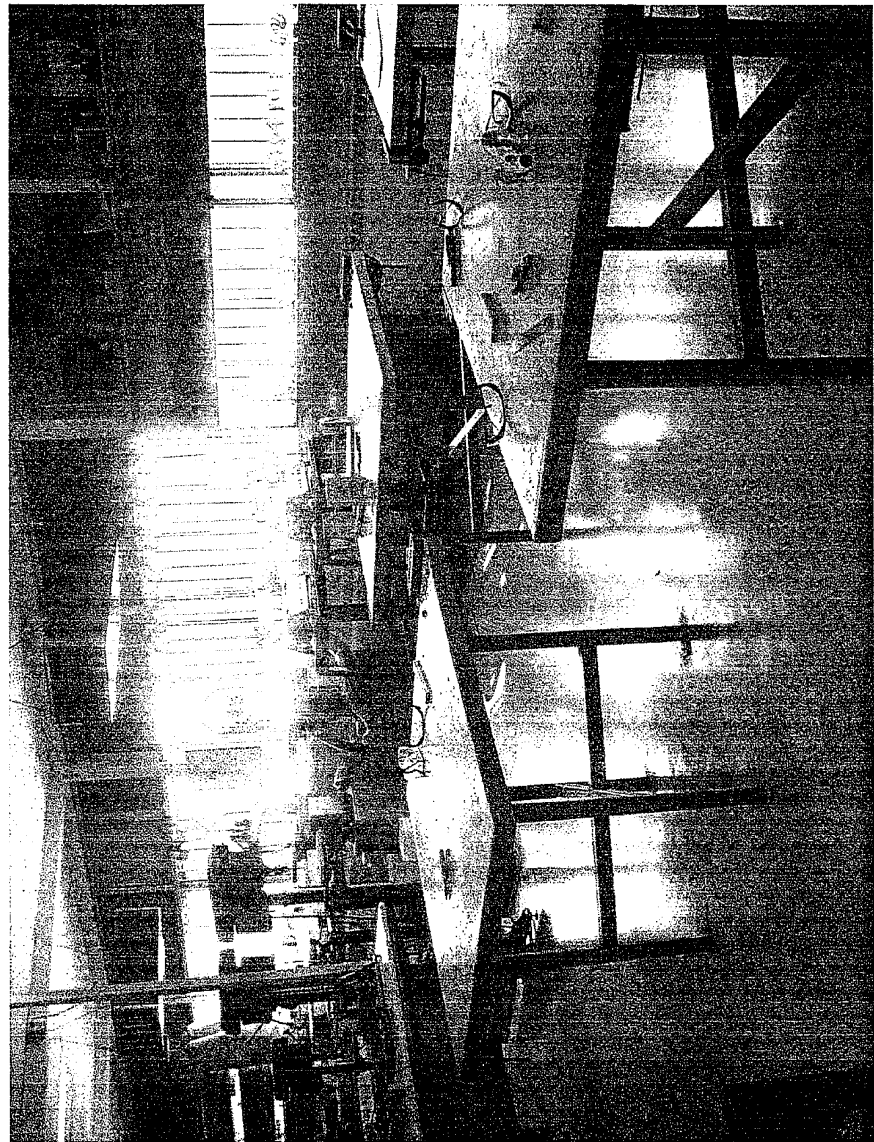




Cyberquest

- Teaching area accommodates all grade 7 & 8 students
- Buses not needed
- High cost involved to reconstruct this room in another school

