

Information at your Fingertips

We encourage you to visit our newly redesigned Ottawa-Carleton District School Board website at www.ocdsb.ca for complete program and school information and much more. Among the many new features you'll find:

- **School Locator** — assists in locating the school nearest you offering the programs of your choice
- **Parents Corner** — featuring a wealth of information for parents on everything from how to find a childcare centre to homework tips and helping your child succeed
- **Community Corner** — helpful information on moving to Ottawa, how to rent our facilities, or volunteer in our schools
- **Students Corner** — information on the arts, sports, on-line learning, community service, and more

This *Report to the Community* is also available in electronic format on our website. If you would like to have additional copies delivered to you, please call Communications and Information Services at 613-721-1820.



Strategic Directions

A Report to the Community

Fall 2007



Educating for Success — Inspiring Learning and Building Citizenship



OTTAWA-CARLETON
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



Chair of the Board Rob Campbell (on the left) and Director of Education Dr. Lorne Rachlis stay in touch with students and teachers through visits to schools across the District. Much to their delight, Mme Beaupré's grade one/two French Immersion class at Knoxdale Public School had an opportunity to host a visit from the Chair and Director this fall.

Our Mission:

*Educating for Success —
Inspiring Learning and
Building Citizenship*

Over the course of the school year our stakeholders can expect to see the many outstanding achievements of our students and of our educators, as well as measurable improvement in student success. We are well underway in demonstrating the District's dedication to being a vital, focused, and highly accountable part of our community.

We encourage all readers of this report to visit our website regularly at www.ocdsb.ca for more detailed information on our new Strategic Plan, its progress and its implementation, for updated news, and for the opportunity to provide input and suggestions on current issues.

Respectfully,

Rob Campbell
Chair of the Board

Dr. Lorne M. Rachlis
Director of Education/
Secretary to the Board

Our Report to the Community

It is our great privilege to present our *Fall 2007 Report to the Community* outlining the goals, the achievements, and some of the exciting new challenges of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. In providing public education to almost 70,000 students through a diverse range of programs available in our 117 elementary schools, 25 secondary schools, and five secondary alternate program sites, we are ever mindful of our position as a public trust with the obligation to provide the best possible education to our students while operating in a fully transparent and positive manner.

We also recognize that our success as a school district comes one student at a time. We strive to maintain our focus on each student — his or her individual abilities, challenges, and ambitions — to help guarantee not only increased graduation rates but heightened learning, motivation, and commitment to excellence among our students and our staff.

To effectively support both school improvement and our capacity to reach every student in our care, we have undertaken one of the most comprehensive planning exercises in the school district's history. This past summer, we reached the first milestone in this process by approving a four-year Strategic Plan aimed at enhancing and strengthening absolutely every aspect of our operations. This plan, entitled *Learning, Leadership, and Community: A Focus for our Future*, represents the culmination of many months of research, consultation, dialogue, and planning.

In today's dynamic environment, no strategic plan can be set in stone. The increasing diversity of our community and improvements to education delivery demand that we continually review, evaluate, and refine our goals and how we go about reaching them. Necessarily, the plan must also reflect a thorough understanding of our financial realities.

We continue to represent our unique requirements to the Government of Ontario and while pursuing creative initiatives such as our foreign student program and the Education Foundation of Ottawa, both of which yield additional non-taxpayer revenues to support our programs, and to pursue partnerships with other community agencies to support non-educational needs of our students. We continue also to examine our services to students and to ask if we can do better within our means.

In developing the plan, our focus was, "Where do we want to go as an organization?" As we move to the implementation stage of the plan our focus shifts to, "How are we going to get there?"

The District Improvement Plan is the ongoing road-map for our work on academic achievement under the Strategic Plan. We have identified and defined the path to greater student success and we are already on it.

Learning, Leadership, and Community: A Focus for our Future

On July 4, 2007, a four-year strategic plan was approved by the Board. Entitled *Learning, Leadership, and Community: A Focus for our Future*, the document builds on our three primary focus areas for the school district:

- Learning
- Leadership
- Community

It is worthwhile noting that the Strategic Plan is not only the result of intense work on the part of staff and trustees but the collected wisdom of a wide variety of our stakeholders. Throughout this process, we have tried to integrate the ideas, information, community input, and decisions of other reviews and initiatives underway such as the Ideas for Education Forum, budget discussions, the Special Education Review, the Leadership Initiative, the French as a Second Language Review, the Accommodation Reviews, the Cooke Report, and the Special Assistance Team Report.

