



**DURHAM CATHOLIC**  
Parent Involvement Committee

# Newsletter



## CONTACT US

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### DCPIC MEMBERS OFFICERS

Roxanne Horwitz, Chair  
Tina Newth, Vice-Chair  
Rose LoPresti, Secretary

### PARENT MEMBERS

Trevor Aitcheson  
Melissa Bevan  
Eileen Bright  
Nancy Sgro (Carpenter)  
Linda Dodson Trchala  
Rachelle Ezechiels  
Michele-Ann Halsall  
Liz Lyew  
Amanda McLaurin  
Paulette Palumbo  
Bernette Santiago Tan

### COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Kim Beatty  
Stan Karwowski  
Jim McGrorey, Past Chair

### TRUSTEE & DCDSB STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

Janice Oldman, Trustee  
Jim McCafferty, Board Chair  
Susie Lee-Fernandes, Principal Rep.  
Joni MacLean, Teacher Rep.  
Chris Szent-Ivany, Principal Rep.  
Gerry O'Reilly, Director's Designate

### MEETING DATES

September 11, 2014  
October 9, 2014  
November 6, 2014  
January 8, 2015  
February 5, 2015  
March 5, 2015  
April 9, 2015  
May 7, 2015  
June 11, 2015

Meetings are held in the Board Room

PIC acts as a direct link to the Director of Education and the Board of Trustees

## Parent to Parent: A message from the DCPIC Chair

Dear Parents, Guardians and Partners in Education,

As the Advent season is upon us, it is a reminder of what is important and significant in our lives. We anticipate the birth of Jesus with joyful celebration and reflection. We cannot help but think of our families and our faith during this joyous, celebratory period. What we all have in common is our stake in our children's education—in Catholic education.

According to the Ministry of Education's Achieving Excellence Report, "Parents and guardians are a critical component of ensuring public confidence in the education system. Parents who are engaged and actively involved in their child's learning make Ontario's great schools even stronger." Parental involvement takes many forms, from reading to your child to volunteering in the classroom to joining your school council. It is encouraging to hear that our province is taking measures to further assist parents. Within the same report, under Plan of Action, it states that Ontario will "provide greater support to ensure parents and guardians are welcomed, respected and valued by the school community as partners in their children's education." What kind of support do you need or what do you think could be improved upon? Please let us know and our committee can bring your recommendations to the board and to the Ministry of Education.

We, as Canadians, are fortunate to live in a place that has democratic values. We are encouraged to participate fully as citizens of this great country. We, as Catholics, are guided to live our lives through the teachings of Jesus Christ. Pope John Paul II has said, "All men and women —and all children—have a

right to education. Closely linked to this right to education is the right of parents, of families, to choose according to their convictions the kind of education and the model of school which they wish for their children (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 26)."

The Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee exists to support parents to support their children's learning at home and at school. Our committee provides advice at the board level. We believe that parents are essential and key partners in our publicly funded education system. While we have made great strides, we know more work remains to fully realize this partnership, at both, the board and provincial level. We all want the same thing—to foster student achievement and well-being. Let's remember to work together with respect and consideration of our roles and perspectives.

Pope John Paul II eloquently stated that "The Catholic School is a community effort, one that cannot succeed without the cooperation of all concerned—the students, the parents, the teachers, the principals and pastors."

On behalf of the DCPIC, I want to wish you and your families peace, joy, hope and love this holiday season. May you be blessed this Christmas and throughout the New Year!

Warmest greetings,  
**Roxanne Horwitz, Chair**

Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee

Website: [www.dcpic.ca](http://www.dcpic.ca)

Email [chair@dcpic.ca](mailto:chair@dcpic.ca)



## Orientation & Commissioning Mass



On October 29, the DCPIC hosted the Orientation & Commissioning Mass. This annual event brings principals and school council chairs/ members together. It is a wonderful opportunity to build

partnerships and share best practices with one another. It began with a celebration of our faith through the commissioning mass. Thank you to Father Keith Wallace and Dominic Pullano for officiating the mass. It set us on the right tone for the rest of the day.

