



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

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Presented to: The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board  
Date: Monday, January 22, 2024  
Submitted by: Chris N. Roehrig, Director of Education and Secretary

# BOARD HIGHLIGHTS FOR JANUARY

Public Session

## BACKGROUND

Many activities take place every month throughout the district to ensure that our students have rich, 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, OYAP Project Leader, the Mental Health Lead, and Managers of activities that take place under their leadership.

## DEVELOPMENTS

The spiritual theme we anchor the 2023-24 school year in is “Go Forth!” and it builds upon the Gospel story of the Road to Emmaus which has been guiding our district over the past three years. The Holy Spirit continues to guide our district and lovingly supports us as we cycle through experiences of encounter, accompaniment and transformation. As we begin a new year, we go forward with incredible enthusiasm, ever grateful for the many gifts of our students, families, staff members, parishes, and communities. Together, we are on a journey of discipleship. We are people of hope and we delight in the many signs of God’s love and joy in our schools and facilities. We are proud to share some highlights from the month of January.

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## ***CATHOLIC EDUCATION***

### **Catholic Student Leadership Team Update**

Final preparations are underway for the Catholic Student Leadership Team retreat that will be happening in February. The theme of the retreat is “We are Called” (Micah 3:8). Students will be reflecting on their gifts as Catholic students and how God is leading them in their faith. Guests from the Diocese of London, including Fr. Danny Santos (Vocations Director), the Chaplaincy team from King's University, and local Huron-Perth Deanery members will be leading sessions focused around this theme. Plenty of opportunities for team-building and fun will be provided. This event is happening at Camp Kintail, located in Huron County. This is being planned by our Religion and Family Life Coordinator in partnership with our secondary school Chaplains.

### **Catholic Role Models Reflecting Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism**

Every school in Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board has received a beautiful culturally diverse prayer cloth/banner that will be displayed in the school halls and used on the school’s prayer table. These prayer cloths feature more than 100 saints and blessed from around the

world and are a representation of the diverse human family. The diverse liturgical prayer cloth has images of the saints on the front surrounded by borders that signify the colours of liturgical seasons in the Catholic Church. The back of the cloth is white, again to provide for diverse liturgical usage. Lessons are being developed about all the holy people featured on the prayer cloths and will focus on how we are all called to holiness. These people serve as role models and reminders that we are all called to holiness, throughout all of history and for all time.



### **French Immersion Parent & Caregiver Information Night**

The administration team and Grade 1 French Immersion (FI) teacher at St. Mary's in Listowel hosted a night for parents and caregivers on January 10 at the school. This was attended by interested parents and caregivers in the Listowel community and surrounding areas.

Superintendent Tigani attended and brought greetings and information on behalf of the senior team regarding the Board's commitment to nurturing a strong FI program at St. Mary's and across the district, emphasizing that we offer this program at St. Michael CSS and St. Anne's CSS and intend for students to have access to a Catholic FI program in our district from K-12. The Principal and Vice-Principal shared information about the benefits of learning a second language in an immersion program and answered questions from parents/caregivers in attendance. They provided an overview of the day and explained that the students are members of the school community in all regards, highlighting the Catholic culture of the school, the diversity within the community and shared many examples of the positive experiences that students are having in our first Grade 1 cohort this year. We will be welcoming a new Grade 1 cohort in the fall of 2024 and look forward to growing this program over the coming years. The evening was well attended and it was evident that the program was well received by the community. A few parents in attendance shared their observations and experiences to date where some have a child in the program now and/or have had interactions at the school that brought them into the FI classroom and into conversation with the FI teacher. A highlight of the meeting was welcoming a couple of students to the meeting as well as noting that some of the people in attendance greeted one another in both French and English.

### **Holocaust Awareness Education**

Students in Grades 6 to 8 across our district recently engaged in two enriching learning sessions centred around the Holocaust. A total of 32 classes actively participated in the virtual workshop titled "Lessons and Legacies of the Holocaust." This insightful workshop, presented by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Education, delved into the historical complexities of the Holocaust, exploring the attitudes and social forces that facilitated Nazi Germany and its collaborators in the near-extermination of European Jews. Spanning two weeks, the virtual sessions provided an in-depth examination of this pivotal chapter in history.

Furthermore, six classes had the unique privilege and opportunity to virtually host a Holocaust survivor. During these special sessions, the survivor shared their personal journey with students and staff, creating a powerful connection between history and the present. This personalized encounter allowed students to pose questions, hear first-hand testimonies, and develop a profound understanding of the Holocaust at a deeply personal level.

