

## Virtual Views Featuring Lillian Orban, Trustee for Ward 7 (Central Mountain) - [Top](#)



The dictionary definition of “challenge” is “thought-provoking, debatable, on the agenda, under consideration, question, doubt, or dispute.”

My aims as a trustee are two-fold: foremost, to serve my Ward 7 public and community of parents, students, and staff; secondly, to participate in decision-making to promote student success.

One challenge we face is living up to the maxim, “It takes a village to raise a child.” This implies shared responsibility, which can only be achieved by building collaborative relationships. This will ensure learning takes place at various stages in a student’s growth and development, in settings such as co-ops or on the sports field. We must address the “whole child” – through exposure to the arts, sports, the trades and life skills. Success is about more than results on standardized tests.

Declining enrolment, growth areas and aging infrastructure make capital planning another challenge for HWDSB. We have already closed many older elementary schools, and opened new ones. But we now face the challenge of having surplus space in our high schools – this could see the closure of some of our secondary schools by 2014. Will this raise issues of school location and size, transportation and technology? This remains to be seen.

Thirdly, when HWDSB no longer needs property, challenges arise. We have a property disposition protocol intended to ensure positive relationships and communication between the Board, the City of Hamilton and our communities. Still, disposing of former school sites as the Board is required under the Education Act has strained relations with some members of the public who deem school sites to be community-owned assets. This raises questions such as: Should the provincial Ministry of Education reconsider the sale of school board lands under Bill 444? And, should the city and Board work on a joint approach to save green space for communities?

Lastly, some HWDSB programs raise challenges for us. We now have about 2,000 students enrolled in programs of choice at schools across the Board and aim for 5,000 in 2010, as we strive to engage each student in his or her education. These programs and Specialist High Skills Majors are not offered at every school, so transportation becomes a challenge for parents. This underscores the importance of a joint public-Catholic school board transportation effort.

And as we celebrate students for becoming part of the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), it is because they will gain work experience through co-op education. My motion to have HWDSB become an employer for these students is a work in progress. We spend millions of dollars on renovations, repairs and new school construction. We should be using these projects as learning opportunities for our students.

Change is the constant. Challenge is the change.

Lillian Orban  
Trustee, Ward 7