

Happy New Year to you all

2012 promises to be an important year for Education. Here are some of the things that lie ahead.

Area Accommodation Reviews

Decisions will be made by trustees about secondary schools in the inner city, including Sir John A Macdonald; the west, including Westdale; on the Mountain; as well as about schools in the elementary review of Dalewood, Prince Philip and George R.Allan. On **January 16th** trustees at the Committee of the Whole will receive staff and committee recommendations for the Dalewood review, and on **March 20** hear public input to these recommendations. The recommendations for inner city, West and Mountain secondary schools from staff and the committees will be received by trustees on **February 13**. The Public meetings for input regarding the inner city will be held **March 27th**, that for the west on **April 2** and that for the mountain on **April 10**. **The Board will make decisions about these recommendations no earlier than April 30th for the Dalewood review, and May 28th for the secondary reviews.**

New Education Centre

The Board will make final decisions about the Education Centre when the conditions for the sale of the present property to McMaster are met. If all goes as planned, the Board will build a new centre on its present site at Crestwood, off upper Wentworth, and move to rented space while the new centre is being built. The cost of the new centre will be \$31 million, and will be paid for by the sale of property presently housing administrative offices, and from the savings in operating costs of these inefficient buildings. The new Education Centre will be smaller than the combined administration buildings currently being used. It was determined in 2007 that to renovate the current Education Centre and add an addition to house all the staff then working in four different sites would cost \$55 million. The current proposal at \$31 million is a fiscally responsible solution, and it will not use any funds needed for new schools.

French Immersion

The Board will be considering starting the French Immersion program in grade 1 instead of kindergarten at the Board meeting on January 30th. A new single track FI school is being considered in Binbrook to help overcrowding at FI schools on the Mountain.

Secondary Program Strategy

This strategy is designed to bring the programs into our high schools that are needed for 21st century learning, and is closely tied to the accommodation reviews currently taking place in secondary schools. It includes, for the first time, a comprehensive approach to supports for special education students, whatever their destination to community, workplace, apprenticeship, college or university. Further work will be needed to implement what is an ambitious program over several years.

The Budget

There will be difficult decisions to be made in the budget as the Province has indicated that this coming year there will only be a 1% increase in funding, which is lower than inflation.

Aboriginal Students

I will continue to work with the Hamilton Aboriginal Education Committee (HAEC). I hope to see the approval and implementation of the HWDSB First Nation, Metis, and Inuit policy. This will lead to a self-identification process and an advisory committee to build on developments to increase these students' success.

All Day Kindergarten

In September 2012, approximately 50% of all kindergarten students will be attending full-day programs. There are some challenges to find the dedicated kindergarten classroom space required in Ward 1 schools, and as a result programs here will not begin until 2013 or 2014. We still need to sort out the issues concerning the extended care of these students, and I will continue to work on providing as seamless a day as possible for the children.

Other work

As chair of the Policy Committee I will be working to finish the review of Board policies and the policy process. I will be monitoring the effects wherever possible of the reduction in settlement services for our newest immigrant and refugee students. Sitting on the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), the Special Education Advisory Committee, and the Parent Engagement Committee of the Best Start Network, I will continue to work to extend support to parents and the use of the new Parent Charter. Through the Best Start Network and the Youth Strategy under the auspices of the United Way, I will continue to be strive for integrated services for children and youth. With community members, I will continue to see how health supports can be increased to support families and children through my work on the Advisory Committee of the Family Nurse Partnership, a Code Red group looking at low birth weight babies (many of whom will require special education in the school system), and another group concerned to bring nurses into our high needs schools.

Please see my updated web site <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/aboutus/trustees/jbishop/index.aspx>

I have posted articles and comments on my blog <http://allchildrenspotential.blogspot.com/>

I look forward to working with you and value hearing from you in 2012.

Good wishes