CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO
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BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

208 School Blessings, Official Opening, School Name Change and School Anniversaries

DIRECTIONAL POLICY

Nurturing and Protecting Catholic Education

Title of Administrative Procedure:

School Blessings, Official Opening, School Name Change and School Anniversaries

Date Approved:

February 2025

Projected Review Date:

February 2029

Directional Policy Alignment:

The School Blessings, Official Opening, School Name Change and School Anniversaries Administrative Procedure aligns with *Directional Policy Nurturing and Protecting Catholic Education* by highlighting the expansion of Catholic education and liturgically expressing God's generosity and love through an official opening and blessing for all new schools and new additions to existing schools.

Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

The School Blessings, Official Opening, School Name Change and School Anniversaries Administrative Procedure puts into action the Board's commitment to educate students in faith-filled learning communities.

CDSBEO Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Purpose

This policy outlines how the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario will provide support concerning blessings, anniversaries, name changes, and official school openings. A

religious blessing ceremony, appropriate to the identity of a Catholic school, shall be conducted at an official opening of a new school, a name change, a major addition to a school and for an anniversary celebration.

Scope and Responsibility

The Director of Education, with the support of the Communications Department and respective superintendents, will provide support to the principal during events celebrating official openings, anniversaries, and blessings.

Action Required

All new schools, and new additions to existing schools, in the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario shall have an official solemn opening and blessing ceremony.

The opening and blessing ceremony shall be held as soon as possible after a new school or new addition to an existing school is completed and occupied. The event shall be held within 60 days (about 2 months) of the occupancy unless there are extenuating circumstances.

We acknowledge the land we sit on is the unceded, traditional Algonquin territory of the Anishinaabe people, as well as the unceded, traditional Mohawk territory of the Haudenosaunee people. We respect both the land and the people of this land, including all Indigenous people who have walked and continue to walk in this place. The board will invite representation from the First Nations people who live in the area of the new school or addition to participate in the official opening and blessing ceremony.

Blessings and Official Openings of New Schools

The following procedure shall be adopted regarding solemn blessings and official openings of new schools and sod turnings for new schools:

1. The Director of Education will consult with the school principal, local trustee(s), parish priest, and FOS Superintendent to determine a suitable date and time for the event.

2. A planning committee will be established locally, including the principal, school staff, Catholic School Council, and student council, with support from the Communications Department.

3. The ceremony for the blessing of the school/addition will be planned in consultation with the local priest.

The official guest list may include:

- the local Archbishop/Bishop, Chair of the Board, Board of Trustees, local parish priest, senior board officials, architect, contractor, the local Mayor/City councillor, the local member of provincial parliament and the local member of parliament.

The order of speakers on the program will be as follows:

- Local Trustee, Chair of the Board, Archbishop/bishop/parish priest (blessing), Principal of the School/Director of Education, Mayor/Councillor (if city/township partnership,) CSC Chair/President of the student council (where applicable).

Blessings of Additions to Existing Schools and School Name Changes

If the event is to celebrate and provide an addition to an existing school, or a name change to the school, the official guest list may include:

- The Trustee, local parish priest, FOS Superintendent, architect, contractor, local city Mayor/Councillor (if city/township partnership) and local member of provincial parliament.

- Invitations may also be sent to include students, parents, and former principals of the school.

The order of speakers on the program for the opening of an addition to an existing school may be as follows:

- Local Trustee, Chair of the Board, Bishop/Priest, Principal of the school, local member of provincial legislature, local city Major/Councillor, FOS Superintendent/Director of Education, Chair of Catholic School Parent Council, President of the student council (where applicable).

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring alignment of this administrative procedure with the Nurturing and Protecting Catholic Education Directional Policy.
- Reviewing the School Blessings, Official Opening and Anniversaries Administrative Procedure as part of its regular policy and procedure review cycle.

The Chairperson of the Board is responsible for:

- Participating as a member in the opening ceremony committee.

Trustees are responsible for:

- Acting as the host if the official opening takes place in their local area.
- Participating as a member in the opening ceremony committee if the official opening takes place in their local area.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- Designating resources for ensuring the implementation of and compliance with this Administrative Procedure.
- Acting as the chair of the opening ceremony committee and establishing a budget for the event.

Family of Schools Superintendents are responsible for:

- Participating as a member in the opening ceremony committee if the opening takes place in their family of schools.

Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for:

- Participating as a member in the opening ceremony committee if the opening takes place at their school.
- Collaborating with the CDSBEO Board planning team and providing school-based support for the event (securing the school gymnasium, set up, etc..).

Definitions

New Addition - This administrative procedure applies to significant new additions to existing school facilities which would substantially increase the square-footage of the school and/or create new learning space that has a significant impact on the school community such as new learning commons (library), gymnasium or kindergarten wing.