Specialized Learning

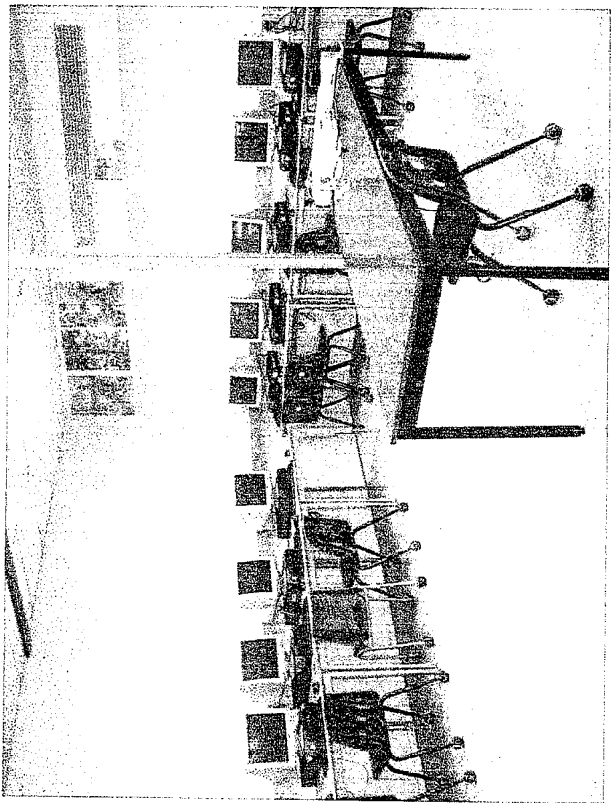
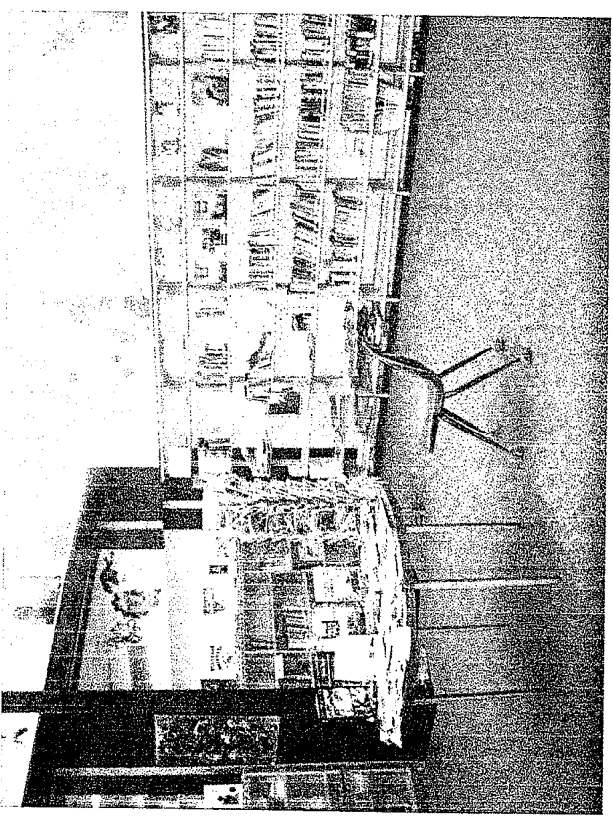




Increase in Library Use

- Inadequate accommodations for 10 classes of extra students
- Library is the focal point of literacy in a school
- Construction needed to enlarge the reading area for primary children
- Computer Lab needs to be sized with appropriate furniture

Library and Computer Lab





ERT Room

- Current Room is very small
- Holds only one meeting table
- Large expansion needed to accommodate needs of primary children
- Room needed to meet the needs of all students, staff, and parents

We Don't Want Portables

- Currently OLMC has no portables
- Currently there are only 5 empty classrooms at OLMC (excluding specialty rooms)
- 7 extra rooms needed to amalgamate the schools
- An adequate teacher resource room is essential
- Construction would be needed to avoid portables



Construction

- Extensive renovations and addition needed at OLMC
- Should not be attempted during the school year
- Safety issue for all students
- Disruptive to learning

In Conclusion

TO: Niagara Catholic District School Board
Special Board Meeting
Public Session
February 17, 2009

TOPIC: PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW (PAR) PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS
MELISSA HESSE - ST. MARY CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Attention:

PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW FOR NIAGARA FALLS ELEMENTARY

ON FEBRUARY 17, 2009 @ 7pm at St Michael's

a) As a member of the St Mary school community who sat on the "ARC" committee in Spring 2008, I request the opportunity to speak publicly regarding the Senior Staff recommendations.

