



## REPORT TO THE HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Prepared by: Tara Boreham and Sean McDade, Superintendents of Education

Presented to: The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board

Date: Monday, September 22, 2025

Submitted by: Karen Tigani, Director of Education and Secretary

## BOARD HIGHLIGHTS FOR SEPTEMBER

Public Session

### BACKGROUND

Many activities take place every month throughout the district to ensure that our students have rich, faith-filled, inclusive learning opportunities that support their learning and fulfill the goals of the Strategic Plan. The Board Highlights list many of the activities that take place in the month prior to the board meeting, with contributions from Superintendents of Education, Learning Coordinators, the Mental Health Lead, the OYAP Project Lead, and Managers of activities that take place under their leadership.

### DEVELOPMENTS

The spiritual theme anchoring our new Strategic Plan is “On Fire With The Spirit: Awaken! Illuminate! Rejoice!” Inspired by the Holy Spirit and enlivened by the Pentecost story, we go forward into a new year full of faith, hope, love and joy. We are excited about the incredible learning and growth that propels us forward as we journey together throughout the school year. September marks the beginning of a new school year and is marked by enthusiasm and commitment from our students, staff, educators and families. We are delighted to highlight some of the activities and opportunities that took place this month across our district.

---

### CATHOLIC EDUCATION

#### Back-to-School Celebrations

Our schools are holding liturgies, Masses, and open houses to welcome students, staff, and families back for the new school year. These events are a great opportunity to build community and include activities such as meeting staff, liturgical celebrations, and book fairs. Every school will host an opening Mass or liturgy in September. Our staff continues to find meaningful ways to incorporate faith into the school day and to foster faith leadership among students and staff.

#### Monday Morning Prayer at the Catholic Education Centre

Every Monday morning, staff at the Catholic Education Centre gather for morning prayer at 9AM in the Board room. This year, we are pleased to include learning about a saint at each of these prayer liturgies. This is part of our commitment to faith formation for all staff of the Board and is a great opportunity to showcase the lives of men and women who are sources of inspiration, faith and strength to all of us. Also this year, we are including prayer intentions in alignment with the Diocesan calendar of prayer intentions for priests, deacons, lay ecclesial ministers and staff of the Deanery. By doing this, we are amplifying the vocations and service of these members of our Deanery and uniting our prayers with those of many others across the Diocese.

---

## **LEADERSHIP**

### **LLC - September 16 - Faith Formation and Leadership Development**

On September 16, principals, coordinators, and managers gathered for the first learning module of our new faith formation initiative, *The Catholic Faith: Understanding the Creed and the Catechism*, offered in partnership with the University of Notre Dame's McGrath Institute for Church Life. Integrated into our Leadership Learning Communities, this professional development series invites our leaders to deepen their understanding of Catholic teaching and strengthen their witness to the Gospel. The first session focused on the Creed, providing a rich foundation for ongoing reflection and equipping our system leaders to share meaningful faith formation with their school communities throughout the year.

In the afternoon, Lawyer Paul Marshall of Emond Harnden LLP led a timely workshop on emerging legal trends in education, highlighting how principals and vice-principals must adapt their leadership practices within an increasingly complex legal landscape. This conversation reinforced the need for proactive, informed decision-making at the school level. To further support principals, Superintendents Boreham and McDade, together with Learning Coordinator Meyers, introduced our new Principal Portal—a one-stop digital hub designed to provide clear, accessible resources on policy, procedures, and professional support. The portal represents an innovative step in equipping our school leaders with the tools they need to thrive in both faith and operational leadership.

### **Pentecost and the Power of Innovation: AI Year of Learning Kicks Off**

On September 23 and 24, our Catholic Education Centre became the gathering place for the launch of our AI: Year of Learning initiative, inspired by our strategic theme *On Fire with the Spirit – Awaken, Illuminate, Rejoice*. Just as the disciples left the upper room emboldened at Pentecost, our system leaders, educators, chaplains, educational assistants, corporate staff, and principal representatives came together with open minds and hearts to explore how Artificial Intelligence can be used as a faithful tool in Catholic education.

The two-day experience combined prayer, reflection, and practical engagement with AI applications, always rooted in our guiding question: *How can AI become a tool that enhances—not replaces—our human connections, allowing us to lead, teach, and serve with greater compassion and purpose?* With representation from across the Board, participants explored tools within our safe, Board-approved environment, considered ethical implications, and discerned how this emerging technology can support our mission. This kickoff marks the beginning of a year-long journey of discovery and formation, ensuring that our community is prepared to embrace innovation with wisdom, courage, and faith.

