



REPORT TO THE HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Prepared by: Tara Boreham and Sean McDade, Superintendents of Education
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Submitted by: Karen Tigani, Director of Education and Secretary

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS FOR MARCH

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 Strategic Plan is “On Fire With The Spirit: Awaken! Illuminate! Rejoice!” Inspired by the Holy Spirit and enlivened by the Pentecost story, we continue to go forward 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. March marks the beginning of a new liturgical season. As we engage in Lent 2025, we are reminded of the opportunity to reflect and renew. At all times, learning is ideally marked by reflection, renewal, enthusiasm and commitment by our students, staff, educators and families to continue to improve. We are delighted to highlight some of the activities and opportunities that took place this month across our district.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Catholic Student Leadership Team Retreat

Over 40 students attended the Catholic Student Leadership Team retreat March 4 and 5 at Camp Kintail, in Huron County. The theme of the retreat was “Let your Light Shine” (Matthew 5:14). Students reflected on the understanding that God has given each student unique gifts (lights) and on addressing the fears (shadows) that prevent them from shining. Plenty of opportunities for team-building and fun also occurred. Fr. Don Pumputis and Fr. Joseph Onome Oghenejabor joined us to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Adoration on Thursday night. Fr. Joseph stayed with us and celebrated Mass on Friday. We are so thankful they could be with our youth. This retreat was planned by our Religion and Family Life Coordinator in partnership with our secondary school Chaplains. Board Chaplain Deacon Dan was also present. Superintendent McDade visited the retreat on the first day and observed that this was a group of young leaders and adults who were “on fire with the Holy Spirit”.



Catholic Association of Religious and Family Life Educators of Ontario Conference

Seven staff members will participate in the Catholic Association of Religious and Family Life Educators of Ontario (CARFLEO) conference and retreat on March 24-25 at the Queen of the Apostles retreat centre in Mississauga.

The theme for the conference is “We Remember. We Celebrate. We Believe (Liturgical Focus). How good it is to sing praises to our God!” Psalm 147:1. His Excellency, Bishop Lobsinger, will celebrate Mass with the attendees. The opportunity for Christian mediation and various forms of prayer are also available to attendees. Huron-Perth Catholic DSB Religion and Family Life Coordinator, Caroline Thuss, helped plan this conference as part of her role on the executive committee of CARFLEO. We are delighted with the engagement our Board staff has with CARFLEO.

Development and Peace Schools (D & P Schools)

As part of our commitment to D & P Schools, every school in Huron-Perth Catholic DSB received a kit to take part in the “Major Mustard Seed Challenge” throughout Lent. The students are excited about this experience, and it is a wonderful way to engage students in a tangible sign of God’s love in their midst while also making important curriculum connections. Schools were also asked to participate in the Share Lent Campaign as part of this Lenten Challenge.

LEADERSHIP

Leaders Learning Council

During the March 24th LLC, in keeping with our ongoing commitment to faith formation, system leaders will continue their formation through the University of Notre Dame course *Foundations of Catholic Belief*.

In the afternoon, administrators and system leaders will engage in an in-person session with Dr. Craig Ross of Zayed Consulting. Dr. Ross will lead a rich and practical discussion addressing frequently asked questions related to assessments, diagnoses, and exceptionalities.

The session is similar to a session that Special Education Resource Teachers attended in November. It will enhance clarity, build shared understanding across the system, and support leaders in navigating complex special education processes with confidence and consistency. The last section of the day will be dedicated to Superintendent updates and a check-in on the progress school teams are making on their EQAO targeted support plans.

Primary and Junior EQAO

The Math and Literacy Teams collaborated to provide professional learning sessions for teachers new to Grade 3 and Grade 6. These sessions focused on building a deeper understanding of the connections between EQAO questions and the expectations outlined in the Ontario Mathematics and Language curricula. Educators explored the structure of the reading, writing, and mathematics assessments, including how student responses are evaluated and scored. The session emphasized effective classroom practices that support student

engagement, confidence, and achievement, while helping teachers understand how strong daily instruction aligned with the curriculum prepares students for success on provincial assessments.

Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting

An Assessment and Evaluation working group was held bringing together superintendents, learning coordinators, and union representatives to review important updates to the Board's assessment practices. The meeting focused on proposed revisions to the current Assessment Policy, and a review of the Board's approved list of diagnostic assessment tools to ensure alignment with current best practices and the expectations outlined in Policy/Program Memorandum 155. This collaborative discussion provided an opportunity for system leaders and educator representatives to share perspectives and help ensure that assessment policies and resources continue to support effective instruction and improved outcomes for all students.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Visit to Amethyst Demonstration School

On March 6, a team from the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board, including Learning Coordinators, Superintendents, a secondary Mathematics Department Head, Math Facilitators, and an Elementary Principal visited Amethyst Demonstration School in London to learn more about effective approaches to supporting students in mathematics within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Throughout the day, the team engaged in sessions focused on evidence-based math instruction, intervention and remediation strategies, and data-informed decision-making. Participants also observed classroom programming to see how these practices support students with diverse learning needs. The visit provided valuable insights that will help inform and strengthen ongoing work to support student success in mathematics across all tiers of instruction.

Additional Crisis Intervention Training

On March 25, the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board will offer an additional day of Crisis Intervention training facilitated through the Safe Management Group (SMG). Members of the Board's Behaviour Team will again serve as certified trainers. This session is being offered to support Educational Assistants who were unable to attend the January 30 training, including permanent and temporary Educational Assistants, and casual Educational Assistants on the supply list. By offering this additional training opportunity, the Board continues to prioritize staff preparedness and confidence in responding to crisis situations using evidence-based, non-violent strategies that support student safety, dignity, and well-being.

DIGITAL TOOLS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

Coding, Robotics, and Experiential Learning: 3rd Annual District Skills Competition

On March 26, 2026, the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board will host its third annual District Skills Competition at the Seaforth Agriplex. Building on the momentum of last year's event which saw over 200 students competing in Robotics, Mechanical Engineering, Green Energy, and Construction, this year's competition continues to grow with the exciting addition of a Landscaping and Horticulture category. This initiative directly supports our strategic mandate to increase student participation in STEM and inquiry-based activities while utilizing the Engineering Design Process to enhance learning. By engaging with coding software, 3D imaging, and digital tools, our Grade 7 and 8 students are developing the technical proficiency

required to not only reach the Skills Ontario provincial competition in May but to consistently place in the top half of the province.

Digital Innovation and Classroom Support: Introduction of Google Class Tools

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board is excited to introduce Google Class Tools, a powerful new digital management platform now available to educators throughout our district. In direct alignment with our Strategic Plan to increase access to high-quality technology and hands-on learning tools, this platform helps our teachers create a safe, focused, and inclusive digital learning environment for every student. Google Class Tools allows educators to guide students more directly in the digital space by limiting distractions and monitoring screen time, ensuring that students remain on track and deeply engaged in their learning. By bridging the gap between technology and personalized instruction, this tool empowers our teachers to tailor their support to meet the unique needs of every learner while fostering the productivity and success prioritized in our system goals.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mathematics

Throughout March, The Math Team continued to support principals, teachers, and students through ongoing school visits focused on strengthening mathematics teaching and learning. This work included collaborative planning with educators, modelling effective instructional strategies, and supporting principals in monitoring mathematics instruction and student learning across classrooms. The Math Coordinator and Math Facilitators also engaged in professional learning through Ministry webinars focused on the High-Impact Instructional Practices (HIIPs) identified in the Ontario Math Curriculum. This learning supports our continued efforts to build teacher capacity in research-informed mathematics instruction that improves student understanding and achievement. At the provincial level, Math Team members contributed leadership and collaboration opportunities through the Ontario Mathematics Coordinators Association (OMCA). Participation included committee work focused on Special Education and Kindergarten mathematics, and involvement in Catholic Curriculum Corporation (CCC) meetings, where leaders across Ontario collaborate on emerging priorities in mathematics education. In preparation for EQAO assessments, Math Facilitators worked directly with Grade 3 and Grade 6 students using released EQAO questions. These sessions focused on helping students develop effective test-taking strategies while revisiting key curriculum expectations. Instruction emphasized the HIIP Teaching About Problem Solving, using teacher think-alouds and direct instruction to model mathematical reasoning and support students in understanding how to approach multi-step problems. Math Facilitators also continued to support schools in the implementation of the Do the Math intervention program, guiding educators in using the resource effectively to provide targeted, small-group support for students who require additional help developing foundational mathematical understanding. In addition, the Math Team completed its cycle of school-based data discussions, releasing teachers to collaboratively analyze results from common assessments, discuss student learning, and determine instructional next steps to support continued improvement in mathematics achievement.

