



**ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL  
BOARD**

**DRAFT 2006 – 2010 STRATEGIC  
PLAN**

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DRAFT 2006 – 2010 STRATEGIC PLAN

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board provides Catholic elementary and secondary school education to over 15,000 students in the Sarnia-Lambton and Chatham-Kent areas of Southwestern Ontario. The Board operates approximately thirty elementary schools and three secondary schools. The Board represents an amalgamation of two County-based Boards undertaken in approximately 1997.

In 1999, the Board of Trustees identified the need for a Strategic Plan. This Plan evolved from the post-amalgamation era and the recruitment of a new Director of Education. The Plan represented the Board's first strategic directions initiative to identify a Vision, Mission, Principles and Values, and key Areas of Effort. The 1999 Strategic Plan became the basis for long term planning, and was utilized widely by the Board in its decision-making.

In the fall of 2005, the Board of Trustees and the Director of Education identified a need to undertake a new strategic planning process. This came about due to the fact that the previous Strategic Plan was six years old, and that a new Director of Education would be leading the Board beginning in the winter of 2006. The process for this Strategic Plan involved a broad-based stakeholder consultation program, involving twenty-three focus groups, multiple interviews and a survey of Deanery members. This input was used as a key resource for the strategic planning workshop. The results of the input received are available under separate cover. Appendix I contains the observations, conclusions and strategic themes from this consultation program.

On May 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006, twenty-one representatives of various stakeholder groups of the St. Clair Catholic District School Board met at the Wallaceburg Knights of Columbus Centre. This session was facilitated by Fred Galloway of F.J. Galloway Associates Inc., and Robert Collins of Collins Consulting. Using a small group and large plenary session format, the workshop participants reviewed and amended the Board's Vision, Mission and Principles and Values. They also developed a new set of Areas of Effort that the Board would focus on over the next three to five years in achieving its Vision and Mission.

This document represents the second draft of the 2006 - 2010 Strategic Plan for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board. It was reviewed by the session participants and amended. Following this, a broader system-wide review process is occurring. Once comments are received, a further draft will be prepared. The Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees for their consideration and

approval in September, 2006. Once approval has been realized, an Implementation Plan will be developed as the basis to advance the Areas of Effort over the next three to five years.

## 2.0 VISION

A Vision for an organization establishes its horizon. That is, a point towards which all its stakeholders can find a common perspective and join together in moving the organization forward. A Vision is not about an organization, but about where it is headed.

The following Vision was affirmed for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board.

### **Lighting the Way – Rejoicing in Our Journey**

The following material provides definitions and further explanation of the Vision:

**Lighting the Way** - This phrase identifies two key elements. Christ lights the way as we follow in His path reflects our belief that Christ is the light and the way. He is the beacon within the Catholic faith. Also, education can be seen as the lamp of learning as it unwraps people's potential and inspires them to achieve through knowledge and personal growth.

**Rejoicing in Our Journey** - This phrase identifies the belief that we need to celebrate and rejoice together as we move through our educational journey, while we are supported by our Catholic community and our Catholic faith. Also, education is a life long journey, and the school system, in partnership with the parish and the home, participates actively in each person's journey by contributing to their personal development as a Catholic and as a member of the community. On this journey, we believe all I am, I give to you, Lord.

### 3.0 MISSION STATEMENT

A Mission Statement describes to the reader the fundamentals of an organization in terms of who it is and what its focus and priorities are. In application terms, all strategic and operational decisions of an organization need to support the achievement of its Mission Statement. If a decision is being considered that does not support the Mission of the organization, one needs to ask why an organization would make such a decision if it doesn't advance the Mission, or whether the Mission Statement needs to be reconsidered.

This Missions Statement is for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board as an organization, involving the Trustees, employees and partners. Therefore, its focus is on the "Board" in terms of its Mission and the strategic directions and actions the Board will pursue within the Strategic Plan.

The following Mission Statement has evolved from the previous Mission based on further reflections and growth within the St. Clair Catholic District School Board.

