


**Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board**



Section: Schools

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE:  
PR SC: 05 Blessing and Official  
Opening of Schools and Major  
Additions**

<b>NUMBER:</b>	PR SC: 05
<b>EFFECTIVE:</b>	Oct. 13, 1998
<b>AMENDED:</b>	Feb. 8, 2011
<b>RELATED POLICIES:</b>	See References
<b>REPEALS:</b>	
<b>REVIEW DATE:</b>	2017 - 2018

**1.0 OBJECTIVE:**

- 1.1 The purpose of this administrative procedure is to provide general guidelines for the organization and planning for the Blessing and Official Opening of New Schools and the Blessing and Dedication of Major Additions.

**2.0 GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

2.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM COMMITTEE

- i. The Superintendent of Education will organize a Program Committee comprised of the local school trustee(s), the principal, other designated school staff, parish priest, chair of the Catholic School Advisory Council, president of the Student Council (if applicable), and Communications Coordinator. Where a Catholic School Advisory Council or Student Council has not been established, a representative may be selected by the principal. The Principal shall act as Chair of the Committee and take the lead on Committee activities.

2.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF BUDGET

- i. The Superintendent of Education and the Principal shall establish a budget for the costs of the Blessing and Official Opening/Dedication Ceremony. The budget shall be authorized by the Superintendent of Education. An itemized statement of disbursements, along with corresponding receipts, shall be submitted to the school's Superintendent within thirty (30) days of the event.

2.3 DATE AND TIME OF BLESSING AND OFFICIAL OPENING/DEDICATION

- i. Subject to a date and time suitable for the Bishop or Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese or the officiating Priest, the Superintendent of Education will arrange an appropriate date with the:
- Chairperson of the Board
  - Director of Education
  - Chancery Office
  - Episcopal Vicar and local Parish Priest(s)
  - Principal
  - School Advisory Council Chairperson

2.4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- i. Notification of the event will be sent to the Board of Trustees and Senior Administration by the Superintendent of Education and be officially announced at a public Board meeting.

2.5 INVITATIONS

- i. Invitations to be prepared by the Program Committee and approved by the Director of Education. Once invitations are approved and printed, the Principal's office is responsible for sending and receiving RSVP's.
- ii. The guest list generally has three parts:
  - Platform guests
  - Special guests
  - General
- iii. Depending on the type of event, the list of invited platform guests may include:
  - Bishop/Auxiliary Bishop of London Diocese
  - Parish Pastor(s)
  - Member of Federal Government
  - Minister of Education
  - Member of Provincial Parliament
  - Mayor of Municipality
  - Chairperson of the Board
  - Manager, District Office, Ministry of Education
  - Ministry of Community and Social Services (if applicable)
  - Director of Education
  - Superintendent of Education
  - Chairperson, Catholic School Advisory Council
  - President, Students' Council (if applicable)
  - Principal
  - Architect
  - Other (discretion of Chairperson of the Board/Principal of School)

Platform guests generally play a prominent role in the blessing and official opening/dedication proceedings. The Principal will invite them with a special letter signed by the Chairperson of the Board and the Director. Additional information will be included such as where and to whom to report, as well as their participation (greetings, ribbon cutting, etc.). RSVP's are to be received by the Principal's office.

- iv. The list of invited special guests may include:
  - Trustees
  - Area Clergy
  - Municipal Councillors
  - Superintendents

- Staff of new school
- Principals from feeder schools
- Representatives from religious orders affiliated with the school
- Consulting Engineers / Contractor
- Former Trustees involved in the approval of the project
- Former Administrators involved in the project
- Contributors to school, e.g. sculptor, others
- Representatives of Staff Associations/Organizations
- Other appropriate administrative officials
- Co-ordinator/Supervisor, Child Care Program (if applicable)

Special Guests are to be invited by the Principal. They are to be notified of the date, time and where and to whom to report. RSVP's are to be received by the Principal's office.

- v. The general invitation list may include:
- Parents
  - All Principals
  - Principals of neighbouring public elementary and secondary schools
  - Managers/Supervisors of various board departments
  - Representatives from business community
  - Others at discretion of Principal

Those groups on the general invitation list are to receive the printed invitation card from the Principal of the school. An RSVP would not be required.

## 2.6 SUGGESTED PROGRAM

Blessing of School (and Chapel)  
Entrance of Official Party to Platform  
Opening Comments  
Ribbon Cutting Ceremony  
O Canada  
Opening Prayer  
Blessing of Crucifix(es)

Presentation of Speakers: (where appropriate) in the following order:

- Bishop of London/Auxiliary Bishop
- Member of Federal or Provincial Government
- Minister of Education
- Mayor of Municipality
- Chairperson of the Board
- Director of Education
- District Manager, Ministry of Education
- Representative - Ministry of Community & Social Services
- Superintendent of Education

- Chairperson, Catholic School Advisory Council
- President, Student Council
- Principal
- Parish Pastor
- Architect

Presentation of Keys to the School (Architect)

Closing Remarks

Refreshments and Tour

2.7 MASTER OF CEREMONIES

- i. The Program Committee will identify a Master of Ceremonies who may be a Trustee from the area/ward, the Superintendent of Education, Principal or other designated individual.

2.8 BLESSING

- i. The ceremony for the blessing of the school will be planned by the Program Committee in consultation with the Parish Pastor.

2.9 PREPARATION OF THE SCHOOL

- i. To mark the importance of the blessing and official opening, the school is to be appropriately prepared and decorated with the use of statues, flags, art work, displays, welcome signs, direction signs and guest books.

2.10 NEWS MEDIA

- i. The Communications Coordinator will notify the area print and broadcast media of the event and coordinate news media requirements the day of the event.

2.11 PHOTOGRAPHS

- i. Arrangements for photography and video shall be the responsibility of the school.

2.12 FOLLOW-UP

- i. Thank you cards/letters shall be sent by the Principal, for the Chairperson of the Board, to the platform guests for their participation. The Superintendent of Education and the Principal shall decide what other participants are to be thanked and shall convey their gratitude to them.