



Media Release

**For Immediate Release
April 21, 2009**

Bluewater District School Board to seek public input to improve accountability, transparency, communication

Chesley, Ontario--The Bluewater District School Board announced today that it will begin an outreach to parents/caregivers, staff and students aimed at improving the Board's accountability and transparency in managing complaints and resolving disputes, as well as its communication. Public outreach will start as early as May, 2009.

"The Board must embrace and demonstrate its commitment to partnerships, accountability, transparency, and effective communication with its parents/caregivers, staff, students and community partners. When its commitment to these core values is challenged, whether real or perceived, steps must be taken to re-establish public confidence and trust" said school board Chair Jennifer Yenssen.

"Our review will help ensure that the Board and its officials operate in a responsive and accountable manner to the students and communities we serve," she said.

Board public outreach process will include focus groups with parents/caregivers, staff and students and will include customer satisfaction surveys. Board employee unions and federations will be included in the outreach.

The Board's outreach is designed to ensure public feedback and convert this feedback into noticeable and measurable improvements in the Board's accountability and transparency related to:

- parental involvement;
- responsiveness to complaints;
- effectiveness of dispute resolution practices;
- general state of "customer" satisfaction with Board operations and the delivery of educational programs and services; and
- internal and external communication.

A preliminary report on the public outreach, along with recommendations for improvement will be completed in June, 2009. Copies will also be sent to the Minister of Education for comment.

For more information please contact:
Jennifer Yenssen, Chair of the Board
519-327-8523
Jennifer_Yenssen@bwdsb.on.ca