Literacy

This March, the System Literacy Team has been deeply engaged in "elbow-to-elbow" collaboration across the district, ensuring that data-driven instruction translates into real-world student success. From foundational early years support to EQAO preparation, our focus remains on providing teachers with the precise tools and coaching they need to move the needle on student achievement. The team recently concluded a comprehensive series of

school-based data meetings. These sessions brought together classroom teachers, Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs), and principals to analyze Middle of the Year screening results. By looking at individual student profiles, we were able to determine clear, actionable next steps for every learner. This collaborative approach ensures that no student slips through the cracks and that our instructional resources are deployed where they are needed most. In our Junior divisions, the literacy team has been providing on-demand coaching to teachers looking to refine their practice. This "elbow-to-elbow" model has proven highly effective, as it allows educators to: ask student-specific questions in real-time and dig deeper into high-yield instructional strategies.

We are also pleased to announce that Tier 2 Early Intervention is officially underway at four of our priority schools: Holy Name of Mary, Precious Blood, St. Boniface, St. Joseph's (Clinton). Under the expert guidance of our Learning Resource Teachers (LRTs), Karen Kramers and Teresa Oud, Kindergarten and Grade 1 students are receiving targeted support in either the whole class setting or small groups. This proactive, preventative measure is designed to solidify foundational decoding skills now, giving our youngest learners the best possible trajectory for future reading proficiency.

Early Years

Throughout the month of March our Kindergarten teachers were engaged in completing the Early Development Instrument (EDI) questionnaire on their students in Senior Kindergarten. EDI is a population-level measure of young children's readiness to learn when they enter school. It is a checklist completed by Senior Kindergarten (SK) teachers for all students in their class and is designed to measure five general domains of development:

- Physical Health and Well-being
- Social Competence
- Emotional Maturity
- Language and Cognitive Development
- Communication Skills and General Knowledge

This collection cycle occurs every three years. The data collected through the EDI anonymous questionnaire is to provide a valuable snapshot of how groups of children in our community are developing.

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test Preparation

Staff at both St. Michael and St. Anne's continue to support students as they prepare for the OSSLT. Staff who are new to the administration of this assessment are also being trained later this month on the online platform, assessment procedures, and protocols.

Indigenous Education

Since the start of the new year, the Indigenous Education Support Teacher has achieved significant momentum, specifically through a strategic focus on authentic relationship building and regional collaboration. We have solidified vital local partnerships, most notably through deepened engagement with Chief Kim Bressette and the Kettle and Stony Point First Nations, and continued consultation with Doug George (SOAHAC). Our commitment to a "stronger together" approach is evidenced by our active participation in quarterly Indigenous Ed leads meetings with SCCDSB, WECDSB, LDCSB, and the Board, alongside intensive joint planning with AMDSB leads. These partnerships are yielding tangible results for our students, including the co-planning of the Huron Perth Indigenous Cultural Demonstration Day and the successful

integration of Knowledge Keepers into each of our secondary schools to share lived experience and traditional wisdom.