**Walking together in Christ's light with parish and family, we are called to build an inclusive Catholic learning community and to serve as partners in the formation of life long learners by**

- **Living our faith**
- **Promoting educational achievement and innovation**
- **Fostering stewardship, leadership and social justice**

The key perspectives of the Mission Statement are as follows:

- ***Walking together in Christ's light with parish and family*** – Reflects the notion of journey identified in the Vision Statement and the fact that, as Catholics, we walk in Christ's light, as He is the light and the way. On this journey, we are not alone as a School Board, as we work with the parishes and the families in providing the very best educational opportunities for all our learners in both their educational and faith development experiences.

- ***We are called to build an inclusive Catholic learning community*** – Represents the sense of calling that exists within our Catholic faith. We work together to build a learning community that is inclusive of all its members, no matter their ability, needs or perspectives. As well, we ensure that the learning environment is focused on faith development, is infused with Catholic values and builds on each learner’s ability to understand and practice their faith as an active living dimension of their daily lives.
- ***To serve as partners in the formation of life long learners*** – Represents a major role of the Board, which is to create an understanding of and a desire amongst all our people to be life long learners. Education no longer ends at a prescribed date or year. In to-day’s world, the ability to continually learn, to upgrade, to discover and to extend oneself is a key to both ones faith development and one’s life journey.
- ***Living our faith*** –One of three key outcomes of the Board, that is to give each learner the opportunity and understanding to live their faith on a daily basis and to give full expression and evidence to that faith.
- ***Promoting educational achievement and innovation*** – Another key outcome of the Board is to ensure that it provides opportunities and educational environments that inspire people to want to learn, to discover their abilities and to pursue educational achievement. Also within this context, is the importance of creating educational environments that both support and inspire innovation, creativity, self discovery and individual development.
- ***Fostering stewardship, leadership and social justice*** – A further key outcome of the Board is endeavoring to foster stewardship amongst learners, staff and others for both our Catholic faith and the world we live in. This fostering also involves developing and providing leadership in terms of our faith and civic communities. Without leadership, these communities would be very different places, as it is through fostering leadership that values are brought forward and given presence; that challenges are overcome; that people are served; and that human perspectives are improved. Finally, the fostering of social justice within our local communities and the broader society is a fundamental Catholic belief and pursues God’s perspective in helping those that need help, ensuring that justice prevails for all as we are all equal in God’s eyes.

## **4.0 PRINCIPLES AND VALUES**

Principles and Values have three roles within a Strategic Plan. First, they provide opportunities to further describe and understand key elements of the Board's Mission Statement. Second, they identify the basis upon which the Board will undertake and develop its relations with people. Third, they begin to identify key areas of accountability for the Board.

The following Principles and Values have been developed for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board.

### **We believe ...**

- **In the vitality, uniqueness and importance of our Catholic values, and in the need to live our faith each day.**
- **In the infusion of the teachings of Jesus Christ in all curriculum.**
- **In the fundamental dignity of each person as one of God's children, and that each one is to be treated with respect in all that we do.**
- **In being learner-centered and inclusive in all our programs, services, relations and decisions.**
- **That parents / guardians are the first and foremost educators of their children.**
- **That every person has the potential, the right and the need to learn.**
- **In valuing all our people through affirming their achievements, recognizing their contributions and supporting their efforts.**
- **In effectively communicating with and facilitating the participation of our stakeholders as the basis for supporting an effective home-school-parish partnership built on faith, trust, meaningful engagement and community cohesion.**

- **In creating an organizational culture that gives voice and witness to social justice; enables responsible risk-taking, responds to changing needs and is built upon striving for academic excellence.**
- **In being accountable for our programs, services, decisions and for the effective stewardship and use of resources.**

All the Principles and Values have equal importance to the success of the St. Clair Catholic District School Board.

The Catholic foundation of the organization is a key Principle and Value. We need to demonstrate this foundation by living our faith within the organization and as individuals on a day to day basis. Our faith provides the fundamental focus, uniqueness and values base for all the Board undertakes and delivers.

