

Reverend Father, Director DiRocco, Superintendents, Trustees and guests. I am humbled to stand before you this evening for the Inauguration of our Board of Trustees. I am grateful for the confidence you have shown in allowing me to be your Chairperson.

As we begin this term I look forward with cautious optimism. I welcome Trustee Speagle into the role of Vice-Chair and Trustee Murphy as Chair of the Finance and Operations Committee. We will work collaboratively in service of our mission and I know I will look to them for support and advice throughout this term.

I am optimistic because this Board has enjoyed years of unwavering leadership from our Director, our Superintendents, Managers, Principals and Vice Principals. Also, we have educators who prove each day that they live their faith and the knowledge to lead our children in a faith filled learning environment.

We must be cautious however, because we are facing many new challenges with many new faces. With the power to influence how our schools operate, we must share our experiences cautiously and learn to adapt to the ever changing education landscape that shapes our children's learning experience.

The recent Provincial election ended a 17 year Liberal government. Their funding model became familiar and supported innovation, technical support in the classroom, new learning techniques and the need for special funding for students with special needs. Early indications suggest that our new Provincial government is seeking savings from all provincial Ministry's. When government's actions are uncharted, Trustees must listen to our administration and support their actions for the benefit of our students.

The need for two English First Language School Boards continues to be an item for discussion for special interest groups. The role of the Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board is to continue to provide the best possible learning environment and actively demonstrate the benefits of Catholic education.

Our Faith is the foundation of our schools and for 11 years, Archbishop O'Brien has been our spiritual guide and church leader, providing help for the faith formation in our students. Our gratitude cannot be summarized in a few words. Thank you from all of us. We wish His Grace the best in his retirement.

Our schools provide children with a path to the sacraments and in many homes, the child's only opportunity to practice our faith. As partners in faith development we must continue to work with our Parish Priests to encourage families to worship

together at Mass because we know the partnership of school, home and church help strengthen families. I encourage Trustees to make themselves available to Parishes in order to reinforce our partnership in faith development.

New Elementary School construction in both Kingston and Belleville is confirmed and much of the planning is underway. Both facilities will benefit from the innovations in facility design applied at St. Francis of Assisi where shared space and shared resources are combined with new teaching concepts. The Universal Design for Learning Framework allows the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board to meet the needs of ALL learners.

We will welcome our new Director Mr. David DeSantis in January. David comes to our Board with an impressive pedigree and steadfast in his faith. David brings a broad spectrum of knowledge beyond the classroom which complements our team of outstanding Superintendents that will provide consistency during the transition of leadership in 2019.

The arrival of Director DeSantis marks the conclusion of an impressive career in education for our outgoing Director Jody DiRocco. I cannot begin to describe how we all have benefited from Director DiRocco's leadership, dedication, prayerful guidance and friendship. On behalf of all Trustees who had the

privilege of serving under your leadership, thank you and best wishes in your retirement.

Our November Board was the final meeting for ½ of our Trustee panel. Forty-Five combined years of service and experience from five dedicated Trustees was lost with the retirement of our fellow Trustees. We appreciate their service and dedication to Catholic Education. We know that their contribution has made an indelible impression on our Board.

To our new Trustees, you will be surprised by the amount of new information, the number of acronyms, the people's names you should remember and number of invitations you will receive. Take time to get to know our Board and the people who work here, both will impress you and give you confidence that we provide education with our faith as the beacon.

To all who are assembled here, I look forward to the year ahead and I thank you for your contribution to the education and faith development of our children.

Thank you.