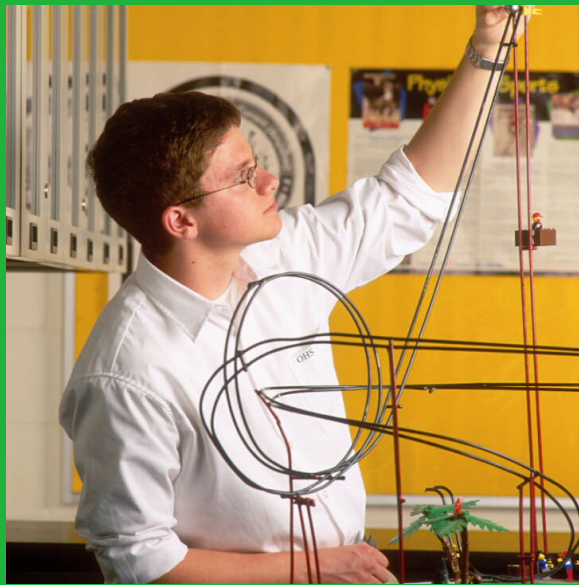




TRACING OUR ROOTS:

A Historical Overview Of The Northeastern Catholic District School Board



OCTOBER 2004

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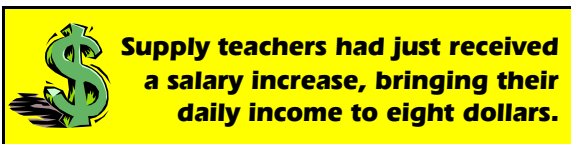
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The Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) is the product of the coming together of regions, of boards, of schools, and of people from Catholic communities throughout northeastern Ontario.

Each region has its own roots, and in fact, had its own separate school board at one time, operating with both English and French language sections.

KIRKLAND LAKE AREA

The earliest recorded minutes of Catholic Education for the Kirkland Lake area date back to September 1954, under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Separate School Board Teck and Lebel. Increases in enrolment figure prominently on the agenda, with the introduction of shift classes at Holy Name School and the construction of a new nine-room building as solutions. At that time, the Board consisted of Mr. A. Lafrance, Mr. G. McCrank and Mr. A. Seguin. The Sisters of the Assumption were well represented on the teaching staff. To put a context on the time period, imagine that the supply teachers had just received a salary increase, bringing their daily income to eight dollars.



One issue that was frequently debated even then was the extension of Catholic education to the secondary panel, for grades nine and ten. Among the considerations figured the need to pay salaries of the additional teachers entirely from the tax base, and the lack of space in the existing facilities. As things stood, the grade one class counted 110 students, twice the number in the graduating class. With this additional bulge of students entering the system, adding grades nine and ten would require that the basement be converted into a classroom, a move that would have proved unpopular with the Department of Education. At the same time, it was determined that the introduction of Kindergarten classes was of greater importance, in order to remain competitive with the public system, particularly in the interest of keeping taxpayers. And so, the issue of Education Catholic secondary education was put aside for the time being. When the issue reemerged in 1960 at the request of a delegation of parish priests, the Board explained that the matter had been studied extensively, but that another elementary school was needed immediately, and that plans for its construction were underway. That school was to become what we now know to be Sacred Heart School. However, the Board did commit to "always bear in mind these grades and to endeavour to build them with the least delay possible". While efforts have been made on numerous occasions to examine the feasibility of this proposal even to this day, the

dream of English Catholic secondary education in the Kirkland Lake area has yet to come to fruit. However, Trustees continue to be committed to the youth in this region.

In Virginiatown during 1966, partnerships were being initiated by the Roman Catholic Separate School Board McGarry Township. Chair Jim Gallagher approached the administrators of the Larder Lake School regarding joint teaching strategies for their English students. Mrs. A. Mageau, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Larder Lake School, was pleased with the proposal, and arrangements were made to share teachers, with two being placed in Larder Lake and two in Virginiatown. Father Magnan was also an integral part of the education system in the area, teaching one period per class each week.

As was the case throughout the province, 1968 brought about an amalgamation of boards into larger units of administration. The inaugural meeting of the new Kirkland Lake Roman Catholic Separate School Board was held in the Sacred Heart School auditorium on December 9, 1968. Around the table, Roger Dufresne, Clifford Lamoureux, David MacDougall, Mary O'Connor, Raymond Roy, Marcel Seguin, Fernand St.-Cyr and Maurice Trahan assumed the role of Catholic trustee, with Mr. MacDougall and Mr. St. Cyr serving as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.

Joining the RCSS Teck and Lebel to form this new entity were the RCSS #2 Larder Lake, the RCSS #1 McGarry, the RCSS #1 Cairo, the CRCSS Englehart and Charlton and the RCSS #1 Chamberlain. Arrangements were immediately made for the central office to be located on Duncan street in Kirkland Lake, by leasing the Northern Telephone building.

Among their first orders of business was the construction of an addition to Holy Family School in Englehart, along with the authorization to install a television antenna outlet in the new classrooms. Advancements in technology, or what was then considered to be so, were making their way into the school settings. Music was also finding its niche in the English section, with the hiring of Music Teacher Margaret MacDonald.

In Kirkland Lake in 1969, Holy Name School and Sacred Heart School were bursting at the seams, and a solution was quickly needed. Program consultant Blaise Healey had the answer: students could be redistributed through changes in boundary lines surrounding St. Jerome School.

When the larger school boards were first formed, some of the outlying areas were concerned that they might lose their identity. The Kirkland Lake RCSS addressed this concern by frequently holding its meetings in the school in the communities that they served, to give the ratepayers the opportunity to attend.

In Englehart, Holy Trinity Parish Council authorized the use of the church hall for the Kindergarten classroom of Holy Family School, at a rate of twenty-five dollars per month.

In June of 1979, Trustees Mary O'Connor and Roger Dufresne paved the way for new learning opportunities for students, by suggesting that an industrial arts program be investigated for grade eight students. Before long, negotiations were under way with Englehart High School, to use their facilities for both home economics classes and industrial arts.

By the early 1990s, the Kirkland Lake Board was facing some financial difficulties, caused in part by economic hardship in the region and the declining population base. In order to ensure the survival of Catholic education, Director of Education Paul St. Cyr led the effort to amalgamate with the Timiskaming Roman Catholic Separate School Board. After careful consultations with the neighboring board, he presented a brief to the Ministry of Education in March of 1992 outlining the proposed process, as the infusion of provincial resources on a transitional basis would be essential to the success of the amalgamation. The anticipated effects of this transition included enhanced financial stability through an enhanced assessment base, better education through a combination of programs being offered at both separate boards and a reduced administrative burden as a percentage of total expenditures. With the Ministry on side, the two boards amalgamated on January 1, 1993, and became known as the Kirkland Lake Timiskaming District Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

The Board continued to operate with both English and French language sections until the 1998 amalgamation, which will be covered in more detail further below.

NEW LISKEARD AREA

The roots of Catholic education in the New Liskeard area prior to the 1993 amalgamation with

Kirkland Lake was well documented in 1978 by Robert Dodge, a former principal:

The history of the separate schools is very closely related to the development of the Catholic Church. In 1902, Father Beaudry celebrated the first mass in the area, in a corner store. In 1903, the Oblate Fathers erected the first Catholic Church where Armstrong motors is now located. Prior to this, mass was celebrated in the store and in various private homes. At about the same time, the first separate school was built on the North-West corner of Wedgewood and Lakeshore Road, just across the street from the Church. This was a one-room building, complete with box-stove and outside privy.

Records show that Miss L. McAlpine was one of the first teachers in this school. Board Members were Henry O'Grady, J. Wadsworth, E. Donald, Charlie Delisle, J.W. Bolger, W.J. Yates, and J.F. Mulligan.

In 1907, Miss Frances Campbell arrived from England and immediately became involved in Catholic Education. She is remembered not only for her efforts in New Liskeard, with the school and the church, but also for being instrumental in establishing Catholic Schools in Haileybury and Cobalt.

In 1913, the School Board purchased three lots on Lakeshore Road and Dymond Crescent. Classes however, continued to be held in the one-room school because funds were not immediately available to build.

In 1915, Father Arsène Arsenault was assigned to New Liskeard as a Parish Priest. He soon realized that the little church on Lakeshore was not adequate so he proceeded to have a large "basement" church built on Dymond Crescent. This basement served as the church for both French and English parishioners until 1957, when the parish was divided. At this time the area was part of the Diocese of Pembroke and the church was known as St. Theodore's. Shortly after this, the Parish became part of the Diocese of Haileybury. The one-room school was also overcrowded so, as the parishioners moved into the new basement church, the student overflow began to occupy the old church building.

