

## Why Abolishing Separate Schools Would Save Money

- ◆ People sometimes say why would abolishing public funding of separate schools save money; we would still need teachers, school supplies, etc.
- ◆ It is true we would still need teachers though elementary school teachers in separate schools would no longer spend about 10% of their time teaching the Catholic faith, and secondary school teachers would no longer spend about 13% of their time teaching Catholicism as a credit course<sup>1</sup>. These teachers could then spend this time helping all students with math, science, etc., rather than teaching a particular faith at the public expense.
- ◆ But schools have administrative expenses such as trustees, supervisors, busing, etc., and it is these expenses that would be significantly reduced.
- ◆ Unlike previous amalgamations where the board area was expanded, the elimination of the separate schools would mean students in the same geographical area were under one school system. As people have said, think how inefficient it would be if we had two fire systems covering the same area each with their own administration instead of homes being served from the closest fire station.
- ◆ We studied thirty-two coterminous English school boards (16 public; 16 separate).
- ◆ Coterminous school boards are public and separate school boards with exactly the same boundaries and the same language.
- ◆ The costs for trustees, directors and supervisors, and transportation per student for all 32 boards from 2012-2015 were compared. The difference between the cost per student in the separate school board and the cost of its coterminous public school board was calculated. It was then multiplied by the number of students in the separate school board.
- ◆ The result: **a potential saving of about 40 million dollars a year** just for trustees, directors and supervisors, and transportation if the costs of these 16 separate school board were the same as their coterminous public boards.<sup>2</sup> And there are 29 English separate school boards and 8 separate French school boards.
- ◆ This is an underestimate as, especially in smaller, more remote boards, the combined board would have even greater savings because currently even students going to public schools have to be bused farther than they should be, and these costs are hard to discover. For example, we know one family whose children were bused for about 40 minutes each way to a public high school when a publicly-supported separate school was within walking distance.
- ◆ Under one non-denominational school system, students could go to their closest community school, saving busing costs and student time.
- ◆ There would also be savings because under-utilized separate schools near under-utilized public schools could be combined to provide fully utilized schools which could offer greater resources to all its students. In the Near North DSB, there is an under-utilized (less than 60%) public elementary school almost across the road from an under-utilized (less than 60%) separate elementary school.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Freedom of Information (FOI) Request #2014-04 and 2014-07.

<sup>2</sup> Freedom of Information (FOI) Request EDU 160074.

<sup>3</sup> [www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/ontariobudgets/2014/papers\\_all.pdf](http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/ontariobudgets/2014/papers_all.pdf).