The strategic planning process began with an environmental scan, which included both a qualitative and a quantitative analysis of the issues and impacts facing our school district. The qualitative analysis consisted of a comprehensive review of demographic and student achievement data with a view to identifying trends. The qualitative analysis was centred on a series of 18 dialogue forums called the OCDSB Cafés. These focus groups involved over 400 students, parents, Board members, teachers, principals and vice-principals, staff, union/federation representatives, senior staff, managers, Board advisory committees, the multicultural community, and other community partners.

Throughout our discussions there were two main contexts for vision: our vision for student learning and our vision for the OCDSB as an organization. There was a strong sense that while the vision for the school district must be student-focused, we cannot be successful in achieving that vision unless we become more effective as an organization.

The following vision has been developed for the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board:

To focus on student success through an effective organization

Flowing from that vision is a new mission statement which speaks to the central purpose of our organization: who it is and what it is about.

“Educating for Success — Inspiring Learning and Building Citizenship”

Every strategic and operational decision is now assessed against this mission statement to ensure the decision advances and is connected to the mission of the organization. When a decision does not align with the mission statement hard questions are raised as to why the decision is being made.

In arriving at our mission, we set out a series of belief statements. For a school district, belief statements are a means of expressing what we believe about students, their potential to learn, and the philosophy that governs our relationship to that learning.

We believe that:

- Every student can learn.
- Every student can benefit from school.
- Every student must be respected, valued, and acknowledged as an individual.
- The individual needs of our students, as these needs change over time, must determine the education we provide.
- Education will enhance students’ opportunities and abilities to function independently.
- There must be continuous improvement of our students and of our schools and staff and the education they provide.
- Education should be delivered in the home class or home school when it meets a student’s needs.

- Our schools must be collaborative, welcoming, and connected with their communities.
- It is the shared responsibility of school, family, and community to support and motivate students to be prepared to meet the challenges of the future.

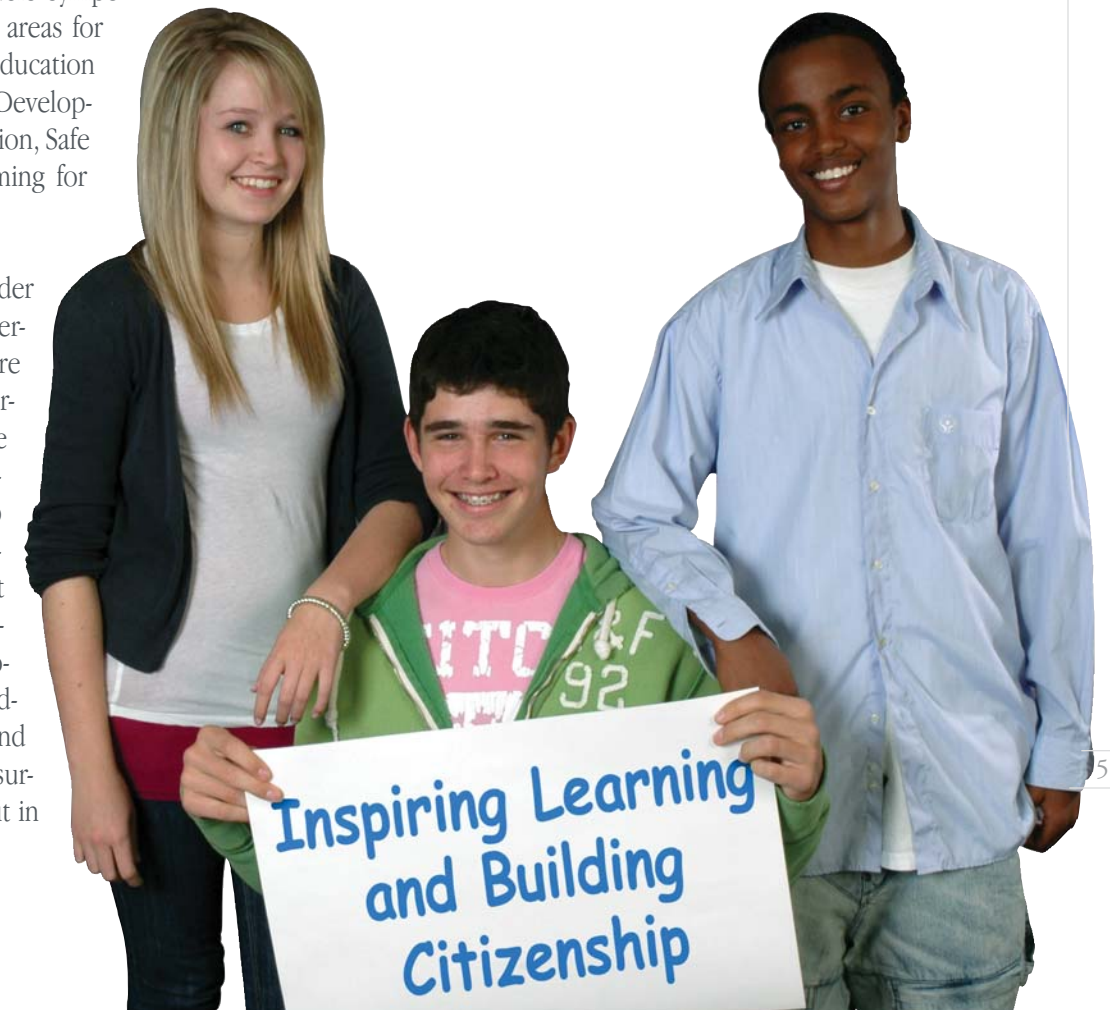
In distilling these beliefs three areas of focus emerged: learning, leadership, and community. These areas of focus — our pillars, if you will — provide a very strong but simple message about what is important to our system and reflect the interests and needs of students, staff, Board members, parents, and other stakeholders.