### **Launch of Teacher-in-Charge/Teacher Designate (TIC/D) Initiative and Manual**

On September 19, the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board launched a new Teacher-in-Charge/Teacher Designate (TIC/D) initiative designed to strengthen support to build leadership capacity and provide consistent training across the system. The first full-day training focused on the newly developed TIC/D Manual. Participants also completed Ministry of Labour Health & Safety Supervisory Training, ensuring they are well-prepared to assume leadership responsibilities when called upon.

### **The Catholic Curriculum Corporation (CCC)**

Our Board is an active participant in the CCC, with many members of our Learning Coordination Team and Superintendent McDade serving on the Board of Representatives. They also

contribute to the When Faith Meets Pedagogy (WFMP) Conference Planning Committee and the four individual Catholic Curriculum Councils (Elementary, Secondary, Faith, and ICT).

In September, our team members attended the first of several WFMP conference planning meetings and the initial board of representatives meeting. The Individual Councils are set to hold their first meetings in early October. The CCC's primary goals are to create, develop, and share resources that support and advance Catholic Education in Ontario. It serves as a vital network of Catholic leaders and educators, ensuring access to high-quality resources and support.

The CCC works in collaboration with the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) and other provincial Catholic educational partners. This year's WFMP conference theme is "Pilgrims of Hope," and it will take place from October 23-25 in Toronto, which will include a Youth Forum day. A delegation from the Huron-Perth Catholic DSB will be attending. Bishop Ronald Fabbro will be attending and celebrating Mass for all WFMP attendees.

### **Secondary Department Head Learning**

On September 18, department heads from both secondary schools met at the Brodhagen Community Center to continue their work on leadership. Hosted by Superintendent Sean McDade and Secondary Coordinator Paul D'Hondt, the day was again animated by former Catholic Superintendent Lorrie Temple on the topic of Catholic leadership. Participants reflected on the role of department leader and servant leadership, while identifying and discussing challenges in their work.

### **International Education**

The Board welcomed eight international students in September from Spain and Japan. St. Michael CSS welcomed five students in total of which three will spend the entire school year with us. The two other students are attending for nine weeks and fifteen weeks with the possibility of extending their stays. Four students are in Grade 10 and one in Grade 12. One additional Grade 12 student has been accepted into the International Student Program from Colombia and is expected to arrive in the coming weeks.

Additionally, three students are attending St. Anne's CSS. Two of these students will spend the entire year with us and the other student is here for 15 weeks with the possibility of extending his stay. Two students are in Grade 10 and one is a Grade 11 student.

All of the students are staying with homestay families through the Board's partnership with Muskoka Languages International (MLI).

These eight students come to our schools after partnership agreements were signed with five different international recruitment agencies in Spain and one with an agency in Japan. To date, the Board has twenty eight agreements with agencies in the United States, South America, Europe, Asia and Australia that are recruiting students.

### **Elementary Sports Council**

The Elementary Sports Council has successfully resumed its events for the new school year, kicking off with the first tournaments of the year: junior and senior soccer across both Huron and Perth counties.

---

## ***SPECIAL EDUCATION***

### **Summer Programming and Transition Support**

Thanks to funding from the Ministry's Summer Programming and Transition Funds, the System Special Education Team offered a variety of engaging programs designed to enrich learning and support students with special education needs. The four programs included **Early Literacy Enrichment (JK - Grade 1)** to strengthen foundational literacy skills, **Welcome to the Nest (Transition to Secondary School)** to help students build positive relationships and gain confidence in their new environment, **Summer Fun Exploration Camp (Elementary Students)** for hands-on learning and social-emotional development, and **Transition Supports (All Schools, August and September)** to provide additional transition support where needed across all grade levels. These initiatives collectively enriched students' learning, strengthened their social-emotional skills, and provided targeted support to build confidence and independence during important transitions.

### **Empower Training**

On September 12 and 15, teachers who are new to teaching the Empower Reading Program attended a two-day training session. The Empower Reading program is a tier 3 reading intervention program offered in all our elementary schools.

### **Lexia**

1000 Lexia Core5 Reading licenses were purchased for students across the system for the 2025-26 school year. Lexia Core5 Reading supports educators in providing differentiated literacy instruction for students of all abilities in Grades pre-K–5. The Board purchased Lexia licenses for current Empower students, Empower graduates, and all Grade 1 students. Licenses were also purchased for other students who schools identified as benefiting from this intervention. Lexia and PowerUp licenses were purchased for students in secondary school where requested as well.