These invaluable learning experiences align seamlessly with the objectives of the new Social Studies curriculum and actively contribute to our equity goals. Moreover, they provide real-life examples of our commitment to Catholic Social Teachings, fostering a holistic and compassionate approach to education.

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## **LEADERSHIP**

### **Leaders' Learning Council (LLC)**

On January 9, we hosted a virtual LLC where we welcomed an incredibly knowledgeable, experienced and inspiring guest presenter, Kate Winn. Kate is currently a Kindergarten teacher with the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland Clarington Catholic District School Board (PVNCCDSB) and is a provincial and national leader in the area of literacy. Kate is a highly sought-after speaker and educator who hosts a podcast entitled "Reading Road Trip" and has been a guest speaker and presenter at countless literacy and reading events, learning sessions, workshops, conferences and more. Most impressively, however, is her active engagement in the classroom with her primary students where she implements and models all of the incredible instructional shifts she speaks and writes about. Kate is a role model for educators who are striving to implement the recommendations of the Right to Read report and ensure that structured reading is embedded in all classrooms for all students. Kate was welcomed by members of our Literacy Team who have been working with her, and many other literacy leaders over the past many months to lead and support important changes in literacy instruction. Kate's message reinforced the outstanding leadership of our Literacy Resource Teachers and focused on the purpose and use of data related to the new early reading screening as well as highlighting the critical importance of consistent use of the core resources we have in our classrooms including UFLI as well as fidelity to the new Ontario Language Curriculum. This presentation is well timed as it comes during the same month as our training of all K-2 teachers on Acadience, our Ministry of Education and Board-approved early reading screening tool. Our Literacy Learning Coordinator and Literacy Resource Teachers are fully trained Acadience Mentors and have invested significant time in taking courses from Acadience to be able to train other educators so we have the capacity to conduct the training and ongoing support within our Board team.

On January 23, we will host a full-day LLC at the Catholic Education Centre. The agenda will include a variety of important topics. The Learning Coordinator for Special Education, alongside the System Special Education Resource Teacher, will deliver a comprehensive presentation on the Moving Inclusion Forward project. This initiative seeks to eliminate obstacles faced by individuals with disabilities, fostering accessible, inclusive, and equitable educational practices both within and beyond the confines of traditional classrooms. The primary objective is to assess our spaces and procedures, with a key focus on reevaluating our system's practices and guidelines pertaining to Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with special educational needs. During the presentation, we will emphasize our objectives: to decrease the use of modified IEPs and to explore innovative methods of supporting students who may be experiencing difficulties, aligning with the board's multi-tiered system of support. Additionally, we emphasize the importance of reinstating adherence to the team meeting procedure and the

response-to-intervention model. Each school leader will be allocated dedicated time to review their students' IEPs, guided by pertinent questions.

Following this, Principals will engage in some learning and reflection related to French as a Second Language (FSL). This includes responding to a Self-Reflection Tool in the "Compendium of Evidence-informed Strategies and Practices to Support School Administrators with FSL Programs and a Survey for Principals that was prepared and shared as part of our tri-board French Immersion/FSL partnership with Windsor-Essex CDSB and St Clair CDSB. The purpose of this is to gather data on the learning needs of principals related to recruitment, retention and support of FSL teachers. Principals will receive a document entitled "FSL for School Administrators: From Awareness to Action". This document is very rich and contains a Framework for FSL in Ontario Schools, K-12 and 10 individual monographs related to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), instructional leadership in an FSL context, increasing engagement in FSL, supporting Multilingual Learners and students with special education needs in FSL, pathways in FSL for secondary students, de-streaming and supporting the language proficiency of FSL teachers. We will provide an update on the Board's implementation of Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF), noting that our students will begin taking this internationally recognized assessment in May 2024 and every year thereafter. This is a very exciting addition to our FSL program and is made possible as a result of the commitment of several FSL leaders and teachers in our Board, who have been trained and will lead the assessments. In the afternoon, school and system leaders will engage in an exercise designed to have everyone reflect on their use of time throughout the day and week and to consider that in light of the Board's priorities, their school improvement plan and the needs of their school community. Lastly, there will be an update provided on the Board's Math Achievement Action Plan with a return to looking at the Key Performance Indicators and how principals are gathering data to inform their leadership moves, while also supporting classroom teachers in their implementation of the plan. The three core priorities of "knowing the curriculum, the math content knowledge and the learner" will be reinforced and attention drawn to our Board's core math resources, stressing the importance of consistency of use and accessing support from the Math Team as needed.