The teachings of Jesus Christ represent the foundation of our Catholic faith and values. The Board believes in the importance of infusing these teachings into all curriculum, and as the primary cornerstone to the learning experiences provided.

Treating each person with dignity and respect, and ensuring fairness of opportunities is an important Principle of the organization in terms of how it interacts with individuals and how it supports its decision-making.

Being learner-centred and inclusive in all our decisions identifies all students as the reason for the organization's existence and the primary focus for how resources are allocated and decisions are made. The learner is the centre point and defines who is being served. Being inclusive allows us to reach out to all we serve.

Parents / guardians are the first educators of their children. The Board, as a partner with the parent, supports, enhances and provides strong learning environments. However, the first and foremost educator throughout a child's life is the parent, particularly related to developing their values, faith, a sense of community and a life long interest in learning.

A fundamental belief is that every person has the potential, right and need to learn. Unlocking a person's potential through learning occurs at many different levels but rests on the fundamental belief that every individual, no matter what their capacity and ability, has the potential to learn.

Valuing people through affirmation, recognition and support is a significant Principle of the organization. The needs of our stakeholders are the basis upon which the organization develops and delivers its services and fulfils its Mission.

Communicating effectively is a key responsibility in both sharing information and facilitating stakeholder participation. People who are informed effectively and honestly have the ability to meaningfully participate in the life of the Board, and their overall contributions are more engaging and satisfying.

The school-family-parish partnerships is a primary focus in the successful delivery of Catholic education. Partnerships also exist with other key stakeholders, the community at large and others. This Principle focuses on enhancing the quality and capacity of Catholic education so that greater opportunities exist for learners to grow and develop.

Developing an organizational culture that supports participation, innovation and responsible risk-taking, as well as giving voice to social justice, is a Principle that helps all stakeholders to understand their role and to contribute. Such a culture challenges them to reach new levels of achievement, and it enriches the experiences of all stakeholders as they learn and work within the Catholic education environment. A positive organizational culture is an important attribute in achieving success for each learner and for building a vital and energized Catholic education community.

Accountability is a Principle that has growing importance in our society. Being accountable for the programs and services provided, the decisions made and for how resources are utilized establishes a foundation upon which the organization defines its accomplishments, measures its outcomes and reports to its stakeholders.

## **5.0 AREAS OF EFFORT**

Areas of Effort are the first level in operationalizing a Strategic Plan. They identify the key priorities and focuses that the Board feels it needs to actively undertake in order to advance the Board towards the achievement of its Vision and Mission. In contemporary strategic planning, it is deemed to be better to have three to six Areas of Effort than a host of Areas of Effort that overwhelm the organization's resources and capacities and do not allow the Strategic Plan to prosper and be valued.

The following Areas of Effort have been identified for the 2006 to 2010 period for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board.

**1. To develop a Vision for and to pursue a comprehensive initiative to build an inclusive Catholic learning community that focuses on:**

- **Defining the School Board's role and responsibilities as a Catholic learning community;**
- **Actively building linkages, undertaking dialogue and exploring relationship opportunities and needs with Catholic families, parishes and the Diocese;**
- **Enrich the curriculum with the Ontario Catholic Graduate Student Expectations;**
- **Developing system-wide strategies, in partnership with the parishes, that support the daily living of the Catholic faith in the schools, sacramental preparation, the faith development of learners and staff, and the evident presence and foundation of the Catholic faith in all that the Board undertakes.**
- **Continually advocating for the vitality, growth and importance of Catholic education;**

**2. To actively pursue key initiatives that contribute significantly to growing the academic standards and excellence of the Board, via:**

- **The potential development of technology programs for Catholic secondary school students;**
- **Further development, support and investment in an organizational culture of innovation and educational enrichment for all learners;**
- **Development of a more coordinated, classroom situated, teacher professional development strategy;**
- **Identification and pursuit of opportunities that broaden the educational services of the Board related to demographic, local employment and other considerations, such as English as a Second Language, alternate school environments, adult education / training initiatives and related opportunities, both within Board and partnership-based environments;**
- **Identification and development of strategies that focus on achieving high academic standards and positive outcomes for learners through:**
  - **Differential learning approaches;**
  - **Enhancing special needs services within classroom environments, ranging from high needs to gifted learners;**
  - **Continuing to enhance curriculum content and instructional approaches building on the Board’s successful literacy initiative.**