Your Board well understands that values and beliefs must be put into action. They must inform our initiatives. In developing our Implementation Strategy and District Improvement Plan we carefully identified five specific areas for our work this year. We will be holding a system leaders’ symposium for each of these areas for the delivery of Special Education support, Leadership Development, Character Education, Safe Schools, and Programming for Students at Risk.

These system leader symposiums are interdependent and are designed to be inter-related. They constitute the training that will inform and help develop excellent school and department improvement plans. The improvement plans will also provide guidance for individual professional goals and growth plans while ensuring that all the pieces fit in the ‘big picture.’

A key feature of the Strategic Plan and all subsequent initiatives is our emphasis on evaluation — the acquisition of detailed information and indicators so that we may, very quickly and rationally, identify trends and challenges facing individual schools, individual departments, and individual students and then logically reapply resources to improving their results.

The following pages provide an overview of how we understand our areas of focus — learning, leadership, and community. They also lay out our immediate objectives and the ways in which we intend to reach them.



Learning

To recognize our focus on student learning through program quality, effective instructional practice, and valid and sustainable learning supports . . .

Students Learning Locally and Acting Globally

"I'm proud of our students who think making a difference is something you do with an education but also something you do to earn your education."

As part of a project to 'think local, act global,' 16 inspired students from Gloucester High School and Woodroffe High School rolled up their sleeves to help build a family their first home in Guatemala. The venture was made possible through Habitat for Humanity's Global Village Project.

Going to Guatemala to work on this project was a life-changing experience for the students. They saw first-hand the challenges people face in third-world countries but also how acts of compassion, like theirs, can make a real difference in the lives of others.

"This is exactly the innovative approach to education that we encourage at Woodroffe High School," says Principal Kevin Bush. "I'm proud of our students who think making a difference is something you do with an education but also something you do to earn your education. Projects like this emphasize respect, diversity, and a commitment to teaching students to think and act both locally and globally."

Principal Lynn Thompson at Gloucester High School agrees, "This project is indicative of the commitment, integrity, leadership, and citizenship that is being put into practice every day by our staff and students."

When the students returned to Ottawa, they shared their Guatemalan experience with elementary students in the hopes they too will be inspired to 'think local, act global.'

