



ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
Lighting the Way – Rejoicing in Our Journey

MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, March 31, 2020

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ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC HOLDS FIRST-EVER EXCLUSIVELY ELECTRONIC BOARD MEETING

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board held its first-ever exclusively electronic Board meeting this evening.

Members of the public were able to attend the electronic meeting as “observers” with audio access to the public session. Links have been posted to the Board website under “COVID-19 Updates” and “Board Meetings” which take stakeholders and interested members of the public to a site with audio access to the meeting. Closed captioning is also available.

“The new reality that has been thrust upon the global community by the COVID-19 pandemic has altered every aspect of our society,” says Director of Education Deb Crawford. “At St. Clair Catholic, this has not only meant a complete re-envisioning of our core business – leading and supporting the education of our students – it has also required the Board to overcome monumental challenges on the business side. That includes how we will meet as a Board for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Previously, Ontario regulation and the Board’s Procedural By-Laws have required that electronic Board meetings be conducted with the Chair, the Director of Education and at least one other Board member physically present in the room. However, on March 19, 2020 the Ministry of Education announced changes to O. Reg. 463/97, which permit school board meetings to be conducted exclusively via electronic means.

At tonight’s meeting, Trustees also temporarily suspended Sec. 8.8.1 and 8.8.2 of the Board’s Procedural By-Laws, to allow the changes. The new measures will remain in place for up to 60 calendar days following an order made under provincial law directing that the school closure has expired.



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ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC TRUSTEES RECEIVE REPORT ON BOARD CALENDAR FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

Trustees for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board have endorsed the proposed calendar for the 2020-2021 school year.

Calendars must be drafted in accordance with the *Education Act* and *Regulation 304 – School Year Calendar – Professional Activity Days*. The regular school year calendar is the period between September 1st and June 30th.

Under *Regulation 304*, school boards are required to designate three mandatory PA days per school year. Boards also have the authority to designate up to an additional four PA days per school year. The regulation also requires that the school year is to include a minimum of 194 school days. As a result, the minimum number of instructional days per school year is 187 and the total maximum number of possible PA days per school year is seven.

A consultation process was undertaken for the 2020-2021 calendar, which included the Lambton Kent District School Board, CSC Providence, the leadership of St. Clair Catholic's unions and associations and the Board Advisory Parent Council.

The proposed draft school year calendar includes the following:

- The school year for students will begin on Tuesday, September 8, 2020
- The final day for students is June 29, 2021
- Professional Activity days are scheduled for:
 - September 2, 2020
 - September 3, 2020
 - October 9, 2020
 - November 20, 2020
 - February 3, 2021
 - June 4, 2021
 - June 30, 2021
- Thanksgiving is October 12, 2020
- The Christmas Break is December 21, 2020 to January 1, 2021
- Family Day is February 15, 2021
- The March Break is March 15, 2021 to March 19, 2021
- Good Friday and Easter Monday are April 2, 2021 and April 5, 2021
- Victoria Day is May 24, 2021
- Secondary School Examination days are:
 - Semester 1: January 27, 2021 to February 2, 2021
 - Semester 2: June 23, 2021 to June 29, 2021

The proposed calendar will now be submitted to the Ministry of Education. It is not considered final until ministry approval is granted.



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BOARD APPROVES APPOINTMENT OF STUDENT TRUSTEES

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The St. Clair Catholic District School Board has approved the appointment of two students, who will serve as Student Trustees for the 2020-2021 school year.

They are:

- Mia Abate – St. Patrick’s Catholic High School, Sarnia
- Lucas Rupert, Ursuline College Chatham

During her three years at St. Patrick’s Mia Abate has been involved in a variety of school activities such as Reach for the Top, Arts and Culture SHSM, the School Store, Cyclone Aid, Irish Miracle and school productions such as ‘Footloose’ and ‘Matilda’. She consistently receives honour roll and other academic awards such as the religion award, the drama award and the W. E. Prentice History 2D Award. Outside of her school community, Mia is active in volunteer work with Rebound’s ‘Act II’ program, participation in her parish choir and performing with local theatre. Having come to St. Patrick’s from St. Joseph’s elementary school in Corunna where she was Minister of Communication and part of the Sacristan team, Mia is no stranger to leadership roles and she understands the importance of promoting Catholic education.

Lucas Rupert possess many gifts and talents, which he generously shares as a collaborative contributor, in and outside of Ursuline College. He is a faith-filled and dedicated Grade 11 student who excels academically, socially and spiritually due to his dedication and commitment. He actively discerns his faith by volunteering with the school Chaplaincy Team. He willingly serves at school Masses, prayer services, prayer devotion of the rosary and with the Lancers for Life, the school’s Pro Life Group. Lucas also serves as lector at Blessed Sacrament and St. Anne of the Lakes Parishes. Lucas participated in junior basketball and football and now offers support behind the scenes in the gym and theatre. He is excited and grateful to be able to bring Catholic student voice to the role of Student Trustee.

“It is an honour to present these students to the Board of Trustees as our nominees for Student Trustees for the coming year,” says Scott Johnson, Superintendent of Education for secondary schools. “I look forward to their reports as they represent the student voice from their schools at the Board table.”

The term of office for Student Trustee runs from August 2020 through July 2021.



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ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC EMPLOYEES DONATE \$10,000 FROM GOOD SAMARITAN FUND TO UNITED WAY IN CK AND LAMBTON

School closures during the COVID-19 pandemic has also meant the cancellation of student nutrition programs at schools in both Chatham-Kent and Sarnia-Lambton.

“We know that for some families, access to our school nutrition programs is an important and reliable supplement for healthy and nutritious foods and any disruption to that access can be very stressful,” says Deb Crawford, Director of Education.

“That is why our staff is making a \$10,000 donation to be divided evenly between United Way Chatham-Kent and the United Way of Sarnia-Lambton. Through these organizations, we know our families will be able to access emergency funds for food,” says Mrs. Crawford.

The money is being donated from the Board’s *Good Samaritan Fund*, which is an account created by employee donations to be used for student needs not covered by *Noelle’s Gift*. It is most often used to support students and families to participate in educational excursions and school trips.

In Chatham-Kent, a partnership has been developed between United Way Chatham-Kent and the Ontario Student Nutrition Program. Families in need of food can apply to obtain grocery gift cards by registering at www.ckgives.ca or calling 519-354-0430 ext. 202.

In Sarnia-Lambton, the Board’s donation will be ear-marked for community partners, who can access United Way funds for food programs to support families and children.

“We are so grateful to the St. Clair Catholic District School Board for this very generous contribution to the United Way of Sarnia Lambton Compassion Fund,” says Dave Brown, Executive Director of United Way Sarnia-Lambton. “Educators and board staff have been consistent and reliable partners of the United Way for many years.”

“We appreciate the support of St. Clair Catholic as we work shoulder to shoulder (nine feet apart) with community partners, government and donors to respond to our local needs and develop solutions – like we have in our partnership with the CK Student Nutrition Program, to bring emergency funding to offset the cost of food for kids,” says Karyn O’Neil, Director, Community Engagement and Operations for United Way Chatham-Kent.