This arrangement continued until 1923, when increased enrolment made it necessary to build a new four-room structure on Dymond Crescent, across the road from the present Sacré-Coeur Church. Members of the Board in 1923 were: A.D. Soucie, Henry O'Grady, John Bucher, and Charles Delisle. The Teaching Staff was composed of Sr. Ste. Alexis-de-Rome, Sr. Marie-du-Tabernacle and Sr. Joseph du Précieux-Sang, of the Sisters of the Assumption. These nuns came to the area in 1922 and they and other Religious teachers played a significant role in the development of Catholic Education in the area.

In spite of the fact that French-speaking Catholics outnumbered the English-speaking, all education was conducted in English only, until 1927, when Regulation 17 was changed. As a result, it became permissible to teach Grammar, Literature, Composition and Spelling in French.

Being a Trustee or ratepayer in the separate school system has not always been enjoyable. For instance, in 1919, with an enrolment of 38 pupils, grants were paid for one classroom and one teacher. The regular grant, in this case was \$14.23. The Board, however, was privileged as they were given a special grant of \$40.80, for a total of \$54.03 covering the year. Trustees and ratepayers delayed changes and construction as long as possible, as the funds were not readily available.

In 1946, increased enrolment in the separate schools made it necessary to add a two-room extension to the existing school on Dymond Crescent, and in the years to follow, it became evident that as numbers grew, it would not always be possible to educate both, the English and the French children in the same school.

In 1950, after the Hope Commission Reports, the Board was allowed to offer Math, Science, History and Geography in French.

In 1956, the combined-Parish had grown to some 375 families of which approximately 125 were English-Speaking, and approximately 250 were French-Speaking. The Parish Priest, at this time, was Father Germain Paquette, and his Curate was Father Francis Murray. In January 1957, the Parish was divided. The English section, under the direction of Father Murray, had their own church erected and called it "Our Mother of Perpetual Help Church". Father Paquette played a major role in this construction, as well as the construction of Eglise Sacré-Coeur which was built on the old "basement" church.

At the same time, the building of two new schools began; that of St. Francis on Davidson Street, a four-room structure, to serve the needs of the English-Speaking students, and Sacré-Coeur on Lakeshore Road, a nine-room building to serve the needs of the French-Speaking children. St. Francis was ready for occupancy by Christmas 1959, while Sacré-Coeur opened its doors in September 1960. In spite of difficult beginnings, the separate schools continued to attract more and more students, and in 1964, enrolment had risen to the point where it became necessary to add two classrooms to both St. Francis School and Ecole Sacré-Coeur.

Over the years many small boards had formed in the area and by 1965-66 it was becoming evident that there was considerable duplication and that it might be better to amalgamate. In 1967, some thirteen boards which included the towns New Liskeard and Haileybury, amalgamated to form one board. This was a bold and enlightened step as it preceded by two years a mandatory amalgamation of all area separate school boards. Board members at this time were: Raoul Portelance, Arthur Maillé, Dalton Wilson, Paul Dupéré, Lorne Charbonneau and Louis Vanier. The administrator was Mr. Joffre Lamothe and his Assistant, Mr. Louis Major. Both these gentlemen played major roles in the development of the separate school system.

This move sparked new interest and enrolment increased again at St. Francis School. In the fall of 1967, two portable classrooms were added and it was also necessary to set up a Kindergarten class in Our Mother of Perpetual Help Parish Hall. Trustees, ratepayers, principals and teachers devoted many long hours to the job of shaping this new system.

In the fall of 1968 it became mandatory for all separate school boards to amalgamate. Because of the hard work and foresight of the Trustees in 1966-67 and 1968, mandatory amalgamation did not present many problems as there were only six Boards left to join the large system, namely: North Cobalt, Cobalt, Latchford, Elk Lake, Thornloe and Earlton.

The late sixties and early seventies were certainly action-packed. The amalgamation expanded the boundaries and included more students than ever before. Decisions had to be made in regards to the type of system we would have, i.e., new, larger and better equipped schools, busing, purchasing of land for construction, and staff.

It was also in 1969 that the Timiskaming District R.C.S.S. Board engaged Mr. L. Charette as Superintendent of Education. Prior to this, Mr. Charette was Inspector of separate schools, but an employee of the Department of Education.

Once the major decisions had been taken, the new Board simply proceeded with the implementation of its decisions. In the spring of 1970, an eight-room addition, a gym, a science room and a library were added to St. Michel in Dymond Township. In May of 1971, construction of English Catholic Central School on Shepherdson Road, was begun and in April 1972, it was opened for occupancy. Alterations were also made at Sacré-Coeur and St. François, and finally, in 1973, the Board undertook to modernize the two old buildings on Armstrong Street, that they were using as a Board Office. During these years many significant changes occurred and today, the separate schools have evolved from a one-room school to a system that employs some 56 teachers to educate more than one thousand pupils.

KAPUSKASING AREA

Catholicity and education have gone hand in hand in the Kapuskasing area for several decades now, thanks to the pivotal role played by many individuals who had in their interest the faith and academic development of the children in their community. Among these devoted people figure the trustees of the early separate school board.

While the exact beginnings of the separate school board could not be pinpointed accurately, archives do date back to 1967. Trustees at the time included Hector Babin, Edgar Plourde, Robert Tremblay, Douglas Davidson, and Edgar Millette, with Mr. Babin and Mr. Plourde serving as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.

The all-important question on the table during their mandate involved the provision of grade 9 and 10 classes, as examined by a committee of study. This issue was of particular interest to the Diocese of Hearst, which was then under the guidance of Monsignor Landriault. Monsignor was kept abreast of the different stages of the process, and was often consulted by the Board regarding similar systems in place in Hearst. The Committee presented its report at a Board meeting on June 20, 1967, which provided guidelines to the Board on proceeding with this initiative. A thorough examination of the report took place in the months that followed, with particular attention placed on statistical data, financial implications and facility options. One possibility included reaching an agreement with the Académie d'Youville for the rental of classrooms. The Kapuskasing High School Board was also interested in the direction to be taken by the Board, and met frequently with them to discuss the possibility of a bilingual high school. With limited grants available, teachers of these grades would have to be paid a salary somewhat lesser than those at the elementary panel, with a reliance on the Sisters and Brothers to take on these roles. In November, the Board passed a motion to proceed with the organization and implementation of grades 9 and 10 under their own administration. Arrangements were made with the Soeurs Grises de la Croix to pay them only the amount of grants received for the pupils of these grades. Efforts were later made to integrate these students into the Kapuskasing and District High School, because of the improved French curriculum offered.

In November 1967, the Board passed a motion to proceed with the organization and implementation of grades 9 and 10.

Early teachers employed by the Board during the late sixties included Sister Blanchard, Isabelle Forsberg, Laura Coté, Rhea Desjardins, Claire Walker, Marcelle Kosowan and several Sisters and Brothers. They worked under the leadership of a dynamic team of principals, including Frank LeVay (St. Patrick), Sister Ghislaine Roy (Immaculée-Conception), Robert Bidal (Jeanne Mance), Jacques Bidal (Jacques Cartier), J. P. Habel (Sacre Coeur) and Brother Rondeau (André Cary). Mr. LeVay, like his peers, regularly attended Board meetings to report to the Board on his school. According to his accounts, St. Patrick School was blessed to have a very cooperative staff, and had a projected enrolment of 70 students just in kindergarten for

September of 1967. He was also an advocate for literacy, stressing the need for a central library in each of the Board's schools.

Research through student testing was also ongoing regarding the need for an opportunity class. After a lengthy discussion on procedures for its implementation, it was decided to proceed with it at the grade 7 and 8 level at André Cary School.



St. Patrick School was blessed with a very cooperative staff, and a projected enrolment of 70 kindergarten students in '67.

The schools of CRCSS O'Brian Kapuskasing were often used by community groups, including for an Arts and Craft Club on weekends, and by the city's recreation committee during the summer months.

In 1969, a new team of trustees joined returning Douglas Davidson at the table, including, Jean-Marie Bordeleau (Chair), Jean-Marc Plouffe, Jacqueline Guertin, Jean-Marie Legris, Benoit Parent, André Bordeleau and Nazaire D'Amours. One of their first orders of business was the search for a Superintendent, with Marcel Jacques being selected to take on this leadership position. In addition to overseeing the daily operation of the Board, he engaged in teacher recruitment efforts, traveling to other towns to convince them to come to the north.

With the growing needs of schools and limited staff in place, the Board turned to volunteers. They advised principals to take some time at their next Parent Teacher Association meeting to ask parents if they were interested in offering their services to the school as teachers' aids. If the interest was sufficient, the Board would then prepare guidelines on the use of volunteers.

Over the years, they faced many challenges as a northern board, including higher cost of construction and heating. Moreover, most of the training opportunities for teachers, principals and trustees occurred in the south or east of the province, leading to exorbitant travel costs. In 1970, they made a request to the Department of Education to give the school boards of the north of the province a higher grant rate. The Kapuskasing Board operated until 1998, when it amalgamated with others and became the Northeastern Catholic District School Board. They continue to face many of the same challenges today.

