



Durham Catholic District School Board

St. John Bosco Catholic School

Motto: "Catch the Spirit"



In the Beginning

St. John Bosco Catholic School welcomed students to its temporary site at John XXIII Catholic School in September 2000.



St. John Bosco gym under construction



St. John Bosco library under construction

St. John Bosco Catholic School created a new Catholic learning community for students from Father Joseph Venini and John XXIII Catholic schools. These students were able to enjoy their beautiful new facility when they returned from Christmas holidays in January 2001. Liz Jarrell was the first principal at St. John Bosco Catholic School. There were 24 staff members, including Diane Traviss as the Administrative Assistant and Ron Darrell as the Chief Custodian.



Diane Traviss, Administrative Assistant, and Liz Jarell, Principal

Students were invited to submit their ideas for a school mascot, an emblem and a school motto. When all submissions were reviewed, it was decided that all school teams would be known as the Bosco Bears, the school motto would be “Catch the Spirit” and the school emblem would be comprised of the letters J and B surrounded by a tongue of fire to represent the Holy Spirit.



The official opening and blessing of the school was celebrated by Bishop Anthony Meagher on the evening of Thursday, February 1, 2001.

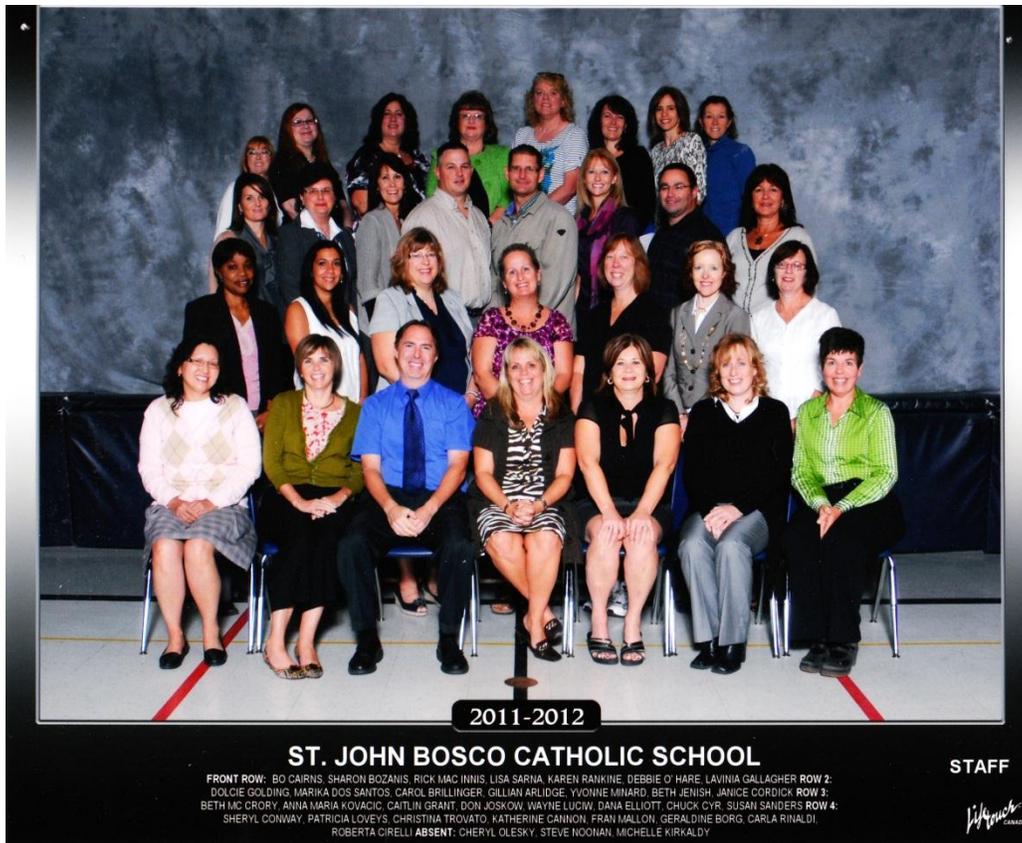
First Staff of St. John Bosco Catholic School, 2000–2001

The school population grew rapidly. In September 2002, St. John Bosco Catholic School welcomed its first vice-principal, Carol Brillinger. With over 600 students, five portables were added to provide classroom space. Joanne Gagnon was appointed vice-principal in 2003.

In September 2004, Patty Orecchio joined St. John Bosco Catholic School as the new principal following Liz Jarrell's retirement. In 2005, with the construction of the new St. Joseph Catholic School, the school population decreased due to the change in boundaries. The building of a new school for the St. Joseph Catholic School community gave the St. John Bosco C.S. community the opportunity to serve as hosts for a new school, as the St. Joseph C.S. junior division staff and students used classroom and school facilities on St. John Bosco Catholic School's premises.

In June 2007, Patty Orecchio left the school to work at the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario; Maria Vasanelli assumed the role of principal from September 2007 to November 2009, at which time she was appointed a supervisory officer with the Durham Catholic District School Board.

At the beginning of November 2009, Lisa Sarna was welcomed as the principal of St. John Bosco Catholic School. School enrolment continued to rise, with new subdivisions developing on farmland north of Taunton Road. In the fall of 2010, the school had grown large enough for a vice-principal to be appointed. Two retired principals, Pat MacKinnon and Elizabeth Snow, spent the school year as vice-principals. Rick MacInnis joined St. John Bosco as vice-principal in September 2010, and Karen Rankine became the new school administrative assistant in July 2011.