**3. To research and develop implementation strategies for a series of change management initiatives that are vital to the Board's longer term success and sustainability, involving:**

- **Transitioning more grade eight students to Catholic secondary schools;**
- **Developing plans and strategies that track and effectively respond to demographic shifts, such as declining service area population and enrollment that will impact school sustainability and Board funding resources; immigration trends and needs; an aging population; and other trends**
- **Developing partnerships with area educational institutions, community organizations, not-for profit and private sector service providers, and others in supporting enhanced economic and population growth and related community priorities;**
- **Developing a long term Technology Plan that guides the Board's investment in hardware and software, ensures adequate support to sustain regular technology operations and ensures the comprehensive training of staff and others to maximize the results and opportunities of these investments across curriculum, adaptive and operational applications;**
- **Developing a Pandemic Response Plan for the Board, in partnership with key health services and economic partners in the community.**

**4. To continually invest in and develop strategies that enhance the Board's Human Resource capacities and contribute to a vibrant, faith-based organizational culture, focusing on:**

- **Initiatives to create an enhanced work-life balance for staff with mutual supports;**
- **Developing and implementing a Transfer Policy for teachers and principals, along with a staff mentoring program;**
- **Growing the Board's leadership development program, focusing on shared leadership**

**principles, including defining the role of Principals;**

- **Developing strategies that enhance the availability and use of occasional teachers;**
- **Developing a communications plan and capacities that support individual initiatives within the Board and broadcast-based advocacy requirements.**
- **Working with community organizations / partners in developing proactive recruitment strategies and opportunities that attract professional and skilled staff to the area;**
- **Ensuring a more welcoming Catholic Education Centre.**

The first Area of Effort focuses directly on the considerable commentary received from the focus groups on the need to grow and build an inclusive Catholic learning community. Though many challenges were identified, a need was expressed to ensure that the basic values of the school system are founded on and enriched by the Catholic faith, and the expression of that faith lived daily within all the schools. Many activities were identified in regards to this Area of Effort. Central to moving this priority forward is defining the role of the School Board in the formation and the living of the Catholic faith, as well as taking leadership in dialoguing with parishes, the Diocese, families and others in building stronger linkages across the Catholic community. Further, the infusion of the Ontario Catholic Graduate Student Expectations into all curriculum creates the basis to fulfill faith development outcomes and differentiate Catholic education as unique with a definitive focus and purpose that touches all dimensions of school life.

Other key initiatives in regards to the daily living of the faith, ranged from a coherent sacramental preparation approach, to ensuring full inclusion of Catholic liturgies, to Catholic teachings being infused across the life of each school and not developed as only a course.

The Board was seen as needing to take leadership in moving this initiative forward, both in terms of defining its role, as well as bringing a voice to the need for the whole Catholic community to realize the challenges ahead and to take the actions necessary to sustain the Catholic school system.

The second Area of Effort focuses on growing academic excellence within the Board. A focus on academic excellence and high standards is seen as a significant strategic requirement. With parents

increasingly making schooling decisions on a range of evolving and individualized criteria, a need exists to ensure that the Board's curriculum, capacities / skills, technology, facilities and related considerations are constantly being improved and consistently reflect the key needs and expectations of the population served.

In this light, resolving some of the challenges associated with the current professional development strategy in order to both enhance the outcomes of these investments and to lessen the impact on classrooms was identified. The availability of secondary school technology programs is also seen as key to achieving broader based educational opportunities for Catholic students. Further considerations involved moving more strongly into differential learning approaches, enhanced inclusion resources for high needs through gifted learners and improving technology support and training across curriculum, adaptive and operational applications.

Another key dimension that emerged from the focus groups' input was the success of the Board's literacy initiative. The ability to build on that success and use those techniques to enhance other parts of the curriculum, in terms of both content and delivery, is seen as a unique strategic opportunity for the Board in striving to enhance excellence.

