

June 18th, 2012

Mark Bowden
85 Terrace Drive
Dundas, Ontario L9H 3X1
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Re: St. Mary's Educational Assistant Corey Pearce

Patricia Amos
Director of Education
Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board
90 Mulberry Street
P.O. Box 2012
Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3R9

Dear Ms. Amos,

I have just left a year end banquet that was held for the St. Mary's Crusaders Drum Line and felt compelled to let you know that this event capped what has been a fantastic year for an exceptional group of students including my Grade 9 son, Tommy Bowden. It was great to see that they had a 100% attendance rate to this event which is completely indicative of the level of commitment that these students have to the program.

The Crusaders Drum Line has students from all grades and is one of the few extracurricular programs that can claim to be truly all-inclusive. While our son does not require the benefit of an EA, he and his band mates have definitely embraced the fact that there are others in this group who are thriving from being included in such a highly visible and fun activity.

Make no mistake, the Crusaders Drum Line is a dedicated and highly competitive group and they were absolutely outstanding in representing St. Mary's and the Hamilton Catholic School Board when they won both the Regional and Provincial Drum Line Championships this year. This is quite an accomplishment given the fact that the Drum Line is only a couple of years old and they were up against some significant competition.

None of this would have been possible without the unbridled dedication of the Drum Line's leader, Educational Assistant Corey Pearce.

Mr. Pearce had both my wife and I in tears as he spoke to each and every one of the members of the Drum Line tonight. He let them know how proud he was of their accomplishments this year and how they had grown both in their skills and as young women and men. I completely concur with Mr. Pearce as I know our son started the year as a nervous grade 9 student who wasn't really sure how he would fit

into high school, and he has emerged as a confident student who enjoys contributing to the betterment of the St. Mary's school community.

There was however, an underlying uneasiness at the banquet tonight. While Mr. Pearce didn't openly discuss this, there was certainly a rumbling among the students and the parents that Mr. Pearce may be transferred to another school next year.

I completely understand that EA's have to go where they are needed, particularly as it is the job they were hired for and not to run drum lines. However, I would implore you to consider Mr. Pearce's significant contribution to the school community outside of the classroom.

Unlike so many of the extracurricular activities that are guided by the many wonderful teachers and EA's in our schools, I feel that Mr. Pearce brings a special skill set that is not readily replaceable. His knowledge of the drum line culture and in particular, his ability to teach his skills to the youth who have had no prior experience in this musical genre, would be a huge loss to the program should he be transferred from St. Mary's High School. In fact, it would probably signal the end of the St. Mary's Crusaders Drum Line.

Ms. Amos, I think it's worthwhile to note that my son has been in the HWCDSD system for 11 years and this is the first time that I have ever been compelled to contact the school board to express my concerns and make my views heard. I guess this generally means that things have been good and it is my sincere hope that Mr. Pearce will be able to stay at St. Mary's to ensure that he can continue what is not just a good program, but a great one!

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Mark Bowden

cc. M. Cipolla, J. LoPresti, E. Piccioni, P. Daly