Sixteen of our students travelled to Guatemala last March to help a family in need build their first house. It was an experience of a lifetime according to Gloucester's Meghan Storey (first row, second from left) and Woodroffe's Dave Conboy and Ian Eskritt (first row, left to right) — three of the teachers who accompanied the students.





Student Mark Brougham is shown using a compound mitre saw in the on-site course lab at the school.

Learning Trades in a Real World Environment

Our programs are designed so that students can earn four credits in one semester by focusing on a specific area of technology.

Our school district is committed to providing as many program choices as possible for our students. The Trades and Technology Initiative is part of this drive in order to give students real-world exposure to the many rewarding careers available in the skilled-trades field. Our programs are designed so that students can earn four credits in one semester by focusing on a specific area of technology.

In addition to House Building and Manufacturing Technology, students in grades 11 and 12 can now enrol in Cabinet Making and Landscape and Design. Trades and Technology Curriculum Consultant Kevin Shea, who coordinates the creation and delivery of the programs, says the Cabinet Making course is giving students an opportunity to experience cabinet making in a unique and authentic environment. Students get to know first-hand what it would be like to have a career in the cabinet-making industry

allowing them to knowledgeably choose this as a career, be it through a work-place apprenticeship or a post-secondary program.

The Landscape and Design Program seeks to give students a similar opportunity through a variety of in-class and on-site projects. Students learn the fundamentals of landscape design, the art of working with interlocking stone, and the essentials of creating and installing retaining walls. Instruction takes place in the greenhouse, classroom, and through projects undertaken in the community.

Such innovative choices wouldn't be possible without community partners who provide facilities and much more for the students. As an example, one of Ottawa's leading kitchen cabinet makers, Laurysen Kitchens, has been generously welcoming students into its state-of-the-art facilities.

The Learning Pillar: Student learning is the key focus of our school district.

In our learning community we provide quality programs, supports, and instructional practices that lead to success for all students and inspire lifelong learning. It is our responsibility as leaders to ensure that the curriculum intended is the curriculum delivered which in turn enables the curriculum that is learned.

We recognize that learning is the outcome of quality programs, good instructional practice, and proper program supports for all students and that we must exercise rigour and prudence in managing our resources to provide the most effective tools and processes to reach our objectives.

The Learning Objective

To recognize our focus on student learning through program quality, effective instructional practice, and valid and sustainable learning supports through the development of:

- a community school framework and implementation strategy
- a program renewal process which facilitates an ongoing cycle of program reviews to ensure program quality, accessibility, sustainability, and innovation
- a focus on literacy and numeracy in support of the full curriculum
- comprehensive differentiated instructional practices supported by early and tiered intervention strategies
- improved assessment and evaluation practices through enhanced training, assessment tools, and strategies
- supports for vulnerable or potentially vulnerable learners through access to internal or external resources and alternative learning strategies
- a capital plan and an accommodation review process which facilitates the natural cycle of accommodation studies

District wide we are establishing a program-renewal process that allows for a holistic look at program quality and allows for both the development of new

programs and the retirement of programs which no longer best meet our students' needs.

As part of our commitment to increasing focus on our literacy and numeracy programs we have instituted a more rigorous system of benchmarks. While, with few exceptions, student achievement in the provincially mandated standardized testing in grades 3, 6, 9, and 10 is at or above province-wide averages, we have set about to improve results in a much more intense manner not only in the four grades for which there is standardized testing but for every school year from kindergarten to grade 12. Our goals (for example, to see 75 per cent of grade 3 and 6 students pass reading, writing, and numeracy tests) are ambitious but attainable.

Improved delivery and measurement of our curriculum is critical. So too is the creation of an optimal learning environment which increases the chances for student success. For this reason, we are focusing on character education, anti-bullying initiatives, balanced school days, balanced reading programs, improved resource rooms, a tiered approach to special education delivery, safe and caring schools, wellness, and an enhanced superintendency model for learning support to our schools.





Warren Rousselle, left, and Adrianna Nystedt are shown recording a new segment for Portable Radio, their on-line podcast site. Looking on is teacher Nathan Toft, who together with Jane Smith (not shown) created this innovative project to further develop language skills in their students.