A third Area of Effort focuses on the fact that the Board will be operating within a continuing environment of change. The Board's ability to respond effectively to and prepare for major change initiatives will be central to its future strategic well-being. Enrollment declines, shifting demographics in terms of an aging population and increased immigration, school closures, funding impacts and related operating environment considerations were widely identified. Proactive planning is needed in order to be prepared. Increased efforts to transition grade eight Catholic students to grade nine Catholic secondary schools, building partnerships with community organizations to support community economic renewal and continuing to assess funding availability and school sustainability are key initiatives.

Also within this Area of Effort is the need to respond to many of the technology challenges that were identified in the focus groups. Developing a long term Technology Plan for curriculum, adaptive and operational technology that operates consistently, is contemporary and has the supports and training necessary to realize results from the investments made needs to be undertaken. The Plan needs to be developed around a holistic perspective, balancing not just software and hardware acquisition, but also the operational supports and on-going training necessary.

Another key area of change is the possibility of pandemics that are being increasingly identified as a possible threat on a global basis. Working in partnership with community institutions and organizations, the need exists to develop Pandemic Plans to secure the Board in terms of both the well-being and safety of the learners and staff, as well as to sustain the viability of the Board.

The fourth Area of Effort focuses on the Human Resources of the Board and building the capacities and skills necessary to continually pursue excellence and to respond to continuing change within the operating environment. This Area of Effort also focuses on building an organizational culture of participation, inclusion and innovation as the foundation for success.

Key initiatives within this Area of Effort involve responding to the challenges identified within the occasional teacher's program; continuing to grow the leadership development initiative within the Board, which was widely recognized as a strength; and to institute succession, mentoring and enhanced staff recruitment strategies.

Also, within this Area of Effort is the need to develop more targeted and enhanced communication strategies, both around individual change initiatives and on a broadcast basis to facilitate a culture of participation and understanding, to seek input, to foster innovation, to support and encourage shared leadership and to build a valued Catholic learning community. Further considerations involve developing a Principal and Teacher Transfer Policy in order to continually refresh schools and staff, along with a mentoring program and other Human Resource enhancements.

## **6.0 STRATGEIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

### **6.1 Implementation Plan**

Once the Strategic Plan for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, in terms of its Vision, Mission, Principles and Values and Areas of Effort has been reviewed and approved, senior administration will undertake to develop a detailed Implementation Plan. The Plan will have a three to five year time horizon and will outline the individual initiatives to be undertaken for each of the Areas of Effort in terms of tasks, responsibilities, resource needs, timelines, approval requirements, participation strategies, etc.

The following charts are included in order to provide a sense of how the Implementation Plan will be formulated.

The Implementation Plan needs to be seen as a living document, in that it will change with some regularity as tasks are completed, new information comes forward, changes occur within the operating environment, new policies and funding arrangements are made by the Province and other factors occur. Therefore, the Implementation Plan is always dynamic. It needs to be continually worked on and reviewed in order to move the Strategic Plan forward actively.

**2006 - 2010 St. Clair Catholic District School Board Strategic Plan  
Implementation Program**

OBJECTIVES	Priority Ranking	Project Lead/Team	Tasks	Reporting Dates mm / dd / yr	Approval Requirements
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<b>Area of Effort No. 1</b>	<b>To develop a Vision for and to pursue a comprehensive initiative to build an inclusive Catholic learning community.</b>				
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1.1	Defining the School Board's role and responsibilities as a Catholic learning community.					
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1.2	Actively building linkages, undertaking dialogue and exploring relationship opportunities and needs with Catholic families, parishes and the Diocese.					
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1.3	Enrich the curriculum with the Ontario Catholic Graduate Student Expectations.					
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1.4	Developing system-wide strategies, in partnership with the parishes that support the daily living of the Catholic faith in the schools, sacramental preparation, the faith development of learners and staff, and the evident presence and foundation of the Catholic faith in all that the Board undertakes.					
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1.5	Continually advocating for the vitality, growth and importance of Catholic education.					
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**2006 - 2010 St. Clair Catholic District School Board Strategic Plan  
Implementation Program**