COCHRANE / IROQUOIS FALL AREA

Further North, in the towns of Cochrane and Iroquois Falls, an amalgamated board was taking shape in 1969. Trustees Gilbert Brisson, Marcel Boissonneault, Alain Brisson, Gerard Lacourciere, Rheel Chouinard, Lucien Lafontaine, Louis Ouelette, and Jean-Paul Parent were sworn in at the meeting of the Roman Catholic Separate School Board Cochrane Iroquois Falls. Mr. Jean-Paul Parent was soon elected as the Chair of the group.

Their first orders of business consisted of the formation of committees to oversee matters of importance. A Finance Committee was organized to look after budget issues, including salaries, taxation, insurance, and allocation per student. The Education Committee would handle supervision of schools, liaisons with parents, principalships, teaching issues and any work with the associations (ACFEEO, OSSTA, ACEBO, AEFO, API). A Property and Management Committee would tackle issues involving administrative personnel, buildings, grounds, construction, transportation and use of schools.

The amalgamation required that trustees serve a larger area, and as such, travel allocations in the amount of 0.15 cents per mile were made available to them to maintain a presence in all communities served by the Board. A decision was quickly made to keep the administrative office in Cochrane for the time being, with a committee asked to study the choice of a long term site as soon as possible.

The budget estimates provided for thirty dollars per student to be made available to principals for instructional and learning materials.

At a special meeting in February of 1969 of all boards in the districts of Cochrane and Timiskaming, trustees discussed the urgent need for all school boards and councils at the primary level to unite in an effort to present a uniform approach in the business of salary negotiations. Trustees from Timmins, Kapuskasing, Ansonville, Val Gagne, and Cochrane were present, and drafted a salary scale for teachers across both districts.

In the interest of moving forward with technology, a group from Toronto representing television broadcasting in the schools was invited to present to a group of trustees, administrators, teachers and supporters. Their goal was to stress the role played by television in teaching and learning, and the

evidence supporting its use. While the cost of furnishing schools with video equipment was considerable, within a few months, the Board decided to move forward with the purchase and installation at two of its schools.

The budget estimates provided for thirty dollars per student to be made available to principals for instructional and learning materials.



St. Anne School was already a vibrant learning community in 1969, with a bilingual Kindergarten and an English section offering half-time kindergarten and grades one to eight. In May, it was pointed out that an additional forty English Catholic pupils could attend starting in September. It was suggested that a letter be written to Mrs. Pedalsky, Chair of the parent teacher association, in order to influence their decision, with the fact that there is available space in an English Catholic school, that will be at their disposal in September 1969. A circular letter was also sent to parents with instructions on transferring their taxes from public to separate school support. By January 1970, St. Anne School had a student population of 211.

In December of 1970, the debate on the location of the administrative offices resumed. One group argued that the site should be in the most populous and central area, namely Iroquois Falls, in order to reduce the cost of travel of trustees. Others countered that the percentage of tax revenue was greater in Cochrane, and that as a result, the office should remain there. By the late eighties, the decision was made to transfer the office to Iroquois Falls.

A prominent political figure made his way to the north in the 1970s. The Chair of the Cochrane Iroquois Fall DRCSS Board recommended that all members of the Board take part in this meeting to held in Timmins, with the Honourable William Davis, Minister of Education. The agenda for the meeting included the study of the problems faced by northern Ontario Boards, and the special assistance demanded by them.

The fate of this Board, like others in the district, was to be determined in 1998 with amalgamation.

TIMMINS AREA

In the Timmins area, the leadership of the original Timmins Separate School Board was under the sound guidance of Mr. P.J. Dunlop, who served as the first Chair of this Board in 1958. Alongside him, Albert Aube, Leo Bertrand, H. Giallonardo and A. F. Martin worked to ensure that all Catholics in the region would have access to a faith centred learning environment. Their family of schools included the Sisters of the Assumption Convent and the Grey Sisters Convent, members of which also devoted their lives to the teaching profession in our elementary and secondary schools.

Kindergarten classes were an integral part of the education system even in those early days, with their introduction in September 1958 at St. Michel, Jacques Cartier, Holy Family and St. Charles Schools. Because the existing schools could not accommodate additional pupils, the Board called upon the parishes to provide facilities for these younger learners. The basements of Nativity Church and Sacred Heart Church doubled as Kindergarten classrooms, for a fee of \$20 per month, simply to cover the costs of hydro and janitorial services.

There were indeed many proud moments for this team of committed trustees, including the announcement, in the fall of 1957, of plans to establish a Junior High School System for grades 7 to 10 at Don Bosco Academy, as well as the special meeting held on a cold January 10, 1967 on the site of what was to become St. Paul School, for the specific purpose of giving the final approval for its creation. Father M. J. Scully recalls these early days, and remembers riding his two-wheel bicycle down the street, visiting families one on one to convince them to attend the new Catholic secondary school. Twenty-four of them agreed to come, with some, such as Shirley Budd, even going on to teach within our system. Monsignor Martindale and Father Della Badia were also prominent supporters of the extension of Catholic secondary education in the Timmins area.



With so many small boards operating in close proximity, it became apparent that the neighbouring school boards would have to unite with the Timmins Board, and form a more efficient, larger body of administration. In the interest of facilitating the transition and creating a certain level of uniformity in the education field and to facilitate the transition, the Timmins Board began sharing the specialized services of their supervisors with the smaller boards. They freed their specialists for half a day per school to provide services to the students in the school communities that would soon fall under their jurisdiction.



The new entity was to be formed from several small boards in the area, some of which operated only one school community. These included the *Roman Catholic Separate School Board #2 Tisdale*, which in 1964 was chaired by Mr. Thomas Beadman, with George Martin and Jeanine Bergeron joining him as trustees. Most of their meetings took place in the St. Alphonsus Church basement. They looked after the operation of St. Francis of Assisi School in Schumacher, which at the time was under the leadership of Principal Joseph Ferrari. As was the case in Timmins, kindergarten classes were moved to the church basement, in order to allow more space for an additional bilingual class in the school until the approval of an extension. This group of trustees placed a strong emphasis on the importance of attending school regularly, and introduced crests to reward students with perfect attendance.

The *Roman Catholic Separate School Board #1 Deloro*, was also in place at the time, but recognized the challenges of operating individually from other board in close proximity. In 1964, their school supporters voted in favour of forming a union with RCSSB #2 Tisdale, with the new body consisting of three trustees from South Porcupine and two from Schumacher.

Joining this new combined body later in the 1960's were the RC Union Separate School for the Section 1,2 &3 in the Township of Mountjoy, The RCSS #7 of Dundonald, and the RCSS #1 Whitney.

With amalgamation taking place on a small scale level on a voluntary basis, the provincial government of the time believed that greater efficiency could be achieved in the best interest of the students through the creation of larger units of administration. On June 28, 1968, legislation to this effect was introduced by the Honourable William Davis, then Minister of Education.

This transition also marks an important change in the supervision of schools, with Board-employed supervisory officers replacing Ministry inspectors.

The official opening of the combined Timmins District Roman Catholic Separate School Board offices took place on December 8, 1968, with both existing and new members taking part in this celebration. The first official meeting of the Timmins District Roman Catholic Separate School Board took place the very next day, with J. Noel Belec, Claire Berthel, Leo J. Blanchard, Terry L. Coles, Treva Cousineau, Gerard C. Evans, J. Jacques Gravel, J. Alex Miller, Georges Perreault and G. M.

Racicot taking an oath of allegiance as the new trustees. Mr. Racicot and Mr. Coles assumed the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. The English section trustees were the minority at the time on the Board.

Another major milestone in their history of Catholic education includes the 1984 announcement, by Premier William Davis, of the extension of provincial education grants to the end of high school for students in Catholic secondary schools. This announcement came as a victory for the private board of O’Gorman High School, who had struggled financially and even faced the possibility of closure. By 1985, full funding was implemented under the leadership of a new Liberal government lead by Premier David Peterson.

Just prior to the 1998 amalgamation, their schools included St. John’s School, Holy Family School, St. Paul School, O’Gorman Intermediate School, O’Gorman High School, Sacred Heart School, and St. Joseph School.

ORIGINS OF THE NORTHEASTERN CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

While separated by distance, each of these boards shared a common goal of providing quality education for their students, in the spirit of the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church. On January 1, 1998, as per Bill 104, *The Fewer School Boards Act 1997*, the Ontario government amalgamated these separate school boards, and created District Board 30A, later to be named the Northeastern Catholic District School Board.

The new entity brought together these boards:

- Kirkland Lake - Timiskaming DRCSS Board
- Kapuskasing DRCSS Board
- Cochrane, Iroquois Falls, Black River-Matheson DRCSS Board
- Timmins DRCSS Board

Local Education Improvement Committees had been formed prior to the amalgamation to ensure a smooth transition period. They had responsibility for approving budgets to encourage reasonable and appropriate spending during the year leading up to the complete amalgamation. The transition period was certainly not without its challenges, including the harmonization of collective agreements, the distribution of assets and liabilities and the transfer of employees.