Using Podcasts to Expand the Learning Landscape

Jane Smith and Nathan Toft say the technology is motivating students to be better writers and communicators — use of the technology has captivated them and, as a result, their work is steadily improving.

Scholastic Books is always looking for cutting-edge educational material and they found it at A. Lorne Cassidy Elementary School thanks to the unique teaching styles and innovative thinking of teachers Jane Smith and Nathan Toft.

The two teachers have incorporated the use of podcasts into their classroom assignments much to the delight of students. In a nutshell, podcasting is a new type of on-line media delivery that lets the students create their own on-line content and invite others to listen in.

Jane Smith and Nathan Toft say the technology is motivating students to be better writers and communicators — use of the technology has captivated them and, as a result, their work is steadily improving. “It is no small thing knowing that other students are hearing your work,” say the teachers.

The students are currently engaged in projects that are shared with over 15 classrooms in countries around the globe including France, Russia, Sweden, Wales, Africa, and New Zealand.

After hearing about the success of the program, Scholastic approached the teachers to submit a book proposal. They were successful and *The Portable Radio* booklet is now part of Scholastic’s Literacy Place Guided Reading Series, *Moving Up*. At the time of writing the book was solely available through the Scholastic website under teaching resources.

You can tune into the students’ podcasts at www.portableradio.ca.

Credit: Chris Mikula/Ottawa Citizen. Reprinted by permission.



Shown with her students, and other chums, at Broadview Public School is award winner Peggy Morris.

Premier Bestows Excellence in Teaching Awards

Each school day parents hand over their most precious gifts — their children — to educators. With this gesture of trust comes the deeply challenging task of guiding our youth to becoming effective, empowered, creative adults. The 2006–2007 Premier’s Awards for Teaching Excellence recognize educators and staff who excel at unlocking the potential of Ontario’s young people.

This past year, two of our teachers were acknowledged with the Premier’s Award for Teaching Excellence. Celina Cada-Matasawagon and Peggy Morris were chosen by Premier Dalton McGuinty from among 1,000 nominations coming in from across Ontario.

Celina Cada-Matasawagon is a teacher at the Urban Aboriginal Alternate High School Program and she was chosen in the category of Outstanding New Teacher. Celina assists her Aboriginal students by building upon their self-esteem and encouraging them to take pride in their Native heritage. As an example, she has incorporated culturally relevant material for her students into their programming by awarding outdoor education credits that include dog sledding and winter camping.

Peggy Morris, a teacher at Broadview Public School, was chosen to receive the Award for Excellence for her dedication in helping special needs students excel in the classroom. Peggy combines her love of teaching with the arts to stimulate her students’ creativity and uncover their hidden talents.

To find out how you can nominate a teacher for an award, visit www.ontario.ca/teachingawards. Deadline for nominations is January 28, 2008. The award categories are:

- Teacher of the Year
- New Teacher of the Year
- Excellent Support Staff
- Excellence in Leadership
- Team of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement

The Leadership Pillar: Inspiring today’s students to become tomorrow’s leaders.

The quality and quantity of future leaders can, to a large extent, be influenced and even determined by their experience within the public education system.

It is, therefore, our privilege as a school district to provide rich and rewarding exposure to as many diverse opportunities as practicable, to help our students acquire useful and relevant knowledge, to encourage them to develop critical thinking, and to gain an appreciation for, and engagement with, their community at hand and the world at large.

Leadership is exemplified by people who are able to impact those around them in a positive way. Our leaders within the District are energetic, empathetic, motivated, trustworthy, knowledgeable, and good communicators. Our leaders understand that their role is one of support, guidance, and encouragement. Daily, they lead by example, they seek input, and they listen. As an organization we encourage and foster these qualities because whether in challenging or prosperous times we, every one of us, are defined by the relationships we build.