OBJECTIVES	Priority Ranking	Project Lead/Team	Tasks	Reporting Dates mm / dd / yr	Approval Requirements
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<b>Area of Effort No. 2</b>	<b>To actively pursue key initiatives that contribute significantly to growing the academic standards and excellence of the Board.</b>
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2.1	The potential development of technology programs for Catholic secondary school students.					
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2.2	Further developing, support and investment in an organizational culture of innovation and educational enrichment for all learners.					
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2.3	Development of a more coordinated teacher professional development strategy.					
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2.4	Identification and pursuit of opportunities that broaden the educational services of the Board related to demographic, local employment and other considerations.					
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2.5	Identification and development of strategies that focus on achieving high academic standards and positive outcomes for learners.					
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**2006 - 2010 St. Clair Catholic District School Board Strategic Plan  
Implementation Program**

OBJECTIVES	Priority Ranking	Project Lead/Team	Tasks	Reporting Dates mm / dd / yr	Approval Requirements
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<b>Area of Effort No. 3</b>	<b>To research and develop implementation strategies for a series of change management initiatives that are vital to the Board's longer term success and sustainability.</b>				
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3.1	Transitioning more grade eight students to Catholic secondary schools.					
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3.2	Developing plans and strategies that track and effectively respond to demographic shifts, such as declining service area populations and enrollment that will impact school sustainability and Board funding resources; immigration; an aging population, etc.					
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3.3	Developing partnerships with area educational institutions, community organizations, not-for profit and private sector service providers, and others in supporting positive economic growth, population growth and related community priorities.					
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3.5	Developing a long term Technology Plan for the Board's investment in hardware and software, ensures adequate support to sustain regular technology operations and ensures the comprehensive training of staff and others.					
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3.6	Developing a Pandemic Response Plan for the Board, in partnership with key health services and economic partners in the community.					
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**2006 - 2010 St. Clair Catholic District School Board Strategic Plan  
Implementation Program**

OBJECTIVES	Priority Ranking	Project Lead/Team	Tasks	Reporting Dates mm / dd / yr	Approval Requirements
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<b>Area of Effort No. 4</b>	<b>To continually invest in and develop strategies that enhances the Board's Human Resource capacities and contributes to a vibrant, faith-based organizational culture.</b>				
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4.1	Initiatives to create an enhanced work-life balance for staff.					
4.2	Developing and implementing a Transfer Policy for teachers and principals, along with a staff mentoring program.					
4.3	Growing the Board's leadership development program, focusing on shared leadership principles, including defining the role of principals.					
4.4	Developing strategies that enhance the availability and use of occasional teachers.					
4.5	Developing a communications plan and capacities that support individual initiatives within the Board and broadcast-based advocacy requirements.					
4.6	Working with community organizations / partners in developing proactive recruitment strategies and opportunities that attract professional and skilled staff to the area.					
4.7	Ensuring a more welcoming Catholic Education Centre.					

## **6.2 Strategic Plan Review**

The Strategic Plan needs to have regular reviews at the Board of Trustee or policy level beyond the internal reviews undertaken by staff and others as the various Areas of Effort move forward. The following review model is suggested for consideration by the Board:

- In the first year, a written or verbal presentation be made quarterly by the Director of Education as to what is occurring around the Strategic Plan as to the various initiatives, outcomes, challenges / barriers, related considerations and any adjustments that are being made. This could be reduced to semi-annually in the second year.
- Annually, a special session or part of a regular session of the Board of Trustees be convened to assess the progress being made, to make any significant adjustments to the Areas of Effort and implementation plan priorities based on new information, changes, etc.
- At the three-year anniversary, the Board of Trustees and Director of Education should undertake a major review of the Plan to ascertain its current relevancy and undertake any adjustments that need to be made on a small or large scale basis. The scale of any changes experienced or anticipated will determine the level of input, consultation and development necessary for the next generation of the Board's Strategic Plan after 2010.