Along with myself (Melissa Hesse), Nicole Pasco and Sue Brady have participated and collaborated on such presentation.

b) i) Melissa Hesse – speaking

Nicole Pasco

Sue Brady

ii) Melissa Hesse is past chairperson of St Mary school council, a member of the ARC committee and parent of a St Mary student.

Nicole Pasco is past co-chair of St Mary school council and parent of students in elementary and secondary schools

Sue Brady is a concerned parent of children at St Mary School

iii) Melissa Hesse

Nicole Pasco

Sue Brady

5266 Ottawa Ave

4993 Rendall Cres

6103 Burdette Dr East

Niagara Falls, ON

Niagara Falls, ON

Niagara Falls, ON

L2E 4Y8

L2E 5E6

L2E 5G8

(905)371-1431

(289)296-8065

(905)357-2202

Fax(905) 357-4026

Email:

michaeldhese@yahoo.com

npasco@cogeco.ca

sbrady2@cogeco.ca

mhesse1@cogeco.ca



The senior staff recommendation is the 2nd worst outcome for St Mary next to closing it completely. Revising the boundary would result in removing 52 St Mary students from a potential growth area (ie. Burdette-Cropp) and leaving an already saturated area with no growth potential.

The current boundary has been supported for 50 years with at least $\frac{3}{4}$ capacity. We suspect St Mary is on the ARC because of location. According to graphs supplied by school board, we are projected to have constant enrolment until 2023. Changing the boundary will result in retuning to an "ARC" situation within a few years, probably before 5 years

The 52 St Mary children would be moved to a school and parish that is served by Our Lady of Scapular, that already has a total of four schools (approx 1800 students) leaving only approximately 350 for St Pat's parish.

According to appendix 'J' of the senior staff recommendations, money will be spent to accommodate students from St Mary at Notre Dame with an addition. How much will this cost? What is the extra cost of bussing these 52 children?

While "ARC" was deliberating on merits of the six schools in the ARC, Notre Dame was added in the last few meetings – not from the start. Was Notre Dame not on the ARC because it had been visited during the prior St Vincent DePaul boundary review? The NCDSB web site is confusing and not clear and transparent to users of the site. Maps of the suggested boundaries are not given street names or timeline. Most people are unaware of the situation. Wording from Senior Staff Report Recommendations is different than ARC Recommendations – this leads to confusion of 2009/2010 or 2010/2011 school year.

Clarify – is the closure of St Joe's and the boundary change effective September 2009? Where is the study that shows students from St Joe's will even go to St Mary? St Patrick and Father Hennepin have room for all of St Joe's students, leaving our school to be monitored for the next two years. Since a city-wide boundary review is going to be done by 2011, why can't St Mary's boundary be left alone. St Joe's population could be split between St Pat's and Father Hennepin so that only two schools are used – which will be better for the children.

What happens to the out of bounds kids that have been in our school? Are they in or out?

We would like a grandfather clause for children that wish to stay at St Mary, realizing that bussing isn't a transportation option. New admissions would have to adhere to policy.

OTHER QUESTIONS

Warren Woods is still on the table for the new subdivision. Has property been purchased by the school board or serviced by a developer.

St Joe's has received money in the form of grants from the Ontario government – What happens to that money?

When does Niagara Falls Ad Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee meet? The whole city should have been included. Has there not been a City Wide Review before?

Part of St Joe's recommended boundary is now in St Paul's secondary school boundary. For children living in Coronation Park Area, will they be forced to leave St Mike's?

The City of Niagara Falls has requested the Region expand the urban boundary for the North West area, making St Vincent DePaul within that boundary of an already crowded school.

Is the trend toward BIG BOX schools? We live in an area where this isn't necessary, due to population numbers

TO: Niagara Catholic District School Board
Special Board Meeting
Public Session
February 17, 2009

TOPIC: PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW (PAR) PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS
SHAWN GRATTON - FATHER HENNEPIN CATHOLIC
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

February 2, 2009

Niagara Catholic District School Board
427 Rice Road
Welland, Ontario
L3C 7C1



Dear Director of Education, Mr. John Crocco:

As Chair of the Father Hennepin Catholic School Delegation, I request the opportunity to appear as a delegation before yourself and the Trustees on Tuesday, February 17, 2009 at Saint Michael's Catholic High School. Please find additional information attached if you wish to contact me prior to the meeting.