The Leadership Objective

To model responsible leadership to our students, ourselves, and our community through our commitment to personal growth, organizational effectiveness, and good governance by:

- recognizing, encouraging, and celebrating leadership through the development of a comprehensive leadership strategy
- emphasizing the importance of personal growth and leadership through sustainable character-development initiatives
- establishing an organizational planning and decision-making framework that supports the key values, priorities, and directions of the Strategic Plan and provides an ongoing link to the Board Improvement Plan
- undertaking a comprehensive governance review to ensure an effective governance framework to support the Board and its committees in achieving its vision and mission

- improving internal communications’ strategies and processes
- creating an accountability framework linked to the Strategic Plan and based on measurable outcomes

At the District level we are increasing our leadership development programs, recognition programs, personal and professional development strategies to give our people every available opportunity to grow as leaders. We are also revising our governance structure, redefining the leadership role of the Board of Trustees, and enhancing how we do business and prioritize meetings and agendas. Additionally, we are strengthening our participation in community events. For example, our annual United Way campaign is just one of the many ways we demonstrate our community involvement.

In short, we are working hard to ensure that, at every turn, our students come into contact and learn — informally and formally — from the leaders we are developing. By ‘walking the talk,’ our personnel — educators, administrators, and support professionals — can provide enduring role models and immediate demonstrations of the value, appeal, and attainability of leadership abilities and practices.

In addition to the modelling of leadership qualities by staff, we aim to improve personal growth at the student level by holding character-development events in every school, by promoting awareness of key character attributes for students, and by incorporating character development aspects in all our initiatives including the District Improvement Plan, school improvement plans, and all our curriculum planning, instruction, and resource documents.





Brookfield Students Join Long Walk to Freedom

"A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination."

What does it take to get a whole school community walking out in support of eradicating world poverty? You stage a Long Walk to Freedom in support of Nelson Mandela's Children's Fund.

Brookfield principal Anne Gillespie says the United Nations' International Day (October 17) for the Eradication of Poverty has been observed every year in countries around the world since 1993. The day is used to promote awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution around the world, particularly in developing countries. To mark this day her students and staff gather to show their support for this initiative and took their 'long walk to freedom' through their neighbouring community.

Joining in on the walk were several special guests including representatives from the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, the South African High Commission, the school's own World Voices Choir, and the Brookfield Drummers.

In addition to the walk, students took part in various other awareness activities including a look at global poverty issues, South Africa past and present, and the amazing life of Nelson Mandela himself.

"Many of our Brookfield neighbours came out to cheer us on during the walk, making it a very inspiring day for our students and staff," says Anne. "Our students are better informed for having held this day and as Mr. Mandela says, 'A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination.'"



Cedarview Middle School students join with Doug, a special volunteer at their school, to celebrate the completion of their seventh annual Walkathon to raise funds for the physically disabled in our community.

Cedarview Middle School Students Dare to Make a Difference

The students are learning the value and reward of contributing to those less fortunate in their community.

As part of its Character Education Program 'Renaissance,' Cedarview Middle School held its seventh annual walkathon this fall to raise funds for some 62 people with multiple disabilities and special communication needs living in Ottawa — including a special friend named Doug.

Over 750 students, staff, and community members showed their character as they participated in the walkathon and raised well over \$75,000 for Doug and his peers.

For many years Doug has volunteered at Cedarview Middle School in the classroom of his sister, teacher Barb Troutman. Doug provides intermediate students with a first-hand opportunity to learn about people who communicate through sign language and struggle with other physical disabilities.

The students are learning the value and reward of contributing to those less fortunate in their community. The motto for Cedarview's Renaissance Program is *Dare to Make a Difference* and these students are surely doing just that.

The Community Pillar: Public education is both the heart and the mind of a healthy community.

Our schools are integral components of their communities at large. Their vitality, accessibility, and relevance make a direct and ongoing contribution to the quality of life around them as well as for the students within them.

Community is both the place where we live and the people with whom we interact. Our commitment to community recognizes that education is not the result of one child and one teacher in a classroom but rather a community engaged in learning together. An effective community is built on a sense of trust, respect, and recognition of our individual and collective responsibility, our diversity, and our need to work collaboratively to ensure success for our students and our future.

The Community Objective

To celebrate our commitment to community through responsible citizenship, collaborative partnership, and the stewardship of resources by:

- recognizing the diversity of our community through the development and implementation of a diversity strategy
- creating a healthy workplace community with a focus on wellness, trust, and respect for all staff
- maximizing opportunities for responsible citizenship, collaborative partnership, and innovation which contributes to community development
- reviewing external communication strategies, techniques, and messaging processes with a view to creating more effective community dialogue and engagement
- using technology effectively to improve both student-learning opportunities and the coordination of information resources
- improving human, administrative, and financial management practices and systems that ensure responsible and sustainable resource management

At the Board level, we are exploring the development of community leadership forums to engage the school district in a dialogue with the broader community. We are doing great things with partners such as the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation (OCRI); municipal, provincial, and federal governments; organizations; and business sectors.

