



NEWS ARCHIVE:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools begins school year; launches new mission statement



Board Chair Diane Boyko revealed the new mission statement Aug. 28, 2009.

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) division unveiled a new mission statement during an opening celebration for the new school year Aug. 28, 2009.

The new mission statement reads: "Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools: a welcoming community where we nurture faith, encourage excellence in learning and inspire students to serve others, making the world a better place. 'We love because He first loved us.' - 1 John 4:19."

GSCS board chair Diane Boyko presented the mission statement to the gathering of staff at Circle Drive Alliance Church, after an opening Mass with Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon, Bishop Albert

LeGatt of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon and a number of priests from the community.

Boyko described the extensive process of input and discussion undertaken to craft the new mission statement to replace a previous statement which was developed 17 years ago.

"We heard from clergy, the CWL, the Knights of Columbus, members of the Catholic community and the general public. We spoke to local politicians, the aboriginal community and many



Bishop Bryan Bayda, Bishop Albert LeGatt and Rev. Ron Beechinor at the Opening Mass for the 2009-2010 school year for staff of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

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representatives from our partner organizations, and of course, we heard from students and from all of you, our staff. Many of your responses were heartening.



Oftentimes they were very thought provoking. All were read and considered.”

This process followed the earlier development of a vision and belief statements for the school division – work started three years ago by a GSCS faith committee which set out to define what made Catholic education unique and distinct, she explained.

“The mission statement goes hand-in-hand with our vision: Rooted in Faith, Growing in Knowledge and Reaching Out to Transform the World,” noted Boyko. “It is also aligned with our belief statements, like ‘we see God in all things’ and ‘our faith is part of learning and life.’”

During the gathering members of the board of education presented a mission statement plaque to the principal of each of its schools in Saskatoon, Humboldt, Biggar and Viscount; and each school will also receive a framed copy of the new mission statement.

“It is our hope, however, that the mission statement will be more than just words that are framed and hung on your walls,” said Boyko “This statement should be lived in our classrooms, in our offices, during our liturgies and assemblies, in Catholic school community council meetings and of course in your staff rooms.”

Director of Education Bev Hanson spoke in more detail about how the mission statement, the vision statement and the belief statements for the GSCS division are aligned.





“Achievement and excellence are central and important in our catholic schools, but ultimately the success of Catholic education is not measured in standardized tests or academic statistics, but in its ability to integrate both faith and learning,” Hanson said. “Catholic schools are called to impart a vision of faith that enables students to seek the truth about God, about nature and the human person.”

Hanson reviewed the process of reflection that has been happening in the school division about the vision of Catholic education, with key messages presented in different booklets printed each year for staff and school leaders to use to explore the vision statements in more detail.

Extending welcome and nurturing faith does not only happen at a prescribed time in Catholic schools, but must take place continuously “in every classroom, in every gymnasium, in every library, in the playground and in every interaction that we have,” said Hanson.

“We understand that we cannot nurture faith alone, but in communion with the whole Church,” she added, noting the partnerships that Catholic schools have with parish and family. “We also recognize that we as adults are on the same faith journey as our students and that we are truly companions on the journey, breaking bread and sharing life.”

During the celebration, the GSCS division also expressed appreciation to Bishop Albert LeGatt for his leadership, presenting him with a gift as he prepares to leave the diocese in September to answer the call to serve as archbishop of St. Boniface, Manitoba.

