

# The Element

A Presentation of the Greater Essex County District School Board

## An Issue of Excellence

Issue 1 Volume 4 October 2009

### Happy New Year!



*J.K. teacher Tracy D'Agostini with her new class at Glenwood Public School*

Better late than never! The 2009-10 school year began as deep into September as it ever will, because the first Monday of the month, which is set aside for the Labour Day holiday, wasn't until the 7<sup>th</sup>.

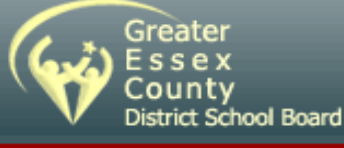
It was a day that Director of Education Warren Kennedy had been looking forward to for some time. It marked the start of his first full school year at the head of the Greater Essex County District School Board.

"I want every day to be just like the first day of school," Kennedy says. "The energy and enthusiasm that fills our hallways on day one should be there

on day forty-two and day one hundred and eleven and I think that's something we can do."

This new school year brings with it more than just a renewed spirit for achievement. There are additional reasons for excitement.

Glenwood Public School, for instance, is welcoming dozens of students and their families to its community. Glenwood is temporarily accommodating the Junior Kindergarten classes from Ecole Bellewood Public School.



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The Board's senior administration team has also seen changes. Filling the positions formerly held by Superintendents Dave Lynn and Steve Snider, who both retired this past year, are John Howitt and Terry Lyons. John was most recently Principal at Ecole Bellewood Public School and Terry was Principal of Essex District High School.

Enrolment numbers are also better than expected this Fall. The Board has experienced another decline in our student numbers; however we do have more than was indicated in the projections carried out last Spring. As of the middle of September enrolment in the Board was just over 34,500 students.



## School Construction

Since 2004 the Greater Essex County District School Board has not had a year without a school construction project on its agenda.

A school designed to inspire environmental stewardship and another which acknowledges our heritage are the Board's latest in the series of themed schools, which began with F.W. Begley Public School.

Dr. David Suzuki Public School is being built on the site where Princess Anne Public School stood for more than 50 years.

It's projected to be Canada's most environmentally conscious school. The Board is seeking a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. The plan is for this school

to be a demonstration site for the installation and application of almost two dozen different environmental technologies.



*Dr. David Suzuki Public School is taking shape*

To get an up to the minute look at the construction, check out the New School Construction page on our website ([www.publicboard.ca](http://www.publicboard.ca)) and watch it live on the web-cams. You can also get updates on Twitter by signing up for DrDavidSuzukiPS. Among the Tweets posted so far: *The DDSPS construction site has generated less than 8 cubic yards (1 small garbage bin) of mixed waste in 16 weeks of construction.*

### School Scoreboard

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## Co-op Construction

September 1, 2009 –

Dr. David Suzuki Public School will be ready for September 2010. The school community will bring together the students of Princess Anne and Concord Public Schools.

John Campbell Public School will also be ready for September 2010. This ambitious and unique re-build of the historically significant building is also moving steadily toward completion, although the progress isn't as obvious as at Dr. Suzuki School, because most of the work is happening inside the existing façade.



*View from main lobby down west corridor*

The theme for John Campbell is Heritage and it will be reflected not just in the school's original exterior but throughout the school. Two rooms, a primary classroom and the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor music room are being restored to their original 1926 design. There will also be display areas which will contain artifacts and items which celebrate the history of the Windsor area.



The term “co-op program” has been stretched to a new dimension with this year's Homebuilding Co-op. Students will once again get hands-on experience in the construction trades but the house they're building this year involves new and interesting partnerships and levels of cooperation.

Steve LeBel is back as the project leader with a dozen students from throughout the Board to work on a house in Essex.

This house will be the grand prize in the 2011 Brentwood Recovery Home Lottery, which is the major annual fundraiser for this esteemed community organization.

“We are grateful and pleased for this opportunity to partner with the Greater Essex County District School Board in creating such a valuable contribution to the future of our youth in Essex County,” stated Brentwood's Executive Director Don Russell. He was among an enthusiastic group at the building site on September 1<sup>st</sup> to kick off this project.



*Chairperson of the Board of Trustees Gale Simko-Hatfield at the Home Building Co-op groundbreaking*

Board Chairperson Gale Simko-Hatfield said, "It's like we've won the lottery - there are so many winners. I look forward to being here to welcome the lucky winners of this home our students helped build."

Among the students working on the project is Dan Bates, a student from General Amherst High School. Dan's connection to this project is much deeper than just a great educational opportunity. He's the grandson of two alumni of the Brentwood Treatment Home program and now he'll be able to repay, in his own way, the contribution Brentwood made to his family.



*Student Dan Bates (right) with Grandparents Bill and Pam Beckett*

The other partners in this project are the developer, Lakepoint Homes and the Town of Essex, which has waived all the development fees for the building.



## Cavalier Contribution to Extreme Build

September 21, 2009 –

Kingsville District High School played a large role in the town's Extreme Build project in September.