They also now operated under a new education tax system introduced with Bill 160, which enabled them to have access to equitable levels of tax revenue. The Bill suspended the authority of school boards to set local mill rates for education taxes. In addition to the property tax funds for which the mill rate is now set by the province, the province provides top-up grants to boards to ensure that they are funded at a per pupil level determined as required to provide quality education.

The new system saw the separation of French and English language sections. The process also streamlined the administrative structure, and reduced the number of trustees for the entire district to a total of eight publicly elected officials representing the various regions. Four of the original trustees who served during the transition period continue to serve on the board of the NCDSB today.

Currently, the NCDSB oversees the operation of twelve elementary schools in the communities of Cobalt, New Liskeard, Englehart, Kirkland Lake, South Porcupine, Timmins, Iroquois Falls, Cochrane and Kapuskasing, and one secondary school, O’Gorman High School, in Timmins.

SCHOOL HISTORIES

AILEEN WRIGHT ENGLISH CATHOLIC SCHOOL Cochrane



Few schools in North America can claim such an unusual beginning as Aileen Wright English Catholic School.

In 1912, a circus train of twenty-two cars pulled into Cochrane. This was Cochrane's first circus and cleared land was required for the show. Three elephants were part of the entourage and before the show could begin, they were led to the area on which Aileen Wright School now stands. The space was full of stumps and the remains of burned trees from the fire of 1911. The elephants surveyed the situation and went to work, pulling and piling stumps and clearing the area. When they were finished, they shuffled away, leaving the workmen to clear debris, level the grounds and arrange the circus.

The clearing was claimed for education and Central Public School was completed by Christmas 1915. A major source of pride for the 3500 settlers of Cochrane, it boasted a fine brick exterior. Unfortunately, during Christmas holidays, the new building burned to its foundations before the children were to use it. It was to be another year before the school was rebuilt.

The school was closed to students and opened to patients when needed as a second hospital. In 1923, during a severe typhoid epidemic, sewer spillage seeped into the lake from which the town pumped its water. There were a few isolated cases of typhoid fever and then the killer disease spread. At one time, there were seventy nurses and seven doctors involved in fighting the outbreak. The emergency hospital was crowded and it has been estimated that there were 1072 cases of the disease, with eighty to one hundred deaths.

Typhoid was carried from Cochrane as far afield as British Columbia and England. Transcontinental trains with Cochrane water and ice spread the germs before the outbreak was detected.

Central Public School continued on as a source of learning and many Cochrane adults remember, with fondness, walking her halls.

In 1972, the school was purchased by the Cochrane-Iroquois Falls District Roman Catholic Separate School Board and renamed St. Joseph Pavilion. The entire English Section that was housed at St. Joseph School and the overflow classes from the French Section were moved to the school.

In June 1981, the French classes returned to St. Joseph School and St. Joseph Pavilion became known as a separate entity from her sister school, St. Joseph. The school provided education to approximately 85 students from Junior Kindergarten to grade 8. It was at this time that the school was renamed Aileen Wright English Catholic School after Mrs. Aileen Wright, who was a former Vice-Principal of the English section at St. Joseph School. Mrs. Wright, who was residing in North Bay at the time of the renaming of the school, returned to Cochrane for the dedication ceremony. Regretfully, Mrs. Aileen Wright passed away a few years later.

In the spring of 1991, the Ministry of Education approved funding for a new school. After much planning, the school construction started in May 1993 and we moved into the new school in March 1994. The new school contained modern state-of-the-art classrooms, a library, a resource room, a gymnasium and a day care centre that was run by the Town of Cochrane. A total of 97 students made the move to the new facility. This would very soon change. Almost immediately the enrolment at our school started to very dramatically climb. Catholic children that were enrolled in other schools in our municipality came back into our system. The numbers were so great (more than double) that we had to bring portables onto the site. Presently, we have a total of four portables.

Also, the day care facility was turned over to the school and it is now our Junior Kindergarten class.

In the fall of 2001, we made another major addition to our school. The parent council fundraised for two years and was successful in raising \$65,000 for a brand new playground and a basketball and volleyball court. Many thanks go to all those volunteers for their dedication and hard work.

Other changes that have been made at our school is the establishment of a first rate computer lab. It is internet connected and it is widely used by both our students and staff.

Our music program has gone through various changes during the past few years. In the past few years it really got off the ground. Both instrumental

and vocal music is being taught. As a result, we have been able to stage some first class musicals. Our school choir has also performed at numerous school functions such as assemblies, masses, and also in the community at our local telethon for the needy at Christmas and the Remembrance Day ceremonies in November. Many thanks go the Mrs. Courville for her drive and dedication to our music program.

In September 2004, we will establish a bullying committee comprised of staff members, parents and students that will assist the school in establishing guidelines as to how to deal with this issue.

Aileen Wright English Catholic School is an active and caring educational institution with a caring staff and a supportive community.

ENGLISH CATHOLIC CENTRAL SCHOOL New Liskeard



In 1967 the first of a four part amalgamation of elementary separate schools occurred. Haileybury and New Liskeard participated at the onset. In 1969 a further amalgamation took place and it was decided that an area school should be built. The choice of location was complicated. Initially 9 locations were discussed and was later trimmed to 4 areas for consideration.

The first area was close to the cemetery in Haileybury but this was rejected because it was not central enough and would require long bus rides from the outlying areas. Also it was remote to the Regional High School and an English language church.

Secondly, a location in the downtown waterfront area of New Liskeard was selected but was also rejected due primarily to it potentially being seen as town "oriented" rather than reflecting the area.

Another location was on land owned by the Wilson family along the highway 11 bypass. Being along the highway this held potential safety risks to the students.

The last option, and current location of ECCS, was close to option 3 and offered many strong points. The towns of New Liskeard and Haileybury were projected to grow into this area. An area hospital was to be built close by and this was an easily accessible location for busing students from as far as Earleton, Temagami, Elk Lake and North Temiskaming along highways 11 and 65.

The name of the school, English Catholic Central School, was selected by the Board as a result of submissions from a contest to name the school (It had also been suggested to be English Catholic Area School).

The Principal, Robert Dodge, the architect, the superintendent of schools, and Board members traveled throughout the province studying trends and educational philosophy of the time. The Robarts Plan and Hall Dennis Report were 2 reports influencing the decision for a large modern educational unit. There was a great deal of input from staff as well. The open concept philosophy was prevalent at the time and the Ministry of Education provided training to staff. The principal worked with the Board and the architect throughout the building process and changes or

improvements were made as the building progressed.

The philosophy of the construction of the central school was that quality education in a central location could be provided to all Catholic students in the area. Smaller schools struggled to provide quality services. The new central school had a library, a central science lab, a double gym, as well as courses in music, french, and physical education provided by qualified teachers with specializations. ECCS opened its doors on April 10, 1972 after a busy weekend of moving books, materials and furniture.

Initial enrolment was near the 400 mark.

There was a cross section of families ranging from professionals with jobs at Northern Telephone, The Ministry of Natural Resources, The Ministry of Transportation, the business community, and Ontario Hydro, to workers in agriculture, mining and those in transportation. The Sherman Mine located in Temagami employed hundreds of skilled tradespeople with well paying jobs. ECCS gained a reputation of being a caring school which aspired to meet individual student needs.

School enrollment continued to be high and with French Immersion offered in grades 6,7 and 8, two additional classrooms were required. Thus, two portables were attached to the school in 1989 with a connecting hallway to the rest of the school.

In the early 1980s the philosophy of education had changed and the need for self contained classrooms grew. Consequently, a wall was built in the central part of the school to separate the "primary pod" or upper area from the "junior pod" or lower area. Shortly thereafter further walls were erected to make all of the inner classrooms self contained.

Over the years the aforementioned employers slowly disappeared or downsized, having a major impact on the entire area. As a result, school enrolment has dropped accordingly. Since St. Patrick School in Cobalt was the sole area school which resisted amalgamation, it continued to

function as a kindergarten to grade 4 school expanding to include grades 5 and 6 in 1992. One principal managed both schools in the beginning. In 1993, St. Patrick School expanded to include grade 7 and 8. This impacted on the enrolment at ECCS as well. The Board's philosophy, at least in this case, was to revert back to the community school as opposed to the central school.

It was during this time, however, that ECCS made some internal changes. As a result of vacant classrooms, a wall separating 2 classrooms in the lower "pod" was removed to make a doubled sized classroom. The library was moved into this area allowing for a new large Senior Kindergarten class to take the room formally occupied by the library. Another classroom was converted to become a computer lab currently housing 32 networked computers, each with Internet access. These changes made the facilities more attractive and accessible.