Thank you in advance,



Shawn Gratton

Name of organization: Father Hennepin Catholic School Delegation

Name and Authority Position: Shawn Gratton- Chair

**Mailing Address: 5821 Sunnylea Cresent
Niagara Falls, Ontario
L2G 2S1**

Day Time Phone Number: 905-562-1324 or 1-866-778-6639 ext. 33

After Business Hours: 905-353-9047

Fax Number: 905-562-7777

E-Mail Address: sgratton@stoneyrIDGE.com or stgratton@yahoo.com

Dear Director of Education, Mr. Crocco, Superintendents of Education, Trustees and members of audience.

My name is Shawn Gratton. I am a parent of two daughters currently attending Father Hennepin Catholic School and I represent the Delegation from Father Hennepin. As the elected Chair of this delegation I come before this panel to represent the voice of the children and their parents, guardians, family and friends regarding the matter before you tonight. Our purpose tonight is three fold: to render our input on the Senior Staff recommendation, to strengthen and secure the long term viability of our school to the Niagara Catholic District School Board and to encourage its consideration in the future deliberations.

As one of the six schools selected in the Accommodation Review Committee process, we wish to thank all the members of the committee involved in the process as their recommendation report to the Director of Education was a difficult one to agree upon. It is import to stress throughout this process, it was extremely important to minimize the over all impact it would have on the students, our children. We also understand the fiscal challenges the school board must face operating these schools as enrolment decreases over time within the province of Ontario. It is fortunate for everyone in attendance, we live in a city with economic growth due to its major source of employment; tourist industry.

Future Development

Father Hennepin's school motto is "**A School With a Vision...Seeing Above and Beyond**". The school lies within the heart of the economic area of Niagara Falls; the Fallsview Tourist Area. The city of Niagara Falls continues to see this area as a major source of job creation. The City of Niagara Falls has approved projects like the building of hotels, the Convention Centre, attractions and encouraging investment and re development in areas such as Downtown and Drummondville; all within a few kilometres of our school. A need for housing and schooling comes with job creation. It is extremely difficult to predict the impact of such job creation on the needs of our school. Could it increase our enrolment? **Definitely**. Could the school handle it? **Absolutely**. The proximity of these endeavours and the location of our school allows us flexibility in accommodating the possible influx of students by either placing portables on site or building an addition(s). Why? Of the six schools involved in the original ARC, we have the greatest amount of land. Father Hennepin currently sits on 3.17 hectares of land. At the time of the ARC, Father Hennipen had 3 vacant classrooms. As of January 2009, the school introduced the Early Years program occupying one of these classrooms. Under the current Senior Staff recommendation, those students coming from St. Joseph, in addition to our current enrolment, would occupy the remaining two classrooms.

Contribution to the School and the Community

It is important to recognize some achievements and successes Father Hennepin has accomplished with a dedicated student body, faculty and parental involvement (like our CSC members). We have taken the Eco School philosophy and ran with it. We raised funds, applied for and received grants from companies like Toyota and TD to increase the number of trees on property to its current number of 21, students have grown, from seeds, plants for our flower beds. We have obtained a Silver rating. We wish to continue this process by achieving our next goal which is a community Vegetable Garden and a Gold rating.

Our fundraising efforts for community needs are amazing. Two consecutive years of \$4000.00 plus to Holy Childhood Walkathon and \$2000.00 plus to Project Share was donated by our students and school. Many more listed in the package provided to the Committee.

We have forged great partnerships with many of the local businesses and charitable organizations within the school community. Without their support, many of our schools goals and endeavours would not have been realized. We wish to continue this wonderful relationship in the future.