- **Instructional Innovation:** We are currently collaborating with neighboring boards to co-create resources for an Indigenous Spirituality unit in the Grade 11 World Religion curriculum, ensuring high-quality, vetted content.
- **System Integration:** The most recent Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC) meeting proved highly productive, as we continue to align the committee's specific goals and initiatives with the Board's initiatives, ensuring our work remains deeply integrated with the Board's overarching strategic vision.
- **Community Presence:** Through a meaningful partnership with OYAP, we have begun a journey of tangible reciprocity for the Elders of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation. Following the successful completion of a prototype, full production is now beginning on planter boxes for community distribution. This initiative moves us beyond symbolic gestures toward active, reciprocal treaty partnerships.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS IN SECONDARY

Skilled Trades & Apprenticeship Pathways (OYAP)

Our commitment to the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) is evidenced by high participation in Level 1 Apprenticeships and specialized technical training.

Level 1 Apprenticeship Enrollment

A total of 8 students across the board are currently completing Level 1 requirements:

- St. Anne's (3 students): Plumbing (Conestoga), Electrical (Conestoga), and HVAC (Fanshawe).
- St. Michael (5 students): Truck & Coach, Automotive Service Technician (AST), and HVAC (all via Conestoga).

Technical Training & Advanced Manufacturing

- Fusion 360 / CNC Training (March 3): Hosted at St. Anne's in collaboration with LeeVerage Integration. 19 students from SACSS and 1 from SMCSS received specialized instruction in 3D printing and CNC milling.
- TradeUcation Day (March 2): Guidance teachers attended Conestoga College for hands-on trades experience and updates on the new Automotive training facility (opening Sept 2026).
- ARISE Showcase: OYAP and SHSM leads attended a Ministry session in London focusing on AI-enhanced learning and literacy/math supports for apprentices.

Dual Credit Enrollment: Semester 2

Dual credit programs continue to provide students with simultaneous secondary and post-secondary credit attainment through our collegiate partners.

Partner Institution	Enrollment	Course Highlights
Lambton College	4 Students (SACSS)	Criminology, Bakeshop Applications, Digital Photography, ECE (Play 3 S.T.E.M)
Conestoga College	1 Student (SACSS)	Crime Scene Investigation (Hosted at SMCSS)
Conestoga College	3 Students (SMCSS)	Culinary/Indigenous Culinary Arts (at Stratford Int.); ECE (Doon Campus)
Conestoga College	1 Student (SMCSS)	Criminology / CSI (Taught by Ret. Detective Scott Campbell)

Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) & Certifications

- Certifications: SACSS students in Agriculture, Health, and Construction earned Grower Pesticide Safety certification (Ridgetown Campus, U of Guelph). Ongoing training includes Infection Control, Safe Food Handling, Customer and Ethical Considerations.
- Sector Experiences:
 - Arts & Culture (SMCSS): Tour of Conestoga Doon Campus media facilities and a live taping at CTV Kitchener.
 - Health & Sports (SMCSS): Kinesiology training in athletic taping and injury management led by a registered physiotherapist.
- Recruitment: Grade 10 classroom visits were conducted at SMCSS to ensure robust enrollment for the 2026–27 academic year.

Elementary Outreach & Early Engagement

- Women in Skilled Trades (TNT Event): On March 4, 30 female Grade 8 students from the Stratford area visited Conestoga College for hands-on sessions in Robotics and Mechatronics.
- Grade 8 Tech Days: Throughout March, St. Anne’s hosted Huron County Grade 8 students for plumbing and electrical workshops delivered by Conestoga College instructors.

These efforts strengthen experiential learning and post-secondary readiness, ensuring our students are well-prepared for high-demand careers in the skilled trades and beyond.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Week across Huron-Perth Catholic DSB!

From March 2–6, 2026, The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board promoted Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Week across our system by releasing our Grade 1–3 The Board adapted version of School Mental Health Ontario’s Wayfinder, a resource intentionally redesigned to reflect our Catholic worldview and spiritual theme, *On Fire with the Spirit*.

SEL strengthens essential life skills such as self-awareness, empathy, resilience, and responsible decision-making. These are skills that help students flourish in school and throughout life. In Catholic education, these competencies are deeply connected to faith formation. They guide students in growing as whole persons through mind, body, and spirit.