*KDHS Students were at the centre of Kingsville's Extreme Build project*

It was a fund raiser for the town's Community Use Building Committee. They schemed to build a 3 bedroom, ranch-style home in four days or fewer, using volunteer labour, then sell the house and use the profit (projected at \$100,000) to improve the town's arena, community centre and library.

Fifty KDHS students participated, along with a couple of their teachers. That was ten percent of the workforce. They completed more than 460 hours of community service. A dozen students were asked for resumes by builders at the site and some were even offered jobs.

The Cavalier contribution helped to finish the house in far less than the 4 days that was allocated. The house is now up for sale.

## Vision to Practice

Highlighted by headline quality keynote speakers and sustained by practical workshops, Vision to Practice, the Greater Essex County District School Board's annual summer conference, has become a drawing card for teachers, administrators, parents and community partners.

And this year's four day event, held at Caesar's Convention Centre, only intensified its magnetic appeal.



*Vision to Practice workshops are always interactive and interesting*

“For the first time in history, it is our job to prepare children for a future we cannot possibly describe,” first day keynote speaker David Warlick told about 600 educators. He definitely set an ambitious tone for the week. He challenged them, “A 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher should be a learner...a mature learner.”

Glenn Singleton followed on Day two with *Courageous Conversations About Race*. Kevin Cameron, the Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma spoke on Wednesday.

The conference concluded, fittingly, with a show-stopper: Academy Award winning actor Marlee Matlin. She demonstrated that her deafness was not

an obstacle or an asset in her success. “Despite predictions, 22 years ago that my Oscar was the result of a pity vote, I’m still here,” she told the audience in American Sign Language and through her interpreter, Jack Jason.



*Marlee Matlin won the best actress Oscar for her role in the 1986 drama “Children of a Lesser God”*

Ms. Matlin became almost completely deaf as a young child. She related her parents' attitude to her disability, “Every day,” she said “they would open the door and encourage me to explore.” She feels that her parents instilled in her that she could do anything she wanted despite being deaf.

And she says she has. Ms. Matlin has an impressive list of television and movie credits and has authored three books.



## Marathon of Hope

Greater Essex County District School Board schools continue to be leaders in the annual Marathon of Hope Terry Fox runs to raise money for cancer research.



*D.M. Eagle Public School raised \$678.54 in its Terry Fox run/walk in Tecumseh*

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*Editor's Note: The following is a summary of the Sandwich Secondary School Terry Fox Run, written by student Sarah Pennington*

### Students Walk for Cancer

On Wednesday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, the students and faculty of Sandwich Secondary School donned their coats and braved the cold for the school's 4<sup>th</sup> annual Terry Fox Walk. The event was organized to raise money for cancer research and to honour the brave man who sparked hope across the nation. The

walk was met with unbelievable enthusiasm by the student body and was all in all a roaring success for the Sabres.

Sandwich's goal was to raise a minimum of ten dollars from every student, but the donations didn't stop there. The grand total of student pledges came to an impressive \$14,600 which brings the school's four year total to more than \$45,000. The grade nines, new to Sandwich's hallways, contributed the most money, making a very good impression and showing some formidable Sabre Spirit. The school's top pledge collector was Chris D'Ambrosio, followed by Jonathon Griffeth and Matt Slipchuck.

The walk itself wrapped up the end of the school day. Participants took a route around the Vollmer Complex and its soccer fields. Students were led by the school mascot, Erbas, and a banner adorned with countless names of the individuals for whom Sandwich's students were walking. Some ambitious Sabres chose to run competitively, making two loops around the complex in what totaled a distance of about five kilometers. They were joined by some of the equally ambitious staff. The top runners were Mitchell Nelson and Justine Crease, who each received commemorative t-shirts and a round of applause from their fellow Sabres.

The event concluded with a lively barbeque on the school's football field. Familiar tunes swelled in the background while students lined up for hotdogs and water. They were then given a chance to mingle among the bleachers and the field before being called to the buses.

Terry Fox's original dream was to raise one dollar from every Canadian to put towards cancer research. Sandwich is one of many schools that

proudly continues the tradition in honour of Terry's hope that, one day, a cure will be found thanks to the devotion and participation of those who are willing to help and hope right along with him. Congratulations Sandwich and good luck with the Terry Fox Walk of 2010.



## Loonie Fridays @ KCI

A lot of common sense went into the planning of Loonie Friday at Kennedy Collegiate Institute. Five years ago some staff members figured if everyone in the school donated one dollar every Friday during the school year, they'd have a lot of money to help students who really need it.



*L to R Sebastien Woods, Lauren Luxford and Nick Hand drop some change in the can on Loonie Friday at KCI*

Each Friday since then, the can gets passed around classrooms and students are encouraged to dig out some change and drop it in.

“You know where this is going,” says teacher Shelby Kawa to her home

room students. Money is spent to buy needed school supplies for students who can't afford them. It's used to get a student a warm coat or a bus pass and Loonie Friday money also helps some students cover the cost of university or college application fees.

The fund is managed by a group of teachers, who determine disbursements based on need. The goal is to help as many Kennedy students as possible, but also to engender a culture of giving at the school. “What can you do for others?” is the question each Friday. “Lots with just a little!” is the answer.



