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## DURHAM CATHOLIC PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

### CHAIR'S REPORT

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**TO:** DCPIC, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, SCHOOL CHAIRS, STAFF AND PARENTS  
**FROM:** ROXANNE HORWITZ  
**SUBJECT:** FEBRUARY 2015 REPORT  
**DATE:** FEBRUARY 5, 2015

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As part of our Regional PRO Grant, funded by the Ministry of Education, the DCPIC hosted Dr. Sandra Mendlowitz at Monsignor Paul Dwyer CSS this past January 27. Dr. Mendlowitz spoke to parents about anxiety in children. We had over 200 participants at this event and it was well received. There were many positive feedback from participants like “lots of great tips I can use with my children”, “helped me as a parent feel reassured that my child can overcome the anxiety she faces - thank you”.

For all the PRO Grant events and other events, please visit our website at [www.dcpic.ca](http://www.dcpic.ca), for all the details.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Distinguished Catholic Volunteer Award ceremony will be on April 13. Plans are underway to honour the outstanding parent volunteers from each of our schools.

In the next couple of weeks, the DCPIC will be sending out a survey to all school councils to confirm that they have the support and the tools and resources to operate as a well-functioning team.

As we celebrate the beginning of Lent this month, I would like to share an excerpt of the Lenten Message from His Holiness, Pope Francis (where he warns us about the culture of indifference that is widespread and a cause for concern.)

*Lent is a time of renewal for the whole Church, for each communities and every believer. Above all it is a “time of grace” (2 Cor 6:2). God does not ask of us anything that he himself has not first given us. “We love because he first has loved us” (1 Jn 4:19). He is not aloof from us. Each one of us has a place in his heart. He knows us by name, he cares for us and he seeks us out whenever we turn away from him. He is interested in each of us; his love does not allow him to be indifferent to what happens to us. Usually, when we are healthy and comfortable, we forget about others (something God the Father never does): we are unconcerned with their problems, their sufferings and the injustices they endure... Our heart grows cold. As long as I am relatively healthy and comfortable, I don’t think about those less well off. Today, this selfish attitude of indifference has taken on global proportions, to the extent that we can speak of a globalization of the indifference. It is a problem which we, as Christians, need to confront.*

*During this Lent, then, brothers and sisters, let us all ask the Lord: “Fac cor nostrum secundum cor tuum”: Make our hearts like yours (Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus). In this way we will receive a heart which is firm and merciful, attentive and generous, a heart which is not closed, indifferent or prey to the globalization of indifference.*

*It is my prayerful hope that this Lent will prove spiritually fruitful for each believer and every ecclesial community. I ask all of you to pray for me. May the Lord bless you and Our Lady keep you.*

Here is the update for this month:

#### February Report

- DCPIC Membership
  - a) Two available positions have opened up for parent members and we will be electing them at the February meeting.

- OAPCE (Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education)
  - a) OAPCE's next quarterly meeting will be in April 2015.
  - b) The OAPCE conference will take place on May 29-30. It will be in Pembroke, Ontario. We need to identify who will be attending and make the necessary bookings.
  - c) At the January Board Meeting, we had the honour of Minister Liz Sandals joining us to talk about the initiatives and updates in education. (Below are points taken by a Toronto director)
    - Ms. Sandals noted the importance of parent engagement and advised that since 2005 \$55 million has been invested in supporting parent engagement initiatives through PICs, CSACs, PRO grants, and to the four recognized parent groups, of which OAPCE is one.
    - Goals for education in Ontario are: 1. Achieving Excellence 2. Ensuring Equity 3. Well-being 4. Enhancing Public Confidence
    - 21 Century Learning : Focus on 21 century skills to build soft skills:  Critical thinkers  Collaborators  Analytical thinkers etc
    - Health and Physical Education Curriculum Update will be released this winter before implementation date of September 2015. It will be available to the public to review, just like all the curriculum is available for viewing. There will be divisional pamphlets that schools can hand out. The curriculum will include teacher prompts in the event that they get a question from a student and how to possibly address the question. Cardinal Collins and the Institute of Catholic Education (ICE) were consulted to develop curriculum.
  
- Conferences/ Professional Development
  - a) Ministry of Education PIC Symposium – April 24-25, 2015 in Toronto
  - b) OAPCE – May 29-30, 2015 in Pembroke, Ontario
  
- Upcoming Events
  - a) February 24 – Dr. Bruce Ferguson presentation on “Working Together to Make our Kids Successful”
  - b) March 9 – Elevated Grounds Theatrical Production on Mental Health at Notre Dame CSS
  - c) March 24 – Elevated Grounds Theatrical Production on Mental Health at Father Leo CSS
  - d) April 13 - Distinguished Catholic Volunteer Award Ceremony
  - e) April 25 – Conference on Youth Mental Health featuring Ann Douglas
  - f) May 13 – Dr. Alex Russell