This year, the Mental Health and Wellness Team (MHWT) introduced the Wayfinder is a digital, grade-by-grade mental health literacy guide aligned with the Ontario curriculum. It offers engaging lessons, activities, virtual field trips, and caregiver tools. In its adapted form, Wayfinder supports students in learning through a Catholic lens and in living out the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations (OCSGE).

Through this integration, students will learn to:

- **Understand themselves as Discerning Believers**, using SEL skills such as self-awareness, emotional understanding, and values-based reflection to connect their inner experiences with Gospel teachings.
- **Communicate as Compassionate, Effective Communicators**, practicing SEL competencies like naming feelings, active listening, and expressing needs respectfully in ways that honour the dignity of others.
- **Act as Responsible Citizens**, applying SEL skills in responsible decision-making, understanding consequences, and choosing actions rooted in justice, care, and integrity.
- **Grow as Collaborative Contributors**, using SEL competencies such as relationship-building, cooperation, perspective-taking, and empathy to serve others with kindness, unity, and hope.

By intentionally connecting SEL with faith formation, the Board adaptation of SMH-ON’s Wayfinder helps our youngest learners build resilience, empathy, and emotional understanding while deepening their capacity to be faith-filled graduates who bring Christ’s love into the world.

Ontario Association of Social Workers’ (OASW) Social Work Week:

During the first week of March, we acknowledged Social Work Week and celebrated the compassion, skill, and steady presence our Social Workers bring to our schools each day. This year’s provincial theme “*Care. Insight. Together,*” reflected the unique blend of expertise and lived experience they offer in supporting students and families. Throughout National Social Work Month, we recognized the ways our Social Workers walk alongside those facing grief, trauma, mental health challenges, systemic barriers, or major life transitions, ensuring no one has to navigate these moments alone.

Their thoughtful connections with students, staff, and families strengthen learning, prevent crises, and uphold our mission to grow the whole student. They maintain strong partnerships with caregivers and community agencies, and their commitment to student well-being deeply aligns with our Catholic values. We are profoundly grateful for our Social Workers and feel truly fortunate to have each of them serving Huron-Perth CDSB.

Attendance: ThoughtExchange Engagement

Our Attendance Team has expanded our data-gathering efforts this year by engaging community partners in the ThoughtExchange survey process. Their participation adds an essential community lens to our understanding of attendance trends and needs. To date, 61 community partners have completed the survey, offering valuable insights into shared challenges and opportunities for collaboration to support student attendance.

We are also seeing strong participation from within our school communities. So far, we have received:

786 student responses from Grades 7–12

303 student responses from Grades 4–6

573 caregiver responses

179 staff responses

These impressive response rates reflect the commitment of our school administrators, who continue to promote the surveys and highlight their importance in shaping effective, board-wide attendance strategies.

There is still time to participate. Survey links for caregivers, staff, and students will continue to be shared, and we will keep collecting responses until the end of May. The data gathered will help us identify barriers and recognize strengths which support the board's attendance planning to design targeted, evidence-informed interventions that promote school engagement across our district.

FACILITIES SERVICES AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

FACILITIES SERVICES

Facilities Services has initiated the planning phase for seasonal preventative maintenance, specifically targeting board-wide HVAC and ventilation systems. Additionally, preparations are underway for spring site remediation, including general cleanup and the commencement of the grounds maintenance and mowing schedule. Capital project tender documents and architectural drawings for upcoming projects are currently being finalized. These will soon be released for public bid. Simultaneously, our Manager of Facilities will be coordinating with school principals to finalize summer construction schedules, ensuring project timelines are optimized to minimize operational disruptions.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The next Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) meeting is scheduled for April 8. We are pleased to welcome Tara Boreham, Superintendent of Education, who will join the committee to lead a strategic discussion on incident reporting.

Key Agenda Items:

- eBase Reporting
- ORT - Training, OT login, Principal Followup
- H&S School Representative Training
- Walkie Talkies
- JHSC Terms of Reference Update
- Messaging of SSIR- when to report

RECOMMENDATION

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