Recommendations by the Accommodation Review Committee and Senior Staff

Our delegation has reviewed both recommendations brought forward to the Director of Education and the Board of Trustees. It is difficult to predict the pace in which Warren Woods and Thundering Waters will develop. The current time frame for these developments maybe a few years away as the economic slowdown may have an effect. With new projects like the Convention Centre likely to commence within this year, interest in our area will sure be realized. Our proximity of less than 1 kilometre will attract potential workers to housing within our school's area. We felt the recommendation made by the Accommodation Review Committee would be drastic and sudden and would have created, in some cases, 3 school changes in a short period of time for some students. It was refreshing to see a different approach from Senior Staff in regards to the matter. Under this recommendation, the impact is minimized and it allows for reviews as situations change within the City of Niagara Falls. In Father Hennepin's case, it would increase our enrolment, make use of our surplus space, and ensure our viability in the short and long term. In return, it strengthens our involvement in our community and with our Church, Our Lady of Peace. It also supports our economic partners and maintains our return in investments like our homes and businesses.

We would like to see, when the time comes, an entire review of the boundaries for all of Niagara Falls' Catholic Schools. As some schools have surplus space others are growing beyond their capacity. Building new schools in areas of need may be more beneficial than building in areas that may or may not develop.

We, the Father Hennepin Delegation, endorse the Senior Staff recommendation and we will welcome, with open arms, those students and parents from St. Joseph Catholic School to our proud and wonderful school community.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shawn Gratton", written in a cursive style.

Shawn Gratton

The following sheets outline our presentations during the 4th A.R.C. public meeting. It highlights many of the strengths of Father Hennepin Catholic School. The original petition, mentioned at the end of this package, was handed in to the A.R.C. at the final public meeting. It is to be noted, the signatures on the petition was collected by the parents and local businesses. The 544 signatures reflect the effect of a 5 day campaign prior to the final public meeting. We believe we could have collected far more if time permitted.

Good Evening ARC Committee and all dedicated persons in attendance. Niagara is fortunate to have several established vibrant schools within its community. Everyone values his or her school. We appreciate the opportunity to briefly share with you what FATHER HENNEPIN School has to offer.

FATHER HENNEPIN'S Motto is: A school with a vision... seeing above and beyond.

Celebrated 50th anniversary this past year

The name Father Hennepin represents history in Niagara Falls, it was Father Hennepin who brought the Wonder of "Niagara Falls" to the world's attention.

Most recently: Awarded-Toyota Evergreen Learning Grounds Grant
- TD Friends of the Environment Grant
- Designation of ECO School

Parents and students Planted 21 trees in our schoolyard
Students grow own seeds and plant in our schools gardens
Parent volunteers up keep the gardens year round

Featured – on Toyota's website and in their Nation Wide Greening Campaign
After this years fall planting

Goal in progress – Community Vegetable Garden

Recognized for: Gifts of giving- contributions

At FH we-Look past the needs of our School and raise funds for our community and the needs of our fellow Christians around the world....

Christmas Charity Raffle – over \$2000.00 each year to Project Share
Holy Childhood Walkathon \$4000.00 this year
Wells of Hope

Backpacks of Hope

Contribute to Tsunami – Natural Disasters in Myanmar & China

Staff Dress down days- different causes each term-Little People of Ontario-

Tim Horton's Foundation-Cancer Society

Heart and Stroke- Jump Rope for Heart

Niagara Children's Peninsula Center

Extra School Programs - Breakfast club started this year

- P 3
- Junior and Intermediate sports programs
- Chess Club and Scrabble group
- Summer Reading Program

Unique To Our School Magical Santa Shop...where all gifts are a loonie

- Created and published our own cook book
- Used Book Fair- helps the environment \$ buy new - books for library.
- Guest Speaker presentations

In the process of being approved for before and after school day care.

Property Value: Street recently repaved

Brand new parking lot

Constructed new Turn around

Our school has 9.49 acres, which gives the school plenty of room for expansion to accommodate higher enrollment.

Recreational Activities – Our soccer field is used and maintained by the City of Niagara Falls, and the Travel Soccer Clubs

-Several organizations and groups use our School gymnasium after hours and on weekends

Dedicated and Strong Partnerships:

Project Share- students volunteer

Cavendish Manor Visits

Heart Niagara Surveys

Swimming at YMCA

PALS

Allergy Aware

Strength of the TRIAD with in Father Hennepin

Strong Values with church- a FH Parent established children's literature several years ago at Our Lady of Peace Parish and it is still active today

There is strong communication among our families, students and staff. FH, in conjunction with Our lady of Peace church provides students with a strong Catholic Faith and allows a new generation to continue practicing their Catholic faith at Our Lady of Peace Parish.