#### **Partnership Meeting with Huron Perth Children's Aid Society**

On January 9, Superintendents of Education Tara Boreham and Karen Tigani met with the Executive Director and Manager of the Huron Perth Children's Aid Society (HPCAS). This joint meeting was intended to support strong communication between our Board and this important agency. At a recent LLC, there were many questions that Principals and Vice-Principals had about changes to the processes used by the HPCAS and it became clear that ongoing dialogue and sharing of information would be important to assist our school leaders and more importantly the students and families we serve. The meeting was very well received on both sides of this important relationship and will be an ongoing opportunity to connect. Additionally, the HPCAS has committed to sharing various family and community resources and events that are taking place with us so that we can share them widely within our school communities in an effort to ensure families know of the kinds of support and services they have available to them.

#### **Regional Supervisory Officers Council Conference (RSOCC)**

Both Superintendents of Education will attend the January 26 RSOCC event hosted in London. This is an important event that brings Supervisory Officers together from across the region to learn, network and collaborate. On this date, we will engage in learning related to Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting, legal issues in schools, and current issues in Special Education. Supervisory Officers and other board leaders in attendance break into two groups in the

afternoon - one focused on curriculum and the other on special education. These days of learning and connecting are highly valued by all who attend.

### **Elementary New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP)**

The second elementary NTIP training day was held on January 16 at the Catholic Education Centre. Presented by our Learning Coordinators, the session focussed on Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in the morning, and Special Education in the afternoon. These learning sessions aim to enhance teachers' proficiency in these critical areas, aligning with our commitment to creating supportive and enriching learning environments for all students. The discussions regarding Special Education underscored our dedication to inclusivity, ensuring personalized learning. The engagement observed reflects our Catholic educators' commitment to continuous improvement in their practices and increasing their knowledge and skills.

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## ***SPECIAL EDUCATION***

### **Transition to Secondary Meeting**

On January 19, the System Special Education Team convened an initial planning session involving both elementary and secondary Special Education Resource Teachers (SERT) to discuss the crucial topic of transitioning students with special education needs to secondary education. This transition holds significant importance for all students, and our objective is to standardize and enhance this process district-wide, ensuring a smooth and tailored transition that fulfills the needs of every student. During this session, the working group reviewed feedback gathered from a previous SERT meeting, along with the current procedural documentation in place. The aim was to evaluate existing practices and incorporate necessary improvements. Moving forward, an upcoming meeting will engage representatives from various employee groups. This inclusive approach is intended to encompass diverse perspectives and ensure a holistic consideration of all viewpoints throughout this process.

### **Life Promotion Training for Special Education Resource Teachers**

On January 24, Special Education Resource Teachers will participate in a Life Promotion Literacy for School Staff training workshop facilitated by Kaitie Westbrook, Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board's Mental Health Lead. The workshop is intended to develop an understanding of suicide prevention at school and the role that all school staff play in keeping students safe. This approach is evidence-informed and supported by the World Health Organization as an effective practice in schools.

### **Regional Special Education Council (RSEC)**

The Special Education Learning Coordinator and the Superintendent of Special Education will attend the Regional Special Education Council on January 26. The agenda includes a presentation on legal issues by Nadya Tymochenko, a presentation by LKDSB on assessment, evaluation and reporting in Grades 9 -12, a presentation by Martin Smit on the LD at School project and a Hot topics/Regional Issues session.

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

### **Robotics and Coding**

Every elementary school participated in the STEM workshop delivered by the University of Waterloo this term, and now has access to LEGO Spike Prime Education kits. Many schools are actively embracing this innovative tool, delving into further learning in coding and robotics. In

anticipation of an upcoming district-level competition, students, collaborating in teams, are immersed in the exciting process of building, coding, testing, redesigning and reprogramming robots. This hands-on approach not only fulfills curriculum expectations in both the Mathematics and Science curriculum but also fosters a dynamic and experiential learning environment.

