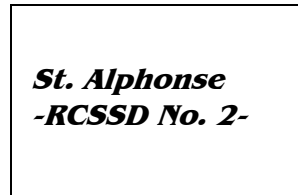
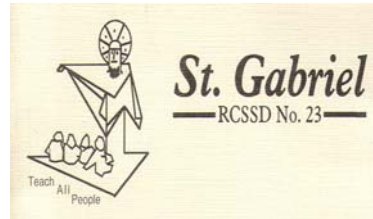


News Release



Four Catholic divisions agree to amalgamate

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, January 20, 2005

Four central Saskatchewan Catholic school divisions have agreed to amalgamate to form a new school division.

St. Alphonse (Viscount) and Saskatoon Catholic school divisions will officially amalgamate as of July 1, 2005. St. Gabriel (Biggar) and Humboldt Catholic school divisions will amalgamate with the two other divisions to form the new division as of January 1, 2006.

Initial amalgamation discussions involving the four boards began in March 2002 and have been ongoing since that time. All four boards of education recently passed motions approving amalgamation agreements and have sent letters of notification to the Minister of Learning.

“St. Gabriel Roman Catholic Separate School Division comes into this with a long history and sense of achievement,” said Todd Hawkins, Chair of the Board. “We recognize that now is the time to move forward in order to ensure that Catholic education continues to be available in our community.”

While this will mean changes in areas such as governance, administration and policy, Rita Theissing, Board Chair of the Humboldt Roman Catholic Separate School Division explained that, “students, parents and teachers will see that day-to-day education in our schools will continue to be of high quality.”

From the perspective of Saskatoon Catholic Schools, “this is great news for Catholic education in Saskatchewan,” said Jim Carriere, Chair of the Board. “We believe the amalgamation will enhance the quality of Catholic education for all students and help to preserve Catholic education in rural areas.”

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“This provides for the continuation of local traditions and culture in Catholic education in Viscount,” added Patrick Clavelle, Chair of the St. Alphonse Roman Catholic Separate School Division.

It is also expected that the amalgamation will provide increased opportunity for parental involvement and engagement through redefined school councils, which will be able to provide input on a variety of issues.

In addition, the amalgamation will ensure the continuation of expertise and support in areas such as student services, religious education and special needs. Staff will see continued support in many areas related to curriculum and technology, and in maximizing the use of resources in the new school division.

Staffing levels at schools are not expected to change due to the amalgamation. Administrative staff at the division level either plan to retire or are expected to be redeployed. All local staff agreements will be honoured until new agreements are negotiated.

During the next few months, all four boards will work through the amalgamation process. The new board will determine its governance model, policies and the name of the new division.

These four Catholic schools divisions serve 15,814 students in 45 schools with 1,679 teachers and service and support staff. As of January 2006, the newly formed division will be the largest Catholic division in the province.

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