## Welcome to High School

Every September hundreds of young people experience a minor identity crisis. Some used to be Cougars but they're now Clippers...some were Hornets now they're Hawks...others are now Rebels after 8 years as Jets...and what the heck's a Tartan anyway?

It's the confusion inherent in the leap from Grade 8 to high school, from being a big fish in a small pond to being a mere minnow.

That's why as soon as possible at the beginning of the school year, the grade 9s are the focus of everyone's attention at GECDSB High Schools. They even call the celebrations Grade 9 Day”. It's just a small gesture to make them feel at home in their new surroundings with their new identities.

They have tours and play games and food is often involved. Seniors socialize with the newcomers. It's also an initiation into the spirit of their new school.



*Century Secondary Grade 9s had a field day at the University of Windsor*



*Tartan superheroes ruled Grade 9 Day at Walkerville*



# Board Bulletins

## Dr. H.D. Taylor Public School –



*Nancy McCabe (right) from the Humane Society accepts a donation from the Taylor Public School community*

Taylor Tigers collected \$187 in a recent “Pennies for Pets” drive at the school. It was part of a Social Justice initiative to help the local Humane Society and raise student awareness about animal cruelty issues.

## Roseville Public School –

Tecumseh Mall has named Roseville Public School as the recipient of their 2009-10 Adopt-a-School program. Roseville receives 6 season tickets to Windsor Spitfires games at the WFCU Centre.

Tickets will be given to students who demonstrate a commitment to their learning, excellence in attendance or who make a positive impact on the Roseville community.

In addition Tecumseh Mall has generously contributed \$250 dollars towards the Grade 8 graduation ceremony.



## D.M. Eagle Public School –



*Sebastien the Bear meets the Mayor of New Westminster B.C. Wayne Wright (left)*

Each school year the Grade 2 class at D.M. Eagle Public School adopts a new bear who is always named Sebastien.

Sebastien always has exciting adventures and meets many interesting people. Among the people he has met this year is Wayne Wright, the Mayor of New Westminster B.C., while on a trip to Toronto.

## Century Secondary School –

The library at Century Secondary School recently received a \$4 thousand grant through Rotary International and the LaSalle Centennial Rotary Club.

The Library Committee is looking at improving both the fiction and non-fiction resources.

## Harrow Sr. Public School –

Students at Harrow Senior Public School are trying to walk across Canada this Fall.

The Kilometre Club credits students for every five hundred metres they walk during lunch recess each day.



*Students getting exercise and learning Geography with the Kilometre Club*



## Walking to School

Walking to school is fun, healthful, and good for the environment, but often taken for granted, especially if there's a ride available.

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit wants students to receive all the benefits by practicing some daily footwork.

They've started a campaign called Windsor-Essex Walks to School. It was launched in October, which is International Walk to School Month.

Eight schools in the area have been selected to pilot the Active and Safe Routes to School program. They will receive a map of the best ways to get to school from the surrounding neighbourhood and signs which will point the students in the right direction.



*Steve Kapusta of the city planning department, led a neighbourhood walkabout with parents and Principal Eileen Topliffe at Hugh Beaton Public School*

Delailah Khan from the Health Unit says, “We eventually want to make walking to school the norm, which it isn’t in most schools. We want to put the fun into it.” It also helps students learn more about their neighbourhoods.

A website, [www.wewalktoschool.ca](http://www.wewalktoschool.ca) has been created with information and an opportunity to participate in a poster contest. Radio ads have also been broadcast throughout October promoting the virtues of a brisk, daily walk to school.



## Feature Teacher

Karen Tompkins is in her first year teaching at Century Secondary School. It’s a different kind of placement for her after spending most of her career at Essex District High School. Among the changes is a switch from teaching Drama to Grade 9 English.

But Karen understands different. “Different is just different. It’s not better or worse,” she says. It’s also the title of her second book, a wonderfully illustrated and poignant children’s book inspired by a question from her daughter.



*Shoo Bear demonstrates how people are different in all sort of ways*

Karen’s daughter Erin lives with Joubert Syndrome, a rare brain malformation characterized by the absence or underdevelopment of the area of the brain that controls balance and coordination. After school one day she asked her mom, “Why did God make me different?”

Karen has no issue with making her response so public. “I’m a teacher. Writing is just an extension of the lesson.”

Different is Just Different is Karen’s second publication. She also wrote Purple Stew or My Kid’s Got What? which is a collection of stories from and about people with Joubert Syndrome.

Greater acceptance for everybody is what Karen hopes will be the legacy of her latest book. “Especially for people with invisible differences,” she says.

Different is Just Different is published by Walkerville Publishing.

Artist Karen Morand is responsible for all the illustrations. For more information visit [www.ktompkins.com](http://www.ktompkins.com).



Name: Karen Tompkins

School: Century  
Secondary

Specialty: Grade 9 English

Teaching  
Experience: 20 years

Attended School: F.J. Brennan H.S.

University: University of  
Windsor

Favorite Saying: "Differences are not intended to separate, to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realize our need of one another." —  
Desmond Tutu