---

## ***DIGITAL TOOLS TO SUPPORT LEARNING***

### **Chromebook Program**

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board's 1:1 Chromebook Initiative is successfully implemented across all elementary and secondary schools. This initiative ensures every student has a Chromebook to enhance their learning. At the beginning of the academic year, all Grade 9 students and new secondary students received a Chromebook after completing the Assumption of Responsibility Agreement, aligning with the Information, Communications Technology Policy 3.2.1.

### **Learning Management Systems**

Huron-Perth Catholic is committed to blended learning, equipping all classrooms with a Learning Management System (LMS), such as Google Classroom and/or D2L. These platforms enhance traditional instruction, offering a flexible and integrated approach to enrich the overall learning experience.

---

## ***STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT***

### **Mathematics**

The Math Team, led by Learning Coordinator Christine Dale and supported by our two Math Facilitators, Hailey Cook and Brittany Wilson, began the school year with a system-wide tour to

model and promote Number Talks. Number Talks are short, daily routines that strengthen students' mental math, reasoning, and flexibility with numbers. They give teachers immediate insight into student thinking and provide opportunities to address misconceptions in real time. Number Talks are also a key equity strategy: by making student thinking visible through models and visuals, they ensure that all learners can access the mathematics and contribute to classroom discussion. Embedding Number Talks into Tier 1 instruction across all classrooms allows us to identify students who need additional support earlier, while raising the level of mathematical reasoning for all.

At the same time, we introduced the new combined grade lessons for the [Math Scope and Sequence](#), which reflect the vision for mathematics in our strategic plan. These resources are designed to ensure that every student receives meaningful, grade-appropriate learning experiences while fostering a cohesive community of learners. Rooted in the moral imperative to provide equitable access to the full curriculum, the lessons leverage our core resources, such as MathUP Classroom and Knowledgehook, which support differentiation through open questions and parallel tasks. Each sample lesson offers flexible guidance, grounded in our Scope and Sequence and aligned with the Effective Math Block. Teachers are encouraged to adapt lessons based on observations, conversations, and formative assessment. This approach promotes collaborative problem solving, purposeful practice, and professional judgment, empowering educators to navigate the complexity of split-grade instruction with reflection and responsiveness.

The Math Team also worked closely with all new and new-to-division teachers, providing practical curriculum guidance and modeling the effective use of board-supported resources. Together, these efforts lay the foundation for consistent, high-quality mathematics instruction in every classroom, ensuring that all students have equitable access to rigorous learning and the opportunity to achieve at high levels.

On September 11, members of the Math Team Superintendent McDade and Director Tigani attended a Ministry of Education-led Math meeting for all Directors of Education and Math leads across Ontario. This meeting was intended to support the Board's Math Achievement Action Plan and ensure consistency across the province.

### **Literacy**

The Literacy team, led by Learning Coordinator MJ Drager and supported by Literacy Resource Teachers Karen Kramers and Teresa Oud, began the year by strategically planning and aligning their goals with the new strategic plan, setting a strong foundation for the year ahead. The team has been actively supporting new teachers as they establish their literacy blocks, offering guidance in designing effective structures and routines that foster student success. They continue to provide resources, tools, and responsive support for general inquiries, ensuring that teachers feel confident and well-equipped in their literacy instruction.

The team is also in the planning stages of supporting teachers with the early reading screening process at the beginning of the year. This year marks a shift to a digital platform for administering the screening, which will streamline the process and provide more accessible data to inform instruction.

In addition, Learning Coordinators Paul D'Hondt and MJ Drager collaborated to provide a new literacy assessment resource and professional learning opportunity for teachers in Grades 7–10, held on September 26 in Huron County and September 30 in Perth County. This resource

will provide all teachers in these grades with a common literacy assessment, offering valuable insights that will help guide their next steps with students.

### **French as a Second Language**

We are pleased to welcome Lauren Quinlan as our System Support Teacher for French. This month, Lauren has been making contact and working alongside new Core French teachers in all schools, supporting them as they begin the year. She has been sharing resources, providing professional development on assessment and evaluation, and offering guidance on navigating the unique aspects of the itinerant teaching role.

### **Secondary e-Learning**

This semester our secondary schools are offering several e-Learning courses including Business Leadership, English, Religious Studies, Introduction to Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology, Health for Life, and Science.