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## **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

### **Mathematics**

The Math Team continues to support the teaching and learning of mathematics in our system through our Math Achievement Action Plan (MAAP). The three goals of the plan are to ensure fidelity to the curriculum, continue math content knowledge for teaching, and ensure tasks and supports are responsive for all students. These goals have implementation strategies at the board, school, and classroom levels. Members of the Math Team continued to attend all Ministry meetings in relation to the MAAP, including strategic planning sessions and the math content knowledge learning series. We continue to meet regularly with our partners at EQAO, MathUP, and Knowledgehook to gather and analyze data for the MAAP's key performance indicators (KPIs). Our two Math Facilitators continued to work at our priority schools (one ministry-identified and two board-identified) supporting targeted groups of students by building operational conceptual understanding and fluency. They also continue to work with new and experienced teachers on an as-requested basis throughout our system. One of the resources that our team produces is a Newsletter with a few issues each year. In the most recent education, we are particularly proud of the "Intentional Planning Cycle" graphic and related support, in order to assist teachers with all aspects of data collection, designing lessons and activities in light of the student data, delivering teaching and learning experiences and differentiating instruction, resources and assessment. The team continues to curate excellent resources for the Math Depot which is used by HPCDSB educators.

### **Literacy: Early Reading Screening**

Early reading screening is a crucial measure recommended by the Ontario Human Rights Commission in the Right to Read Executive Summary. This practice yields invaluable insights into potential future reading challenges among young children, empowering educators to proactively intervene and mitigate issues before they become challenges. Our system literacy team recently completed their final course, officially attaining the status of Acadience Mentors. This achievement enables them to offer comprehensive training to K-3 educators. Fifteen professional learning sessions have been designed to equip our classroom educators with the knowledge of early reading screening techniques and the ability to interpret results effectively.

### **French as a Second Language: Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELFP)**

Principal Shona Gracey, Learning Coordinator MJ Drager and both FSL department heads from our two secondary schools met this month to develop plans in order to provide the opportunity for our Grade 12 students to challenge the DELF this spring. This test is an internationally recognized proficiency exam from France. It is based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) where proficiency is measured across four competencies: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The DELF is set to take place in May 2024.

### **Secondary Teacher Collaboration**

Secondary English teachers from St. Michael CSS met to further discuss supporting students in the newly destreamed Grade 9 English course (ENL1W). They discussed their program, instructional strategies, assessment strategies, resource selection, and more. These regular opportunities to collaborate and share ideas and planning are invaluable to supporting the

implementation of this new curriculum as well as furthering and goal of destreaming our Grade 9 program.

### **Secondary Final Evaluations**

Semester 1 wraps up at the end of January in our secondary schools. Leading up to final evaluations, our schools have a practice of honouring a “quiet week” where extra-curricular activities are limited and additional formative assessments are finished. This intentional slowing down of other activities and focusing on classroom learning allows our students to focus on their summative tasks and final evaluations. Many courses will have traditional final exams, while others have other forms of final evaluations such as performances, oral exams, and other demonstrations of learning.

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

### **Dual-credit courses**

We are pleased to partner with Conestoga College for the third year, to offer a dual-credit plumbing course at St. Michael CSS. Conestoga College facilitated the transport of 4 St. Anne’s CSS students who participated in this opportunity too. Students received an amazing technical experience. The students learned to properly measure, cut and thread steel, measure, cut and solder copper pipe from detailed drawings, and install pex piping to detailed plans. 20 students took part in the course this year. These students are well prepared for moving forward in their Co-op and possibly an apprenticeship pathway. Students received a plumbing credit at Conestoga as well as a Construction - Plumbing credit on their high school transcript.

Six St. Anne’s CSS students have been taking a range of dual credit courses at Lambton College this semester including: Intro to Residential Electrical, Mental Health: An Exploration, Baking, Hair Styling and Make-up Artistry, Criminology, Digital Photography and e-Sports Marketing.

### **Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM)**

St. Anne’s CSS SHSM students have been participating in coaching clinics this month. This is a great way for students to continue to develop their leadership skills and get involved with community sports. St. Anne’s CSS Co-op students completed a few SHSM certifications before the end of the semester including Leadership Skills, Infection Control, and Math Literacy.

### **Working at Heights Training**

On January 17 and 18, 24 St. Anne’s CSS students participated in Working at Heights training. This is a mandatory certification for SHSM Construction students and it is highly valued by employers. Once completed, these students will be able to participate in Elevated Work Platform training at the LiUNA Training Centre in London in April.

### **Leadership Training**

20 students participated in Leadership Training. Students received a certification from the Ontario Council of Technological Education (OCTE) which is a great addition to their resumes. A highlight of the certification is helping students practice potential interview questions focusing on leadership and teamwork skills.

