

Chair's Inaugural Address

December 9, 2019

Good evening fellow Trustees, members of Senior Administration, staff and guests. I am honoured to be your Board Chair once again this year.

I believe that 2020 is going to be a challenging year in the field of education as we are facing uncertainty with labour negotiations. There is considerable Provincial unrest currently that may impact our students and staff in the upcoming year. Strong leadership will be necessary at the Board level to overcome whatever challenges need to be faced.

I am glad to have past Board Chair, Rita Collver, as our Vice-Chair. Rita brings a wealth of experience to the table that is always helpful. Susan Gibson will be stepping into the role of Committee of the Whole Chair and I am confident that she will fill this role admirably. Having former Board Chair Carol Ann Sloat as Committee of the Whole Vice-Chair gives us a knowledgeable and capable resource. Finally, we have a very seasoned past Board Chair, Don Werden, serving as our OPSBA representative. This will come in handy in 2020 as we navigate the coming issues. We are very fortunate to have a cohesive group of Trustees who work together for the common good.

I would also like to personally thank Trustee David Dean for his help and support the last two years as Vice-Chair of the Board.

This is an important time for Grand Erie with Future Grade 9 Student and Parent Information Nights underway at the secondary level and Kindergarten Registration kicking off in our elementary schools in January. This is the time when we attract students to our Board.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the great work that the Board has done in the past year. A blending of Trustees occurred in 2019 following the 2018 municipal election. We have been fortunate to have a high level of energy, commitment, and focus from our Trustees. We are also very fortunate to have an outstanding Director of Education and an excellent team of Superintendents. With this team approach between Senior Administration and Trustees, we have:

- Opened Maplevue Elementary School in Dunnville

- Increased our focus on Child Care at Hagersville Secondary School and Central Public School
- Added elevators at Major Ballachey Public School and Pauline Johnson Collegiate and Vocational School
- Focused on Equity and Indigenous Education
- Passed a balanced budget
- Provided leadership through our Multi-Year Plan

This will be the final year of our Multi-Year Plan, *Success for Every Student*, and I look forward to starting the process in the fall of creating a new Multi-Year Plan for our Board.

I want to thank the support of Trustees as I embark on a third term as Board Chair. I was fortunate to have been both an elementary and secondary teacher, a vice-principal, principal and school superintendent in an education career that spanned 37 years. Yet, I am most happy being a school board Trustee as it affords me the opportunity to stay involved in education and continue to do what I always enjoyed doing: helping our youngsters learn and develop skills that will lead them into the future. As Trustees, it is our mandate to look out for our students and help them become the best they can be.

While we may see some changes in 2020, I feel confident that we have a group of Trustees and Senior Administration that can meet any challenges squarely and effectively. Our Multi-Year Plan, *Success for Every Student*, summarizes what we stand for at Grand Erie. By focusing on students and staff in a culture of high expectations, we can achieve success. The six indicators that support our vision, include: Achievement, Well-Being, Equity, Environment, Technology and Community.

On behalf of all Trustees, I would like to extend our thanks to all of our employees. Thank you for the support that you provide to our students and system in so many ways. May you all enjoy a wonderful Christmas holiday with family and friends.

Thank you.

Greg Anderson
Board Chair