In 1997, Mr. Dodge retired and was succeeded by Mrs. Drury. In 1999, Mr. Harvey replaced Mrs. Drury and was himself replaced by an interim principal, Mrs. Rowe in June of 2002. Mrs. Drury became acting principal for the 2002-2003 school year. Mr. Collins became principal in September of 2003 and is the current principal.

In 2001, Mr. Harvey attempted to make ECCS a fully dual tract school (Immersion and English). That year, French Immersion was offered in Junior and Senior Kindergarten as well as from grades 5-8 with the goal of adding one grade level each year until full immersion was realized. Unfortunately, due primarily to an imbalance in student numbers in the Immersion and non-Immersion classrooms, this idea has had to be faded out. Consequently, French Immersion is currently only offered in grades 2 through 4 and grades 5 through 8 with the goal of only offering it in grades 5-8 by September 2007.

ECCS continues to be an active community centered school meeting the needs of the English Catholic population of the area. It is respected for its dedicated staff of 18 teachers, 7 educational assistants and a child and youth worker. Current enrolment stands at 280 students.

HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL

Englehart



Holy Family School is located within the Town of Englehart and serves the English Catholic population of Central Timiskaming. The school came into existence in 1959 when it opened its doors to 62 students from grade 1 to 8, with classes being taught in the basement of Holy Trinity Church. At that time, the members of the inaugural Holy Family School Board of Trustees included Clem Yantha Sr., Father Edouard Del Guidice, Ernie Leroux, Leonard Lessard, Jack Clancy and Charlie Valencik. Following the Easter Break, and after months of construction, Holy Family School opened its doors to students at its present site on the corner of 8th Avenue and 4th Street in Englehart in 1960. At that time, the school had three classrooms, one administrative office and a small gymnasium. During the 1964-1965 school year, there existed three classrooms that accommodated the student population. Grades 1, 2 and 3 were taught by Shirley Howard, grades 4, 5 and 6 were taught by Diane Cecelia Gibson and grades 7 and 8 were taught by Romeo Thibeault, who also served as principal.

In 1968, an addition was constructed onto the school as the student population had grown significantly to 115. This addition included a kindergarten classroom and a library which also served as a lunch room and a research room. Senior Kindergarten was taught by Marie Pepin, Grades 1 and 2 were taught by Julie Tobin, grades 3 and 4 were taught by Mabel Birch (who continued to teach for 27 uninterrupted years), Grade 5 and 6 were taught by Diane Aquino, while Grades 7 and 8 continued to be the responsibility of Romeo Thibeault. Prior to the construction, some students were required to use the gymnasium as a classroom and, in the words of Lana LaCarte and Bonnie Quinn who were in the grade 7/8 class at the time, they would have more room to do their projects. Enrolment continued to grow over the years and in 1972, a Junior Kindergarten program

was instituted. In 1979, student population stood at 121, while in December of 1982, it had grown to 184 students. This population growth was attributed to the establishment of the Grant Waferboard Plant in Englehart which began production in 1980. As a result, a strain was put on the building and an expansion became necessary as there were many students and too little room.

Consequently, on March 3, 1988, a 1.4 million dollar grant was awarded to the Kirkland Lake District Roman Catholic Separate School Board for an expansion at Holy Family School. This expansion would include three new classrooms, a nurse's room, an administrative room and a gymnasium complete with change rooms. In addition, the former undersized gymnasium would be renovated to become the new school library. The official opening of the newly renovated school took place in January of 1989 and with it, the four portable classrooms which had been required were no longer needed and were then removed from the property.

Holy Family School was, and still is, a focal point for community activities within the area. Over the years, our students have taken an active role in their school, in their parish and in their community. In 1967, for instance, the school hosted a Commonwealth and Citizenship Program as part of the centennial celebrations marking Canada's 100th birthday. Mayor Joseph Clarke spoke on the meaning of citizenship to mark the occasion and two royalty centennial crab apple trees were planted. From 1995 to 2003, the school was home to the Englehart and Area Child Care Centre which provided daycare services to the area. During the 1990s, our school also hosted an Interlink Program. This special program was an inter-generational non-denominational initiative that matched our grade 6 students with seniors from the community. The major focus was on music and friendship and it also featured many social events throughout the school year. Finally, a very special event took place on the long weekend in May of 1996 when, after a year of planning, a school reunion was held in town with former students from all over Canada and some parts of the U.S.A. with 37 years of catching up to do.

As we move forward during this first decade of the new millenium, Holy Family School continues to serve the needs of the Christian/Catholic community. The school operates under the jurisdiction of the Northeastern Catholic District School Board and we are indeed proud of our past

history as we prepare for a bright and challenging future. We enjoy an excellent partnership with our Catholic School Council and with Holy Trinity Parish as we endeavour to deliver the best possible Catholic Christian education to our students as they prepare for citizenship in the 21st century.

O'GORMAN INTERMEDIATE CATHOLIC SCHOOL Timmins



A Small School With A Bright Future!!!

O'Gorman Intermediate School originated as St. Theresa School in 1969. At that time, the school was housed in Louis Rheaume School on Preston Street. Due to limited space, the school was run on a split shift. Students from South Porcupine and some Timmins students attended classes from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., while the remainder of the Timmins students attended school from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

In September of 1972, the school moved to its present location at 490 MacLean Drive. Prior to this year, the building housed a grade 9 and 10 girls' French high school. Due to the fact that full funding for Catholic schools was not in effect for grades past grade 10, the Sisters of the Assumption built the additional part of the school, which is now the Bishop's residence, to house the grade 11 and 12 girls. The grade 11 and 12 part of the high school was called Notre Dame.

The first principal of the school was Mr. Maurice Lemire who served in this capacity from 1972 to 1985. In its first year of operation, there were 300 students. The rationales for having a grade 7 and 8 school were to have more specialization at those grade levels, to improve the transition from grade 8 to grade 9, and to better deal with the difficulties of this age group. St. Theresa was the first intermediate school to have a full-time guidance counsellor on staff.

Mr. Lemire was followed by Mr. Charles Gazzola as principal from 1985 to 1989. During his tenure, the Timmins District Roman Catholic Separate School Board decided to change the name to O'Gorman Intermediate Separate School to reinforce the links to O'Gorman High School.

Mr. Joseph Ferrari followed Mr. Gazzola as principal from 1989 to 1994; he was followed by Mrs. Doryne MacDonald from 1994 to 1998. With the overcrowding at St. Paul's School, grade 6 classes were moved to O'Gorman in 1998 and were housed in two portables on site. The grade 6 classes moved back to St. Paul's the following year. In 1998, Mr. Glenn Sheculski became the principal at O'Gorman Intermediate and remained at the school for the next four years. Currently, Mr. Darren Berthier is the principal of the school. During his first year as principal, the school's name was changed to O'Gorman Intermediate Catholic School to promote our catholic identity.

O'GORMAN HIGH SCHOOL

Timmins



The right to a Catholic secondary education in the Timmins area is well preserved and cherished by members of our community. That's because they earned it, and not without many sacrifices, both financial and physical. For almost 50 years, people have been rallying to raise funds and community support for our Catholic establishment, O'Gorman High School. Here's how it all began. In 1953, a longtime dream of a Catholic High School in Timmins became a reality. Under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation, the Don Bosco Academy served the needs of both the French and English students from grades seven to ten. By 1958, the Timmins Separate School Board obtained ownership of the junior high facility, and planned for further expansion of Catholic education to accommodate students in grades eleven through thirteen. Through donations from the Grey Sisters, the Sisters of the Assumption, the Brothers of Sacred Heart, and Nativity and Sacred Heart Parishes and parishioners, the ground breaking ceremony occurred later that same year. The Catholic community's conviction in the importance of a faith-centered secondary education was manifested by their generosity towards this project.

The dream became a reality on January 6, 1959, when O'Gorman High School welcomed its first students from grades eleven through thirteen. The leadership role played by Father John Robert O'Gorman, parish priest at the Church of the Nativity from 1926 to 1948, was recognized in the naming of the high school.

The early years at O'Gorman were evidently not the easiest. At the time, the Ministry of Education did not fund Catholic education for senior high school students. Parents were required to pay tuition fees, in order to have their children attend a private high school where the curriculum reflected their Catholic values. The school itself struggled to cope with the financial hardships of operating without Government funding. However, the Catholic

community continued to support the high school, both financially and through their actions. The Founding Fathers themselves had helped clear the land used in the construction. Once the school was built, everyone did their part to help maintain it: some did the grounds keeping, others cleaned the floors in the evenings. One parent would look after the furnace, which kept breaking down. Everyone pulled together to ensure that their children could continue to learn in a Catholic environment.

O'Gorman High School served an additional important role in society: it served as a convent for the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. This partnership was particularly beneficial to the high school, as the Sisters composed a large part of the teaching staff. Without Government funding, we were unable to provide them with salaries. They relied on the Mother House to help them get their basic necessities. Sacrifices by the Grey Sisters and the teaching staff were necessary to keep the school and programs operating.