Qualified Board teachers teach these courses and provide our students with flexibility in their studies. Through our partnership with Catholic Virtual Ontario, these courses also allow our students access to hundreds of potential course offerings from across the province. We are currently welcoming over 80 students from over a dozen Catholic school boards into our semester 1 Board-delivered e-Learning classes, which allows for this exchange and gives our students access to a wide array of courses offered online.

### **Indigenous Education**

We are pleased to announce that a full-time Indigenous Education System Support Teacher will be joining our team this school year. This individual will be working with all of our schools, Indigenous students, their families and Indigenous Communities to support student achievement and well-being.

Our Indigenous Student Support Advisor (Grad Coach), Josh Pagan, continues to work mainly in our Secondary Schools, offering support to students, staff and families.

Schools across the district recognized Powley Day on September 19 in a variety of activities. Now known as “Powley Day”, September 19 celebrates the anniversary of the landmark Métis rights victory at the Supreme Court of Canada.

Many opportunities were provided for students and staff to participate in Truth and Reconciliation Week from Sept 22-30, including an art activity with Moses Lunham, Kettle and Stony Point First Nation - Art to Inspire Action, literacy activity for elementary schools, and virtual workshop opportunities with The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

Schools across the Board will participate in a variety of activities to recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

---

## ***EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS IN SECONDARY***

### **First Aid/CPR Training**

Grade 12 SHSM students at both schools had the opportunity to receive their First Aid/CPR certification in early September. This training is a requirement for all SHSM sectors to achieve their OSSD designation and continues to be a highly valued credential.

### **Working at Heights Training**

SHSM Construction, Agriculture, and Arts & Culture students participated in Working at Heights training. St. Michael CSS held their session on September 10, while St. Anne's CSS hosted training on September 15 and 16. This certification is highly valued by employers and a strong addition to students' resumes.

### **Canadian Outdoor Farm Show**

On September 10, students from both schools attended the Canadian Outdoor Farm Show. SHSM Agriculture and Transportation students networked with industry professionals and explored innovations in their sectors. Students in Health & Wellness and Business SHSMs also attended, gaining insights into how their fields contribute to meeting the needs of rural communities.

### **Dual Credit – Electrical**

On September 16, both schools offered students the opportunity to begin a dual credit electrical course with Conestoga College. At St. Michael CSS, this marks the 9th year of hosting the course on-site, reducing transportation costs and allowing students to stay engaged in their regular studies. At St. Anne's CSS 18 students (from both schools combined) are working directly with a Conestoga instructor to gain both high school and college credit.

### **Technology Supports for SHSM**

St. Michael Catholic Secondary School continues to expand its use of technology to inform students and families about SHSM opportunities. Building on the success of their SHSM D2L landing page, they are now incorporating Google Forms and QR codes. These tools allow students to register for certifications, training, and experiential learning opportunities, while securely tracking student progress to ensure program requirements are met.

### **Elevated Work Platform Training**

At St. Anne's CSS on September 17, the Construction and Agriculture SHSM students participated in Elevated Work Platform training at LiUNA in London. This certification provides valuable safety skills and enhances employability in skilled trades.

### **Lambton College Dual Credit Courses – Starting September 25**

Six students from SACSS are enrolled in a variety of Lambton College dual credit courses, including:

- Bakeshop
- Criminology
- Digital Photography
- Canadian Diversity & Strategies in Community Safety
- Hairstyling
- Introduction to Residential Electrical
- The Great Outdoors

### **OYAP Level 1 Information Session – September**

Grade 10–12 students attended an OYAP Level 1 Information Session with Mark Flanagan and Jodie Wells. The session provided details about Level 1 programs offered by Conestoga, Lambton, and Fanshawe Colleges, outlining the benefits and expectations of completing Level 1 trade school while still in high school.

## **SHSM Information Sessions**

Ongoing meetings with Grade 11 students highlighted the benefits of joining SHSM programs at St. Anne's. Available sectors include:

- Agriculture
- Arts & Culture
- Business
- Construction
- Health & Wellness
- Non-Profit, Education & Childcare
- Sports

September has been an exciting start to the school year for both St. Michael CSS and St. Anne's CSS. Students continue to benefit from certifications, dual credit opportunities, experiential learning, and sector-specific programming that prepare them for future careers in skilled trades and beyond.