### **Business Learning & Business SHSM**

Holly Mortimer from the Stratford-Perth Centre for Business made presentations to 5 different Business classes. She discussed business/economic development, marketing, entrepreneurial

skills, and summer company grants/programs for students. Many of these students are in the Business SHSM and this helps to support that pathway of learning and skill development for them as well as bolstering learning for all of the students in these classes.

## **Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) and Co-operative Education**

### **Level 1 Apprenticeship Courses at Conestoga College**

Conestoga College Level 1 Apprenticeship courses are open for 8 boards for students to apply for classes starting March 1 for 8 weeks. In most cases, only 3 to 4 high school students will be taken into the apprenticeship class. Huron-Perth Catholic DSB with only 2 schools has an amazing six students that successfully passed the interview process. We have students enrolled in the following Conestoga College in the Level 1 Apprentice programs:

- 2 students Truck and Coach
- 2 students Electrical
- 1 student Plumbing
- 1 student Refrigeration air conditioning, waiting for results

St. Michael CSS is also hosting a Level 1 Electrical course starting April 29 in partnership with Fanshawe College. St Anne's CSS and St Michael CSS will have 11 electrical students registered for this amazing opportunity.

### **Fanshawe Partnership 2023/24**

On January 16, Superintendents and OYAP leaders from HPCDSB and AMDSB met with representatives from Fanshawe College to discuss our partnership offering team-taught, dual credit, and level 1 courses for the 2024-25 school year. We have a strong commitment from Fanshawe to continue to offer courses and programs that meet the needs of the students in Huron and Perth counties. Working together with our AMDSB colleagues provides increased opportunities for students in both boards.

### **Elementary Electrical Board Visits**

On January 17, our visits to elementary schools with electrical boards resumed. This was a very successful learning opportunity for our Grade 8 students. Conestoga is working on a schedule for the three local school boards that they are supporting on this electrical learning opportunity.

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

### **Supporting Well-Being and Stress in the New Year:**

January marks a time for resetting and focusing on well-being and stress management goals for the upcoming months. In alignment with this, the Mental Health and Wellness Team introduced the January 2024 Wellness Month initiatives for both elementary and secondary levels. These resources offer 'grab and go' materials designed to facilitate student engagement in wellness activities throughout January that celebrate our Catholic faith. Additionally, the Mental Health and Wellness team developed [HPCDSB Caregiver Resource - Helping Your Teen During Exams](#) for our secondary schools to share with caregivers to provide support in managing stressors.

Resources Shared:

[January 2024 Wellness Month Elementary](#)  
[January 2024 Wellness Month Secondary](#)

**HPCDSB Mental Health and Wellness Team: Caregiver Lunch and Learn:**

During the 2023-2024 school year, the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board and Avon Maitland District School Board hosted monthly lunch & learn sessions for caregivers and staff. Each session, facilitated by community partners, offered a concise 30-minute virtual discussion on children's mental health and well-being topics. In January, the Huron Perth Public Health Unit presented a webinar titled "Stress, Nutrition, Physical Activity & Sleep: Building Healthy Strategies Into Your Child's Day," providing attendees with insights and actionable practices to enhance positive mental health and set new well-being goals.

**HPCDSB Mental Health Leadership in Huron Community Safety and Well-Being Initiative:**

As a member of the Huron Community Safety and Well-Being Committee and its mental health and addiction sub-committee, our Mental Health Lead collaborated with CMHA Huron Perth and Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance Crisis Support, among other local mental health leaders. Together, they crafted strategic messages to raise awareness about mental health resources available in Huron. This campaign targets a broad audience, emphasizing four key places to seek help and information related to mental health and addiction. The initiative was officially launched at a press event hosted at Libro Credit Union in Clinton on Friday, January 19.

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***MAINTENANCE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY***

**Health and Safety Committee**

The Joint Health and Safety Committee met on January 10. Items discussed included the following:

- Behaviour Consultation and Safe Intervention Procedure
- Workplace Violence Risk Assessments
- Mental Health Strategies for Staff - Proactive System of Care
- Review of Annual Board Policy - 3A:3 - Health and Safety
- Annual Health and Safety Week - April 22 - 26, 2024
- WSPS Inspections and Training - St. Mike's and St. Anne's
- Monthly Inspection Reporting
- Incident Reporting
- Defibrillator and Fire Extinguisher Training

The minutes are posted on the Staff Intranet for employees to review.

**RECOMMENDATION**

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