This event could have not been a success without the support of the board staff and the DCPIC team. Thank you to everyone for continuing to assist our school councils.

## Communications

Nancy Sgro (Carpenter), Kim Beatty, Co-Chairs

The DCPIC is committed to expanding and improving our methods of communication and we've taken meaningful steps over the past few months to provide our parent community with greater access to information.

- To facilitate communication between schools, we've created email accounts for all DCDSB School Advisory Councils
- We continue to develop the content and scope of our website DCPIC.ca, twitter feed @DCPIC, newsletters and email programs
- We are currently working on new initiatives to support timely and transparent communications

To learn more about the DCPIC, please visit DCPIC.ca and subscribe to our mailing list to hear about events, meetings, news and more.

## Faith Formation

Rose LoPresti, Chair

The mission of the Faith Formation Subcommittee is to continue to promote positive and supportive relationships between home, school and parish and to find ways to help our students and families grow in their Faith. Our initiative is to provide speakers and activities to help our school communities continue to strengthen their Faith.

## School Council Outreach

Tricia Chapman, Past-Chair

The School Council Outreach Subcommittee had a successful inaugural meeting recently and the committee members are thrilled with the new initiatives for this year. The result of the committee's efforts last year produced an updated school council handbook for all schools which contains a wealth of information and tools ranging from how to run an election to how to complete minutes. The handbook was created as a "living document" in that the DCPIC will always be updating the content as relevant updates become available. The DCPIC is also asking school councils to provide updates or feedback for the improvement of the handbook on an ongoing basis.

This year the School Council Outreach Subcommittee is led by co-chairs Liz Lyew and Paulette Palumbo and the goals of the committee focus on building community within school councils for the purposes of sharing of best practices and improving the functioning of councils. The initiatives this year target board-wide outreach in minimal time using technology and aim to improve consistency, communication and celebrate the great ideas within councils.

## Distinguished Catholic Volunteer Award 2015

We would like to remind all school councils to nominate one parent volunteer from your school who exemplifies outstanding parent involvement.

Please forward your nomination by March 12, 2015 to Patti Ritchie Fax: 905-571-9703 or [chair@dcpic.ca](mailto:chair@dcpic.ca). For more details, please contact us. The next award ceremony will be on April 15, 2015.

This year, the recipients are able to invite their families to the ceremony, as our venue can accommodate more people. We look forward to honouring the service of parents, who make our schools even better!

## Pro Grant

Jim MCGrorey, Chair

Starting in 2015, PRO Grant events featuring speakers, a conference and a play on the theme of Youth Mental Health will be staged across Durham. Stay tuned for more information.



On November 20<sup>th</sup>, DCPIC presented The Calm Within the Storm, with Dr. Robert Wicks, Author of Perspective

## Prayer

Preparing for Christmas  
Now we'll stay awake  
And make our house clean  
With the brightest things  
Of red and green  
And we'll wait for Jesus until he comes  
We'll wait until he comes.  
First we'll put up a tree  
All shiny and bright with lights  
And balls to shine through the night.  
Then build him a house  
With a little bed, a place high enough  
Not to bump his head.  
Bring sheep and shepherds  
to see him new born  
and a cow and a donkey  
to keep him warm.  
Good Lord Jesus  
Asleep in the hay  
Bless all little children  
Each night and each day.

## DCPIC AREAS OF FOCUS

Communications  
Faith Formation  
School Council Outreach (Parent Engagement)

DCPIC is always interested in your thoughts and ideas, and would welcome an opportunity to seek your feedback on ideas and events we are considering providing our Durham Catholic school community. Subscribe to our mailing list by visiting our website, [dcpic.ca](http://dcpic.ca) and filling out the form on the bottom of our homepage.