---

## **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**



### **Mentally Healthy Return to School**

To support a smooth and mentally healthy return to school, the Attendance Counsellor and members of the Mental Health and Wellness Team met with students and families during the final two weeks of August and into September. These meetings fostered connection and offered a supportive start to the school year by addressing individual needs and promoting a healthy transition back to school.

### **Igniting the Spirit of Attendance:**

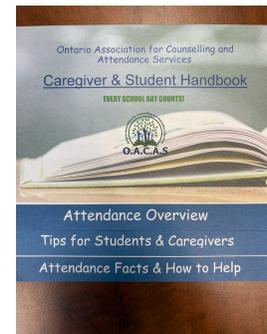
#### **A Strong Start to the School Year**

As we begin the school year “on fire with the spirit,” we recognize the vital role that consistent

attendance plays in student success and well-being. To support this, we launched an initiative aimed at raising awareness and empowering families—starting with our Grade One community.

Each Grade One family received a thoughtfully prepared attendance package, featuring practical tips from the Ontario Association for Counselling and Attendance Services, along with a variety of helpful resources. These materials are designed to encourage positive attendance habits and foster a strong connection between home and school.

By illuminating the importance of showing up—every day and on time—we’re laying the foundation for a year filled with growth, learning, and community spirit.



### **Integrating Faith and Mental Wellness Through Secondary Retreats:**

Grade 12 students from across the board gathered at Hidden Acres for a retreat co-facilitated by the Secondary School-Based Chaplain and Social Workers. Centered on the theme of Legacy, the retreat invited students to reflect on the impact they hope to leave as they prepare for life beyond high school. This encourages students to pause and reflect on who they are becoming, not just what they’re achieving. Through prayer, conversation, and reflection, students explored how their gifts, relationships, and choices can shape a legacy rooted in faith, compassion, and

purpose.

### **School Service Advisory Council (SSAC) Symposium: Supporting Student Mental Health**

This interactive workshop presented by Dr. Jennifer McTaggart equipped school service providers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to effectively support students experiencing intense emotions, mental health symptoms, and worrisome behaviours such as suicidal ideation and/or self-harming behaviours. Participants deepened their understanding of the underlying functions of these behaviours and learned practical, evidence-informed strategies for intervention.

Through a school-based lens, attendees explored how to structure and coach their interactions to foster safety, connection, and resilience in youth. Emphasis was placed on recognizing when and how to intervene in ways that were both supportive and validating for students.

In addition, participants were introduced to the newly revised Huron Perth Mental Health & Suicide Crisis Response Protocol, to ensure a coordinated and compassionate response to student mental health needs.

### **Caregiver Workshop: Parenting with Confidence**

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board and the Avon Maitland District School Board, in collaboration with Psychologist Dr. Jennifer McTaggart, hosted an in-person workshop titled Parenting With Confidence.

This engaging session supported parents and caregivers in deepening their understanding of how children's emotions and needs evolve over time—and how adult responses must adapt accordingly. Whether attendees were caring for toddlers, tweens, or teens, the workshop provided practical strategies to navigate everyday parenting challenges with greater ease. Participants left with simple, effective tools to help them feel more confident and calm while raising children in today's complex world. The workshop emphasized the importance of creating nurturing environments where children can thrive mentally, emotionally, and socially.

### **World Suicide Prevention Day - Illuminating Hope**

September 10 marked World Suicide Prevention Day - Time to honour the sacredness of life in our shared responsibility to care for one another.

As Catholic educators, inspired by our spiritual theme *On Fire With The Spirit*, we are called to be sources of light and hope, attuned to the challenges our students face and committed to fostering healing, connection and life.

To support this mission, the Mental Health And Wellness Team shared [Suicide Prevention and Life Promotion resources](#) with staff. Drawing from school Mental Health Ontario, Educators received the Life Promotion Tool Kit which emphasizes nurturing connections to self, community, culture, and land. This approach fosters belonging, meaning, purpose and hope, values deeply aligned with our Catholic belief in the Dignity of every person.

---

## **MAINTENANCE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Joint Health and Safety Committee**

The Joint Health and Safety Committee met September 17. Topics discussed included the following:

- Monthly and Annual Inspections
- Incident reporting

- Annual workplace risk assessment
- Annual Review of Policies
- Workplace Violence - standing item
- Electrical appliances in classrooms/offices
- Annual drinking water reports
- Yearly Training for school H & S Reps
- First Aid Kits

**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board receives the Board Highlights for September for information.