Looking towards the Future:

The South end in close proximity to the school still has areas to be developed at the present, many single family homes, apartments, and condos are under construction right now.

-Opportunity for increasing our enrollment to capacity.

In Conclusion-

At Father Hennepin

Everyone feels like family there is a feeling of warmth, friendship and just belonging. Staff has stayed because they love being there and what it has to offer. Along with the spirit of the families, some students leave and end up coming back because they feel comfortable at our school.

We are a family at Father Hennepin, and in todays busy world we need the comfort of knowing our children are being taught to love Christ and follow in his footsteps.

Please take this opportunity to allow Father Hennepin to remain open increasing our enrollment to its capacity. We welcome opportunities of construction and expansion.

Thanks to our small size, Father Hennepin offers a very safe environment for our students.

Students, teachers, and parents may all be better served when a school is small enough to allow for effective communication amongst teachers, students and the school community. In small schools, meaningful relationships are nurtured.

Our small school offers an environment in which students are more visible. When students are better known, teachers can more easily identify individual talents and the unique needs of each student, offering a more personalized educational experience.

At Father Hennepin our staff size allows more opportunity for teachers to know each other well, more easily share information about their students, and collaborate to solve problems, and generally support one another.

Our **School Mission Statement** is

“We create a Christ-Centered environment within which children will grow and learning will flourish.

As you can see at **Father Hennepin** we follow our School Mission Statement in everything we do.

Thank you

A lot of what Father Hennepin is about and what we do in the school and give to the community cannot be reflected in a rubric. We scored low on parent involvement. I would like to know how you came up with this number because the parents who volunteer in the school know all of the children and all of the children know the parents by name. The parents who do not volunteer in the school volunteer behind the scenes. And why do we do this, because we **LOVE OUR SCHOOL.**

We teach our children by example, by fighting for what we believe in and how important it is to help others. By keeping Father Hennepin open we will continue to teach them a sense of community.

Just over the past few days we have collected over 544 signatures on a petition to **SAVE FATHER HENNEPIN.** This does not include our 213 students. The community support to keep our school open is overwhelming.

TO: Niagara Catholic District School Board
Special Board Meeting
Public Session
February 17, 2009

TOPIC: ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, NIAGARA FALLS
BEVERLEY RIEMERSMA, WENDY MOULTON

February 11, 2009

John Crocco,
Director of Education
Niagara Catholic District School Board

Please consider the viability of maintaining St. Joseph's Elementary School as it currently runs.

The enrollment projected for 2008-2009 was set at 129, and currently it is at 146

Needs in the Community are being met, by the availability of a "Data Room" which has been utilized outside of school uses. Area principals have met in our school and will be conducting their own school staff meetings and tours within our school to witness our best practices.

EQAO scores one of the top schools, discussion regarding the improvements and how this has positively affected school atmosphere.

Garfield Weston Award for Excellence in Education, for the category of Improvement In Academics. This award recognizes the school team whose overall academic rating has experienced the fastest, most consistent improvement over the last five years. St. Joseph's was short listed one of top 30 schools, then we were notified that we are one of the top three and will be awarded in a ceremony in April. The Garfield Weston Awards for Excellence in Education support the challenging pursuit of excellence in education and ensure that the efforts of the education community do not go unnoticed. The accomplishments of our school's team are the result of hard work and dedication and are cause for a great deal of pride, and celebration.

Another accomplishment has been our grade 7 and 8 students and teachers making proposals for grants to run some clubs, out of all the schools (1000) and 20 schools from our Board alone, only 3 schools received grants and St. Joseph's students were able to successfully acquire 3 grants to develop and run these clubs, this effort and achievement is phenomenal.

Lastly this school has a dedicated and involved family and community who turn out for fundraisers and events to better the school and parental support.

Beverly Riemersma, Chair of the Catholic School Council, and Wendy Moulton parent representative on the Catholic School Council.

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