When repairs were needed, or when someone in the community could not afford the tuition fees, the Foundation Board held "\$100 ticket draws", and even auctions to help out. To this day, the community still lends a hand to those in need.

By 1984, the provincial government introduced Bill 30, to implement full funding for Roman Catholic Separate High Schools. As a result, O'Gorman High School became eligible for legislative grants, enabling it to attract more students and expand its pool of teachers. As O'Gorman increased its enrolment, the building became inadequate to meet the learning needs of students. The Board approached the Ministry of Education to obtain funding for the construction of larger, more modern facilities. The community rallied together to show their commitment to Catholic education. Their efforts were finally rewarded, when approval came through, and grants were provided for the construction of the new O'Gorman High School. In 1993, the ground breaking ceremony marked the achievement of a milestone for English Catholic secondary education in Timmins. Within a year, students moved into the state-of-the-art facility at 150 George Street.

The school has a state-of-the-art theatre which was built through donations from the community. It is named after Sylvia Gravel who chaired the fund raising efforts to build the theatre. It has allowed the school to offer an excellent Drama program by providing the perfect learning environment for our students to hone their crafts by performing numerous plays and musicals for the community.

The gymnasium was named after Anne Mac Donald a former principal of the school at the time of its construction and of the move to the new school. The modern building has allowed O’Gorman to offer programs which integrate advancements in information technology, allow students to excel in the arts, and strengthen the athletic department with a strong history of major victories for their sports teams.

So that all students know the history of the school, the board constructed a cabinet in the school lobby

which houses historical memorabilia from Father O’Gorman, soldier, scholar and priest. During the school’s 50th Anniversary Reunion in 2003, they also dedicated a monument on the original site of O’Gorman to the private board members who served from 1953 to 1984 to ensure that their sacrifices over the years are not forgotten.

In September 2003, O’Gorman High School students began sporting their school colours with stylish casual uniforms. The Catholic School Council at OHS reintroduced this tradition after parents overwhelmingly expressed their support in favor of it.

Today, O’Gorman High School is a symbol of conviction, commitment and cooperation by members of our Catholic community. The spirit of community involvement continues with a new generation of staff, students and supporters.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL

Kirkland Lake



Sacred Heart has always been a school with a lot of ‘heart’. School spirit comes with the co-operative efforts of everyone within the school family - the principal, the teachers, the secretary, the custodians, the teachers’ assistants, the support staff, the students, their parents, guardians and family, working together for a common goal. We work closely in our school, in parish activities and community involvement. We have always worked together, in good times and in difficult ones, and we’ve done many things. Over the years, we’ve supported each other and we’ve encouraged each other, to always be our best.

The school year of 1961-62 was the beginning of Sacred Heart School. It was February of 1962 and Robert Piché was in Mrs. Bedard’s grade 7 class at St. Joseph’s School. He remembers that all the

students carried their desks, in the snow, from St. Joseph’s across the yard and into their classes at Sacred Heart. Mr. Piché is now teaching the Grade 8 class at Sacred Heart. Is that one example of the “circle of life”? The grade 5 classes were at Holy Name School and they too, were helped by the older children, as they moved themselves into Sacred Heart. What fond memories!

The school was officially opened in grand style, with many notable personalities taking part in the event. From then on, Sacred Heart thrived.

At the beginning, there were two French Kindergarten and two English Kindergarten classes in the south wing of the school. What is now the grade 7 class, was one of the French Kindergarten rooms; the second one was next to it (the space is now divided into two rooms). Across the hallway were two English Kindergarten classes - one still exists; the other has been made into two rooms.

The rest of the school was from grades 5 to 8, two classes of each. Grades 1 to 4 were still at Holy Name at the time. The gymnasium, with a large stage at one end, was in the space that is now the library. The doorway of the principal’s office faced visitors as they came in.

In 1971, Sacred Heart started a Junior Kindergarten pilot project. At that time, the French Kindergarten moved to Assumption School and we were all 'Core French' - having French for one daily period. In 1979, the students from Holy Name School came over to Sacred Heart. We now became a school from Junior Kindergarten right through to grade 8. With school enrolment fluctuating, changes needed to be made. During the years 1986 to 1988, the classes from grades 6, 7 and 8 were sent to St. Jerome School. Between 1988 and 1991, the grades 7 and 8 went there. In the school year of 1991-92, the grade 8 class was at St. Jerome. In September of 1993, Sacred Heart once again became a school of Junior Kindergarten to grade 8, with a Special Needs class as well.

A capital project was undertaken in 1992, with funding from the Ministry of Education that witnessed a major facelift to the existing building, combined with an addition of a number of rooms. These included a Special Needs Classroom, a gymnasium with a built-into-the-wall stage and lunch room tables, as well as a main office area. The official opening and blessing by Bishop Gilles Cazabon was held on January 20, 1993.

In 2003-2004, a new learning model was adopted in Kirkland Lake, with Sacred Heart School becoming a grades 4 to 8 school offering both English and French Immersion program options. The Junior Kindergarten to grade 3 students from Sacred Heart were relocated to St. Jerome School. The school settings, the resources, the materials and the activities now reflect the age group of the children in each school. It has also facilitated collaboration between teachers to enhance the learning environment for the students.

Sacred Heart School always had a 'heart', with students and teachers working together with parents and parish. Who can forget 'The Emperor's New Clothes', during the school year of 1973-74? This was a musical play with the whole school involved, from the beginning of September right up to the grand performance at Northern College in May. Students signed up for acting parts or production crew. Teachers were in charge of various areas (e.g. acting, props, costumes, etc.) and students, even parents, participating in the

behind the scenes aspects of putting on a show. This was quite the experience!

Over the years, Sacred Heart has been involved with many projects and our students have done well in their endeavours. We've raised money for the Heart Fund, for M.S., for the Cancer Society and for other charities with our Jump-Rope-For-Heart, our Terry Fox Runs (Mrs. Betty Fox, Terry's mother, came to visit in 1998), our Read-a-Thons, our Lenten and Advent collections and many more. We've provided bed kits for "Sleeping Children Around the World" and made Christmas happier for children through the Christmas Shoe Box project. We've done well in our Legion Public Speaking and our Science Fairs (going as far as International Finals). We became an "Earth School" in 1999, with 1000 environmental projects and have collected thousands of phone books for recycling. Many of the students have won prizes or recognition for their Art projects. The hydro, firemen and post office and many others are always looking for poster ideas and our students are winners.

Our teachers have involved our students in the community and parish activities in many ways. We've built sculptures, painted posters or been part of the parade for many Winter Carnivals or town events. We've decorated Christmas trees at the Museum and become involved with Seniors at Teck Pioneer Residence. We've done well in our Sports Tournaments, held in conjunction with area schools. We've put on and served at Teas, Lunches and evening activities. We've had "Fun Days" at the complex and the Parish Hall. We've played countless student-teacher games and activities of all kinds. Many of our extra-curricular activities involve our parents and they have come through with flying colours. Our experiences have bonded us together in priceless ways.

Yes, Sacred Heart Catholic School is indeed a school with a heart. We are proud of our students, past and present. We also appreciate their parents with all our hearts.

Reunion 2000 was an event to remember. What a pleasure it was to have the past and present come together and look forward to the future.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL

Timmins



Sacred Heart School, which is now a full French Immersion School, is housed in the former Ecole St-Michel which was built in 1936. Ecole St-Michel was a French-language school which was part of the separate school board.

In 1957, the school board opened an English-language kindergarten class and effective July 1, 1959, Ecole St-Michel became Sacred Heart School because of its affiliation with Sacred Heart Parish. The new school housed students from kindergarten to grade eight, but in 1969, the students were sent to St-Theresa Intermediate School (now O’Gorman Intermediate). Prior to 1973, students began school in Kindergarten and it was after that time that Junior Kindergarten was introduced.

The Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception were instrumental in the Catholic education provided to all of the students in the Catholic English-language schools in Timmins including Sacred Heart School. Sister St-Monica (Cora McKenna) was its first principal and she was replaced in 1968 by Sister Nora Kelly. In 1972, Mr. Charles Gazzola became the first lay principal.

Throughout the years, Sacred Heart School underwent many renovations. This original 10 room school was becoming inadequate for its growing population. The renovations were implemented in stages. The first renovation took place in 1963. In 1984, a gymnasium and library facility were added and, in 1996, the interior received a face lift with the addition of extra classrooms, additional washrooms, lockers, and new flooring. With the help of a devoted fund-raising committee comprised of parent volunteers, Sacred Heart School was able to purchase a play structure for the school yard in May of 1998 and, with the help of the Northeastern Catholic District School Board, an additional play structure was added in 2002.

With the growing popularity of French Immersion in our community, the separate school board decided to convert Sacred Heart into a full French Immersion school. The transition was done gradually with the first French Immersion class of grade one students in 1988-1989. Every year a new grade was added until the English-language program was phased out.

