



Media Release

For Immediate Release
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Brenda Blancher, Director of Education at Grand Erie District School Board, Announces Retirement

Brantford Ont. – After nearly 35 years in education, Grand Erie District School Board's Director, Brenda Blancher, is retiring.

"Brenda's dedication and commitment to our students, our staff, our parents, and our communities has been evident since she started as Director of Education," said Greg Anderson, Chair of Grand Erie's Board of Trustees, who offered a public thank you to Blancher during Monday's Committee of the Whole Meeting following the Board's acceptance of Blancher's resignation letter. "Brenda has always been an excellent listener who seeks information from all sources, then works collaboratively in the best interests of our students and our families."



Blancher will formally retire on July 31, 2020 after an illustrious career in education.

Blancher completed her teaching degree in 1985 and earned a Masters of Education degree in 1999. She stepped into her first teaching role as an English Teacher with the Wentworth County Board of Education, and was in the classroom for nearly a decade before moving into administrative roles in the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board as Head of Student Services, School to Work Transition Teacher and Secondary School Reform Consultant. In 2001, Blancher was promoted to Vice-Principal. She became a Principal in 2003, taking on a system role as Student Success Leader. Before she became a School Principal in 2006, Blancher served as an Education Officer with the Ministry of Education.

In 2007, Blancher made the move to Grand Erie, taking on the role of Superintendent of Program. In 2010, after portfolio restructuring, she was named a Superintendent of Education. Finally, in 2015, Blancher was selected by the Board of Trustees as Grand Erie's Director of Education, becoming the first female director in the Board's history.

"Brenda broke through the glass ceiling at Grand Erie," said Diannah Dean, an Ontario Principal Council Executive and Principal at Grand Erie's Woodman-Cainsville School. "As Director, she's been a highly visible and constructive leader. She has this incredible

ability to be fully present in a conversation and asks the courageous questions to prompt reflection and solutions, validating the work we all do as a system.”

During Blancher’s five-year tenure as Director, she delivered on several significant community milestones for Grand Erie, including the opening of two new elementary schools and the expansion of the French Immersion program. She also launched Grand Erie’s current Multi-Year Plan, providing a strategic direction to guide the work that the school board is doing. At the centre of this plan is *Success for Every Student*, achieved through a focus on students and staff in a culture of high expectations. Grand Erie’ Multi-Year Plan is supported through six success indicators: achievement, community, environment, equity, technology and well-being.

“The Multi-Year Plan was never an administrative document to Brenda,” said Rita Collver, Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees. “She has embodied this plan, modelling its ideals each and every day by building strong relationships with staff, students, families, trustees and communities. Brenda’s focus and her decision-making has never wavered from the goal of *Success for Every Student*. Under her leadership, we have all been reminded of our purpose in public education, which is our students.”

Blancher’s plans for retirement include tackling a very long reading list, getting out hiking more often, spending time with her family, travelling, and pursuing volunteer work.

“I will forever be grateful for the confidence Trustees placed in me and for their ongoing support,” said Blancher. “The opportunity to lead as Director of Education with Grand Erie has truly been the highlight of my career. Working with the Board’s students, parents, trustees, staff, unions and community partners has furthered my commitment to public education and proven to me that when we all work together, great things can happen for our students.”

A search for Grand Erie’s next Director of Education will begin shortly. The Board expects to have a new director named before the end of the 2019-20 school year.

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