Staff picture, 2011–2012

St. John Bosco C.S. continues to be a faith-filled school offering rich learning experiences for the students. It has an active parent council that volunteers many hours working alongside staff and students at barbecues, track events, academic open houses, concerts and treat days. The parent council is well known for its focus on building community within the school. One way they do this is by hosting a Christmas turkey luncheon, where students, staff, parish and community members gather in the school gym to enjoyed a Christmas feast. This tradition has been enjoyed for the past 11 years.

Every year, on January 31, the feast day of St. John Bosco, students celebrate through prayer and a liturgy, the faith life of their patron saint. This celebration is followed by “Bosco cupcakes” and a fun-filled game of Bosco Bingo.

School volunteers also come from the local community. Marg Priest shares the gift of her musical talent with all by providing music for school Masses and celebrations. She also visits weekly to accompany the school choir. Russell Smith, 93 years of age, is also a weekly visitor to St. John Bosco C.S. Every Tuesday morning for the past 10 years, he has come to assist the school’s youngest students with their literacy development.

There is a strong connection with St. Gertrude's Catholic Church. Mass is celebrated monthly in the school. Students in Grades 6 to 8 are actively involved in the Parish Youth Program – EDGE. Catholic Women's League volunteers from the parish regularly visit and support our students' faith development, especially in their sacramental years. Every year, students at St. John Bosco C.S. prepare a performance of our Lord's Passion and in the past have shared their talents at St. Gertrude's Church on Good Friday.

For a relatively young school, St. John Bosco Catholic School is rich in tradition. The school junior and intermediate letter program encourages active participation from students in all aspects of school life. The school offers teams for every sport and has won many championship banners, trophies and medals. Over the years, St. John Bosco C.S. has been especially known for its strong flag football and cross country teams. Throughout the school year, many intramural sporting activities are offered for all grades, ranging from badminton to volleyball. There is a wide range of general interest clubs for students to join, including student council, chess, garden, literacy (Battle of the Books, Silver Birch) and choir, as well as various social justice initiatives (including the Terry Fox Run in September, ShareLife in April, Jump Rope for Heart in May, food drives, and support of local and global charitable organizations) in which students are invited to participate. The school's most ambitious social justice project to date featured partnering with Craig Kielburger's Free the Children organization. In less than two years, the St. John Bosco Catholic School community was able to raise close to \$10,000 to have a school built in Sierra Leone.

The St. John Bosco Catholic School choir is big in size and in voice. On November 7, 2011, the choir was the first-ever choir to sing the national anthem live at an Oshawa City Council meeting. The choir has since been videotaped singing O Canada, and as of June 11, 2012, this recording will be used to open all Oshawa City Council meetings.

St. John Bosco C.S. is proud to be one of the schools that is taking the lead in the technology initiative, with a goal to equip almost every classroom with an interactive whiteboard.

The school has been part of the Board's EcoSchool project since it began five years ago and has been awarded five consecutive Gold medals – something everyone is very proud of at St. John Bosco C.S. The school was also one of the first schools to “ban the bottle” and not allow water bottles. The active Eco team

worked with the Garden Club and parent council to create a Prayer Garden at the front of the school a few years ago.

Our patron saint continues to inspire staff and students alike in a desire to create a faith-filled school community where all are respected for their individual God-given gifts. As all members of the St. John Bosco Catholic learning community, from the youngest to the oldest, share their talents in service to one another, they demonstrate to all that they truly “catch the spirit” of the gospel message.

Our Patron Saint

The Italian saint John Bosco was from a humble background. His father died when John was only two, leaving his mother to bring up three boys in extreme poverty. While he was growing up, John liked to spend time around circus camps. He learned how to juggle and walk a tightrope. After a dream he had, John decided to become a priest. While he was a student priest in Turin, John started working in the slums. He was very popular because he never treated the children like juvenile delinquents. With his mother’s help, John set up a hostel where boys could live and train as tailors and shoemakers. He is known as the “friend of boys” and is often called “Don,” which means “father.”

Don Bosco made sure that in addition to getting a religious education, the boys learned to play musical instruments, perform in plays and engage in sports. He also wrote and printed books on the Christian faith for boys.

In 1859, John began a religious community of priests that is still active today, caring for boys who have been neglected. Because he admired Francis de Sales, he named the group the Salesians. Later, with St. Mary Mazzarello, he began a community of Sisters called the Daughters of Mary.

Father John Bosco died on January 31, 1888. He was canonized in 1934.

Our Saint John Bosco Catholic School community has adopted the motto “Catch the Spirit,” which exemplifies our commitment to follow the example of St. John Bosco’s life.

School Prayer

Dear God,

We thank you for blessing us in so many ways.

Thank you for our families, our friends
and our St. John Bosco Catholic School community.

May we be guided by the spirit of St. John Bosco
to help us live as Jesus taught us.

Amen.

Principals

Elizabeth Jarrell (2000-2004)

Patty Orecchio (2004-2007)

Maria Vasanelli (2007-2008)

Lisa Sarna (2008-2013)

Michelle Lantaigne (2013-present)

Contributors:

Staff of St. John Bosco C.S., 2011–2012