What was once a neighborhood school now houses English-Catholic children from all over Timmins and South Porcupine.

Many traditions have been up-held at Sacred Heart School since its inception in 1959 including winter carnival, play days, barbecues and most importantly its many religious celebrations.

Although Sacred Heart School has undergone many changes it continues to be rooted in its original mission: to provide a solid Catholic Education for all of its students.

ST. ANNE ENGLISH CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Iroquois Falls



In 1919, when Ansonville was still called “The Wye”, school board Trustees Messrs. A. E. La Palme, Vital Agase, and Urgel Delisse, along with board Secretary - Treasurer, Mr. Auguste Trottier, propelled by the needs of out of town children, rushed the completion of St. Anne School.

The walk to Iroquois Falls in summer was too much for small children and the open horse drawn sleigh ride was too cold in the winter for the children. The first teachers of the new school, which had two classrooms, were Miss Eva Serre and Miss Yvonne Marion. The next year, an annex was built with one classroom which was taught by Mr. Fabian Lefebvre. The school was known as Roman Catholic School No. 4, because it was in the Fourth Concession of the township of Clavert. By 1921, St. Anne School was named with it's chief objective "to prepare the child for what s/he must be and for what s/he must do here below in order to attain the sublime and for which s/he was created."

In 1923, the school was remodelled and enlarged to hold four classrooms, and by 1948 the school consisted of nine classrooms, including a music room, a science room and a gymnasium. The old school building served staff and students well; but, in 1980, teachers and students moved from their original building to what was previously Jeanne D'Arc School and began classes in its present location at 200 Church Street. The old school building took on a new role as temporary headquarters for Iroquois Falls Woodlands operations and then finally to its present role as an apartment building.

In 1983 a French Immersion program was started for early primary grades in a separate building near

the Local 90. Students in the Immersion program from JK to grade 3 or 4, depending on enrollment, spent their first years in the "little school" until they "transferred" to the "big school" to finish their immersion training. This arrangement continued until this feeder school reunited under one roof with the main school 7 years ago.

Misfortune struck the school when children playing with matches accidentally set a grass fire which got out of control demolishing the school gym in the mid 1980's. The school year began slightly later than scheduled and without gym facilities until a new gym was constructed.

With board amalgamations, St. Anne School came under the control of the newly formed Northeastern Catholic District School Board. With a growing school population, the new board revamped the old district school board offices, located adjacent to the school yard, into a kindergarten building where student now begin their education at St. Anne English Catholic School. This adjacent building, now known as the "little school", graduates its students to the "big school" where students begin their studies in grade 1 until graduating from grade 8.

At present, St. Anne English Catholic School has an enrolment of 185 students, approximately half of which are in the Immersion program.

ST. JEROME SCHOOL

Kirkland Lake



St Jerome School was built in 1938 on the corner of Queen and Folger Street. The present school playground is located where the school once stood. Eight classes began in January of 1939. They consisted of six English classes and two French classes. The principal at the time was Mr. Claus.

In 1941, the school took over the third floor which had been the nun's residence. The principal was Bertha McMahan from 1941 to 1946. Ed Ratza was the principal from 1964 to 1969. In 1969, Mr.

Jack Furlong took over and continued to be principal until 1985. During Mr. Furlong's term a new school was built. The old school had two basement rooms, which were substandard and could only be used as a last resort. There was also a great deal of heaving on the main floor. The present St. Jerome School was built in 1978 at the end of Main Street. It was officially opened and blessed in November 1979. From 1973 to 1984 there was an average enrolment of 175 students.

From 1985 – 1988, Mr. Terrence Schonfeldt was principal of St. Jerome School with an average enrollment of 207 students.

In 1984-85, the French Immersion program started with the JK level and it continued every year by introducing one level at a time. In 1993-94, it was available from JK to grade 8.

Rick Brassard became principal in 1989 and continued until 1993. In 1992 the school added a two-story addition of two classrooms.

From 1994 to April 1999, Mr. Robert Plaunt was principal. The enrollment was an average of 251 students. Lorraine Cantin came to St. Jerome from Timmins Ontario in April 1999 to finish the school year.

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL South Porcupine



St. Joseph School opened its doors for grade one to eight students nearly four decades ago. The blessings and official opening of the Roman Catholic separate school took place on Sunday, March 20, 1960 at 2:30 p.m. His Excellency Canan H. G. Jones blessed the new school. The architects responsible for this structure were H. W. O’Gorman and S. Smith. The teaching staff consisted of Mr. Albert F. Forrest, Principal, Mr. Ross Clausi, Vice Principal, Miss Margaret Moss, Miss Mary Sinopoli, Mrs. Winifred Aitken and Miss Rita McGuire.

St. Joseph School was fortunate to have a very active Parent-Teacher Association Executive consisting of Mr. J. M. Bailey, President, Mrs. William Murphy, Vice-President, Mrs. B. J. Prentice, Secretary and Mr. John Costello, Treasurer. Through fundraising such as auctions, penny sales, rummage sales, bale sales, bond draws and grocery draws, the P.T.A. purchased items ranging from new curtains for the school windows to sports equipment for the gym. While the school lacked great facilities, spirit was high at St. Joseph School. Sport teams won gold medals in tournaments and students with musical talent were provided with opportunities to develop their gifts by participating in musical productions and festivals.

Under the leadership of Mr. Ross Clausi (1962-65), Mr. Ed Zobetz (1965-66) and Mr. Harry Polowy (1967-84), growth and change continued to be a

Mr. Gerry Picket became principal in 1999 until June 2002. In 2002, Carmen Koski was principal and stayed until February 2003. It was at this time that Anne Bougie came to St. Jerome School. At present she continues to be the principal at St. Jerome School. In September 2003, St. Jerome School made the transition from a JK to grade 8 French Immersion School to a JK to grade 3 dual track school. The enrollment today is 176 students.

constant factor in the school life. The student population grew as did the staff. In 1969, grade 7 & 8 students were bussed to St. Theresa, an intermediate school in Timmins.

During the leadership of Maurice Lemire (1985-88) renovations were made and additions were built to the original structure in 1987. One addition, the resource centre was dedicated to Mrs. Irene Cahill, a staunch supporter of Catholic Education in South Porcupine. The others consisted of a new gym, a junior kindergarten room, and staff room, a nurse’s room and an administrator’s office. On April 20, 1988 the newly renovated St. Joseph School was blessed by his excellency Jacques Landriault.

In 1989, Mr. Charles Gazzola took the role of principal until his retirement in 1992 whereby Mrs. Marilyn McAlpine took over until 1996. Over the years the P.T.A. slowly dissolved. In October 1996, under Policy/Program Memorandum No 122, a St. Joseph School Advisory Council was established. To date the School Council remains strong and effective advocating for the needs of all learners.

In 1997, Mrs. Patricia Biasetti continued the role of principal of the *Little School on the Lake* until the year 2000 when Mrs. Susan Trail was appointed to the position. In 2001, Mrs. Tricia Stefanic Weltz became principal of St. Joseph School and brought spirit to a new level by creating and establishing a school logo and school colours. The Cougars were off and running with great school pride. Currently, Mr. Ted Weltz is the principal of the school. During his first year as principal, a YMCA Before and After School Program was established and the implementation of a yearly school trip to Ottawa was introduced to St. Joseph School.

Cougars Can! 

ST. PATRICK SCHOOL

Cobalt



Father O’Gorman was the first pastor at St. Patrick Church in Cobalt and was instrumental in the founding of our English Catholic School. The original St. Patrick School was built on Jamieson Street in Cobalt in 1913.

The majority of the teachers who were hired for the school were from the Ottawa Valley region. Mrs. Charlesbois was the first principal, followed by Mr. Houghton in 1920. Other principals include Harry Cassells (1930), Edgar Boland (who designed the logo and crest), Gladys Murphy, Don Pinkney, Jackie St. Laurent and Rick Brassard.

Mrs. Margaret Dunning, who has been a lifelong resident of Cobalt, began teaching at the original St. Patrick School in 1932.

In the early days of the school, especially during the mining boom days, attendance ranged from 250 to 300 students. Class sizes were anywhere from 32 to 36 students, with some even having 40 pupils.

In 1959-60, many schools were being constructed, including one on Silver Street which became the new St. Patrick. Miss Gladys Murphy was the principal at that time. However, as the mining

industry declined and families were forced to relocate, the school population decreased. In the 1970's, with the Hall Dennis Report recommendations, district schools became popular. As a result, English Catholic Central School was built and our grade 7/8 students attended the larger school. Later the grade 5/6 classes were transferred and St. Patrick became a primary school.

Copper was discovered in Temagami and the Sherman Mine was built. Consequently, many new families moved to our area. Students from Latchford attended the school. Parents worked diligently to persuade the Board to have the grade 5/6 students return to Cobalt.

