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Catholic school board thrives on teamwork

The Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) knows it takes a village to raise a child.

That's why the OCSB is renowned for initiating conversations and programs with its staff that centre on how to make the Ottawa Catholic School Board a better place for all.

"We create a culture of innovation," says Julian Hanlon, Director of Education with the board.

"We allow people the opportunity to take risks and share what they learned with the rest of the school system. We have a clear vision of where we want to go."

The Ottawa Catholic School Board, as known today, was formed in 1998 when the school boards amalgamated across Ontario. Though its mission is similar to other school boards with an emphasis on students' education, what makes the OCSB unique is its dedication to students as a whole.

"We provide students with a well-rounded education for their mind, body and spirit," says Hanlon.

Because of its dedication to its students, the OCSB garners above average Education Quality and Accountability Office scores in comparison to the province.

Part of its excellence is due to its unfaltering commitment to technology.

The OCSB is renowned for using technology to enhance the student learning experience. It is one of the first school boards in the province to go completely wireless, which is especially beneficial for students since it



The Ottawa Catholic School Board - A place where excellence is recognized. Pictured are the 2014 recipients of the Director of Education Commendation awards and the Stephen H. Richardson awards with (centre) Archbishop Terrence J. Prendergast and Director of Education Julian Hanlon.

has a bring your own device policy. Going wireless also benefits staff because the OCSB has migrated to a Google Platform, allowing teachers to network with one another.

"It's great for sharing info, ideas and communicating with students and parents," says Hanlon. "It keeps people connected on a regular basis."

The OCSB also connects with its staff through collaborative initiatives and development programs. For instance, the board runs an extensive professional development program called 'The Leadership Journey' that sees more than 500 employees participating in 16 different programs.

"We want our employees to feel they're a part of what we're doing because they are," says Hanlon. "We want to show them that we value what they do and are happy to give them the opportunity for professional and personal growth."

This culture of collaboration has paid off for the OCSB in a big way – to the tune of \$20 million, to be exact.

Its staff, through its own initiatives, developed an energy management system that lowered hydro and electricity bills and introduced green initiatives. It resulted in \$20 million saved over the past nine years.

To show appreciation for its staff, the

Ottawa Catholic School Board

- **YEARS IN BUSINESS:** 159
- **NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:** 4,135
- **LOCATIONS:** 82 schools, multi-site treatment centre, adult high school, four adult education centres and head office.
- **HEAD OFFICE:** Nepean
- **POSITIONS EMPLOYED:** Elementary, secondary and continuing education teachers, early childhood educators, educational assistants, administrative support, caretakers and skilled trades, managerial and professional.
- **HIRING INCENTIVES:** Competitive salaries, professional development for all employees, pension, health and dental benefits for permanent employees, exceptional workplace morale, employee assistance program, vacation days and Christmas break.

OCSB has an array of programs to show recognition, including peer-nominated awards, appreciation nights for teachers that support the arts and sports programs, service pins and celebrations for those who have been employees for 15 years or more and parties for retired staff.

"We may be a big board, but we have a family feeling," says Hanlon. "Our employees know we care."

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Helping your child build a successful future

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