Today's students are much more globally aware than previous generations and they act on their awareness through such positive steps as energy conservation initiatives, in fundraising for charitable and medical causes, and in direct interaction with students around the world.

Beyond the direct assistance provided, connection to the 'outside' world instils within our students a sense of pride in their individual contributions and in their school's activism. Moreover, it helps confirm the value and importance of their citizenship in their city, their country, and their world. Finally and perhaps most importantly, it helps create an environment where community awareness and service is not an extraordinary activity but a way of life.



About our District

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) is the largest school district in Eastern Ontario serving students within a 2,760 square kilometre area known as the city of Ottawa. We are the seventh largest district by school population in the province of Ontario.

Our Students

We have a vibrant, enthusiastic learning community that benefits from a wide range of programs that promote excellence and meet individual needs. All of our schools are learning communities where our staff support and challenge students to achieve their best in academics, the arts, athletics, and technology. In addition, students requiring specialized programming, both elementary and secondary, have many supports in place to ensure their academic success. Our enrolment as of October 31, 2007 totalled 72,372 students (47,074 elementary and 25,298 secondary).

Our Staff

The total number of full-time equivalent elementary teachers was 2,711 and the number of secondary teachers was 1,627. The number of principals and vice-principals totalled 238. Approximately 2,494 teachers were on the occasional teachers list. We had a total of 2,055 administrative and support staff of whom 1,817 work in the schools.

Schools and Programs

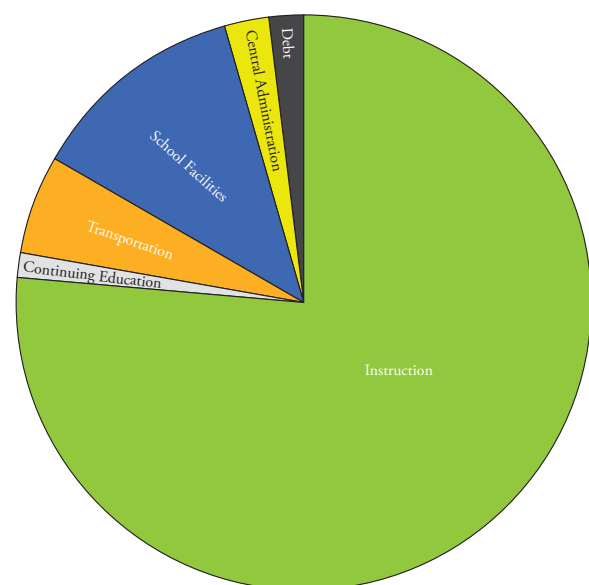
We operate 147 school sites — 117 elementary, 25 secondary including the Adult High School and five secondary alternate sites. Our elementary schools provide English with Core French, Early French Immersion (EFI), Middle French Immersion (MFI), and Late French Immersion (LFI) programs, which are delivered in single, dual, and triple-track schools. Six schools offer the Alternative Elementary Program. Our secondary schools offer a wide

variety of programs including French Immersion, Extended French, International Baccalaurate, Arts, and High-performance Athlete.

Please visit www.ocdsb.ca to read *More Schools, More Choices, A Guide to our Elementary and Secondary Programs*.

2007–2008 Operating Budget September 1, 2007 to August 31, 2008

	Percent	\$Millions
Instruction	76.6%	486.4
Continuing Education	1.3%	8.3
Transportation	5.7%	36.1
School Facilities	12.2 %	77.3
Central Administration	2.4%	15.3
Debt and Transfer to Capital Reserves	1.8%	11.4
Total	100%	634.8



Our Board of Trustees December 1, 2006 to November 30, 2010



Cathy Curry
Zone 2



Rob Campbell
Chair of the Board
Zone 9



Lynn Scott
Vice-chair of the Board
Zone 1



Greg Laws
Zone 7



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