As the population continued to grow, it was found that the small school building could no longer accommodate the larger numbers of students. Ste. Therese, the French language school in Cobalt, was facing declining enrollment. The trustees adopted a bold approach and had the English and French schools switch facilities. In 1984, the larger school (St. Patrick) was moved to its present site on Lang Street.

In 1993-94, grade 7/8 was re-established at St. Patrick, with grade 7 beginning the first year and grade 8, the second. In 1999, the school community welcomed two important additions to the school: a new gym facility and lift device.

At present, in 2004, we have a student population of 156 students. We continue to take great pride in our small ‘family’ school, which enjoys healthy links to the community and a strong Catholic faith life.

ST. PATRICK SCHOOL

Kapuskasing



Prior to 1960, the English Catholic students of Kapuskasing were housed in the basement of Sacre Coeur, a French-language school which was under

the jurisdiction of the Kapuskasing Roman Catholic School Board. The annexe was called Sacred Heart School and was the only English Catholic school in the school board.

After eight years of occupying rooms in the French language school, the English Catholic children of Kapuskasing finally had their own school. St. Patrick School was built right next to Saint Patrick’s Church which had been opened by Father J. P. Laurin only 5 years before. It was blessed by Bishop

Louis Levesque of Hearst on October 23, 1960. The parish, church and school now stood side by side in a strong partnership. This partnership with our Parish Priest, Father Fern Villeneuve, continues to exist to this day.

The original school consisted of ten classrooms, a principal's office, a staff room and washrooms. Original staff members in September 1960 included principal Frank LeVay (succeeding Mr. Larry Power) and twelve teachers - Mrs. Louise Boucher, Mr. Daniel Bouvier, Miss Rita Gaughan, Mrs. Doreen Lanthier, Mrs. Lorraine Lanteigne, Mrs. Mirelle Macdonald, Miss Elaine McKinnon, Miss Theresa Norlock, Mrs. Lucy St. James, Miss Joanne Turcotte, Mrs. Georgette Ungar and Mrs. Claire Walker. There were 360 pupils from Kindergarten to grade eight.

Over the years several large-scale additions were made to the building. In 1962 the gym plus four more classrooms and a nurse's room were built. Then, in 1963, four more classrooms were constructed. Later, in 1973, two of the classrooms were combined into a modern library. In 1974 the separate school board located its Audio-Visual Centre at St. Patrick School.

Between 1960 and 1973 the school population grew steadily to a total of 498 pupils, 23 teachers and 16 classrooms. Subsequently, there was a province-wide decline in student population and numbers declined. Still under the leadership of Frank LeVay, in September of 1973, St. Patrick School opened its doors to its first Junior Kindergarten program.

As a result of the bilingual trend in the province, in September 1983, Mr. LeVay announced to the staff

that St. Pat's would be offering a French Immersion class. This class was a 2/3 split taught by Mrs. Marg Boucher and consisted of 17 students. At that time, ninety percent of the program was taught in the French language and soon, due to the success of the program, French Immersion classes were offered from Junior Kindergarten to grade 8.

In 1987, Mr. LeVay retired and was replaced by Mr. Maurice McDonald, a teacher at St. Patrick School. The staff enjoyed "Moe's" leadership and recognized his ability to instill the "love of learning" and "self-confidence" in his students.

In 1998, as a result of the amalgamation of the school boards, St. Patrick School was finally under the jurisdiction of an English Catholic School board, namely the Northeastern Catholic District School Board.

From 1999 to 2001, Mr. McDonald was replaced by interim principals, Lorraine Cantin and Doryne McDonald, and Acting Principal Linda Stewart until his official retirement in June 2001.

In September 2001, a former St. Patrick School graduate, Melodie McCrae, was named principal of the school of 238. Together, she and staff worked diligently to build the best school in Kapuskasing.

Today, St. Patrick School is recognized for its high academic standards, numerous extra-curricular activities and outstanding teaching staff.

**St. Patrick School:
A - Awesome Students
B - Best Teachers
C - Cool School**

ST. PAUL SCHOOL

Timmins



St. Paul School opened its doors in 1966. The school was virtually the same configuration that it is now, with the exception of the gym containing a

stage. The secretary's office once housed a small kitchen for the nuns and it was enlarged in 1980. At the same time that St. Paul was built, a sister school, namely St. Gerard, was built in the other end of town for French speaking students. There were minor changes to the building over the years, the most significant being a portapac added to the structure in 1999 to accommodate the growing student population.

Sister Francis Margaret (Grey Sister of the Immaculate Conception) was appointed the first

principal of St. Paul School in September of 1966. She was replaced in September of 1970 by Sister Marjory Casey (G.S.I.C.), and Charlie Gazzola was her full-time vice-principal until June of 1972 when he was replaced by Joe Ferrari. In September of 1977, Joe Ferrari was appointed principal and his vice-principal was Mary Devcich. In September of 1978, Sister Marjory Casey returned to Timmins after her sabbatical leave and was appointed half-time vice-principal with Joe Ferrari continuing as principal until June of 1982. Charlie Gazzola (September 1982 - June 1985), Harry Polowi (September 1985 - June 1989), Maurice Lemire (September 1989 - March 1997), Marilyn McAlpine (March 1997 - June 1998), and Susan Trail (September 1998 - June 200) also took turns as principal before Patricia Biasetti was appointed principal in September 2000. Daphne Brumwell was appointed principal in September 2003.

The school contained grades Kindergarten to 8 when it opened in January 1966. In the Fall of

1969, the grade 7 and 8 classes moved to St. Theresa School (now O'Gorman Intermediate Catholic School). Junior Kindergarten began in 1974. In September of 1977, the grade 6 students of St. Paul School were sent to O'Gorman Intermediate School because of the crowded conditions at St. Paul. In September 2002, the school reconfiguration committee made a recommendation that the grade 6 students remain at St. Paul School.

During the summer of 2004, St. Paul received renovations. These included new washrooms for the students, air conditioning in the administration area and the computer room, the removal of the storage area in the gym and a new floor, new windows, a ventilation system, a new staff room in Room 8 and an elevator. These improvements have been met with much enthusiasm by the students and the teachers.

TRUSTEES PRIOR TO 1998 AMALGAMATION ENGLISH SECTION

COCHRANE - IROQUOIS FALLS - BLACK RIVER-MATHESON DRCSS BOARD

Michael Cournoyer

Bruce Muise

Lorne Murphy

KAPUSKASING DRCSS BOARD

Helen Dubien

Paul Keating

Edith Plourde

KIRKLAND LAKE - TIMISKAMING DRCSS BOARD

Mary Dudgeon

Connie Lavallée

Mary O'Connor

Judy Pace

Ray Viskovich

TIMMINS DRCSS BOARD

Peter Del Guidice

Colleen Landers

Jack Slattery

Joe Torlone

LOCAL EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

The Fewer School Boards Act, 1997, provided for the creation of Local Education Improvement Committees to facilitate the establishment of new district school boards. They laid the groundwork for the transition within the government's legislative framework and on the basis of directives and guidelines issued by the Education Improvement Commission.

Rhéal M. Bazinet

Peter Del Guidice

Hélène Dubien

Colleen Landers

Anne Mac Donald

Lorne Murphy

Michel Serré

Paul St-Cyr

Michel Breen

Bernard Demers

Paul Keating

Connie Lavallée

Bruce Muise

Mary O'Connor

Jack Slattery

NORTHEASTERN CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD INAUGURAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES 1998

Peter Del Guidice

Paul Keating

Bruce Muise

Judy Pace

Mary Dudgeon

Colleen Landers

Mary O'Connor

Jack Slattery

NORTHEASTERN CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

CHAIRS - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1998	Peter Del Guidice
1999	Judy Pace (effective December 1998)
2000	Judy Pace (until July 25, 2000)
2000	Jack Slattery (effective July 25, 2000)
2001	Jack Slattery
2002	Jack Slattery
2003	Colleen Landers (effective December 2002)
2004	Colleen Landers

VICE-CHAIRS - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1998	Mary O'Connor
1999	Bruce Muise (effective December 1998)
2000	Jack Slattery (until July 25, 2000)
2000	Paul Keating (effective August 23, 2000)
2001	Paul Keating
2002	Colleen Landers
2003	Peter Del Guidice (effective December 2002)
2004	Peter Del Guidice

DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION

March 1998 - January 2000	William Parent
May 2000 - April 2005	Larry Yaguchi
May 2005 - Present	Paul Toffanello

SUPERINTENDENTS OF EDUCATION

January 1998 - December 1999	Anne Mac Donald
January 2000 - August 2001	John Madigan
September 2001 - July 2004	Paul Toffanello

Sincere thanks to all individuals who assisted in the research and composition of the history of each of our school communities, as well as that of our Board and its predecessors.

Efforts were made to ensure that the information contained in this booklet is as accurate as possible. However, we welcome any corrections, additions or comments on the content of this first edition.

Additional copies may be obtained by contacting the Northeastern Catholic District School Board at (705) 268-7443.