

Director's Bulletin

February 10, 2012

Every Student, Every Day

Celebrating Our Successes

It is my pleasure as your Director to be able to share inspirational examples of student and staff successes. Periodically, I present a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Snapshots of Excellence* at Board Meetings. It highlights accomplishments, partnerships and examples of humanitarian acts throughout our district. For example, we recently celebrated Alexandra Zuniga of Northern Collegiate and Nancy Shipman of Wallaceburg District Secondary School after they each received the Lincoln Alexander Award as well as Alexander Mackenzie Secondary School Teacher Chris King who received the 2010/2011 Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence!

Recently one of our secondary principals received a letter from parents who had recently visited the school for a volleyball tournament. The following are excerpts from the letter:

Sir;

You do not know my daughter, my wife or I but this past weekend we had the pleasure of visiting your wonderful school for a 16U girls volleyball tournament. The event lasted about 10 hours during which we had plenty of time to get to see your facilities and to visit your town of Chatham. Coming from a larger city (Hamilton) we are often curious to see what other communities have to offer and smaller more rural ones unfortunately are not what we are accustomed to. By that I mean that coming from a larger city with many large secondary schools that feed a local university and college we tend to get trapped in preconceived notions of superiority and enlightenment, or perhaps it is just foolish a false sense of entitlement. This is very wrong on our part and is something which we try to teach our daughter to look past and give all things, places, and people a chance before making any judgment. We do not like ignorance or prejudice in any form so we try to set an example by showing that globally everyone has something to offer.

After visiting your campus and its truly wonderful up to date modern facilities we were pleasantly humbled and eating crow. We rather enjoyed watching the girls look around amazed and wide eyed and say things like I wished I went here. In fact I must say how amazed we were by your schools ability to adapt to changing needs from its early days in the 60's to present in what appears to be a seamless transition and keeping with modern trends and knowledge base. A number of things struck us as we strolled about from your World War 2 memorial which was very respectful and historic to the playing fields for football and soccer and track. My wife noted a number of interlocking bricks with names on them that seemed to be of alumni or contributors to your campus and thought it was a wonderful tribute and very tasteful means of paying respect to those individuals while providing a great area for your student to use to recreate. Your science labs with their exhaust hoods and microscopes to the coffee house to student shop to the fashion and art departments were impressive. Your facility was very clean and had a number of areas which to relax and places for students to study and seemed open to the concept of allowing students to be able to approach advisory staff for assistance with the way things were set up of the offices.

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The honour rolls and student achievements were proudly displayed everywhere we went and your school has a very storied history. We immediately got a strong sense of school pride with the displays of the Golden Hawks throughout. Tied in with this we got a sense of belonging and strong community support as well. This was supported while stopping in town to get things like food and lodging. Everyone was very friendly and helpful to the point that the visiting teams from around the province felt like we were welcomed, appreciated, and made to feel comfortable.

My wife and I are both correctional officers who work for the province of Ontario. I personally have been to many institutions and jails and have been past your community on a number of occasions. If not for the fact that I have 22 years plus in Hamilton and my family is settled here, your community is the type of place where we would look to as a place to settle down had we not already done so. It is very clean and seems to have a low crime rate. We applaud you because the tools and skills that you are providing these fine young people is working and shows not only in your school but in the community as a whole. The citizens of Chatham and their students should be very proud of their accomplishments and they have nothing to fear in the way of being able to keep up with larger cities. If you ask me they are head and shoulders above most cities I have visited and should celebrate what they have. Needless to say we were all very impressed and cannot wait to be able to visit your facility again.

Thanks again for permitting us the use of it and please give our thanks and respect to everyone from the janitorial staff to the student body to the administration. A job well done.

I believe this letter exemplifies the Board's Belief Statement #4

- √ **Student success is achieved through shared responsibility of students, staff, families, community and First Nation partners.**

Please keep sharing your stories of excellence in education with me so we can all celebrate together.



**Lambton Kent
District School Board**

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Jim Costello, Director of Education