



REPORT TO THE HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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BOARD HIGHLIGHTS FOR FEBRUARY

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, 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 the season of Lent, we go forward with a renewed focus on prayer, generosity and sacrifice, ever grateful for the many gifts we have received from God and in turn, we wish to deepen and share with others. We are ever grateful for 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.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Lent 2024

Schools celebrated Shrove Tuesday with pancakes for lunch as well as celebrating St Valentine’s Day one day early this year, because it coincided with Ash Wednesday which is a holy day of fasting. This unique double celebration of the beginning of Lent and St Valentine’s proved to be a day full of joy, love, hope and community-building activities and was very well received by students, families and staff.

Schools celebrated Ash Wednesday with Masses, many of which took place in Catholic churches within our partner Families of Parishes and some which took place in the schools. Where Mass was not possible, schools celebrated prayer liturgies led by students and staff. Throughout the season of Lent, our schools will be engaging in many examples of prayer, almsgiving and acts of charity. This is a beautiful time on our school calendar for everyone to deeply reflect on our mission and vision as Catholic Christians and consider how we can

individually and collectively strengthen our faith as we walk the path of daily living and learning together.

Catholic Student Leadership Team Retreat

We are delighted that 24 of our secondary students from St. Anne's CSS and St. Michael CSS participated in a two-day leadership and faith retreat centred around the theme of "We are Called" (Micah 3:8). Students reflected on their gifts as Catholic students and explored how God is leading them in their faith journey. Guest speakers included Fr. Danny Santos (Vocations Director, Diocese of London), Deacon Dan McPhee (Huron Perth Deanery), the Chaplaincy team from King's University, and Development and Peace members. Each of these speakers and facilitators prompted students to contemplate how, as Catholics, we are called to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our Lord. Opportunities for personal reflection and team building were also provided. This event was planned by our Religion and Family Life Coordinator in partnership with our secondary school Chaplains. Additional staff supervision was provided by the Religion Department Heads from each of our secondary schools. We look forward to the ongoing faith development and leadership of these students throughout the remainder of the school year as they take what they have learned and use it to promote faith among their peers. Fr. Santos remained with the group for the duration of the retreat as did Deacon McPhee. Fr. Santos led Eucharistic Adoration and offered the Sacrament of Reconciliation which were both very well received by the students and adults in attendance.

Black History Month

Educators across the district have engaged students in various learning activities throughout the month related to the history, accomplishments and leadership of Black Canadians and others from around the world. Our staff have been using the digital subscription to *My Place in this World: A Black Heritage Curriculum*, which has been promoted not just this month, but throughout the school year. This innovative curriculum provides a wealth of information, activities, assignments, and assessments that recognize and celebrate the vast contributions of Black people. There are also many great videos available on the On-Core platform that focus on Canadian Black History. Schools included special announcements and social media posts about Black Saints, authors, actors and humanitarians.

Development and Peace Schools (D & P Schools)

Schools throughout our board continue to participate in awareness campaigns and earn badges as part of the Development & Peace Schools Program. Schools will be completing the Major Mustard Challenge throughout Lent, which includes raising funds for the Share Lent Campaign "Stand for the Land". We hope that this campaign will raise awareness and offer an act of unity across the district and around the world.

LEADERSHIP

Leaders' Learning Council (LLC)

The February 13 LLC was hosted online and included a variety of board policies as well as an overview of the administrative procedure portal. Policies included Infectious Disease Reporting, Artificial Intelligence, Copyright, Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions, Purchasing, Information Technology, and Advertising in Schools. Reviewing these policies with school leaders, and by extension, principals ensuring that staff are aware of and adhere to them is a key component of risk mitigation for the Board.

The February 27 LLC will be in person at the Catholic Education Centre and will include a comprehensive workshop led by Director Roehrig related to strategic planning, with a focus on concluding our current plan and initiating the next one that will guide our district for the upcoming few years. In addition, the day will include a presentation from Knowledgehook for principals and vice-principals on how best to use the new data dashboard to inform and support school improvement plans. The new data dashboard is designed to inform teachers and leaders, at the school or district level, as they plan classroom, school and board improvement measures. It creates visibility into student needs for teachers and for leaders so that at every level, our educators can take prompt action to support opportunities for intervention in the classroom or for extension activities. Knowledgehook is a tool used by teachers and students to support learning in mathematics.

There will be a presentation introducing the new Family Life Education curriculum with an opportunity for each principal to consider how they will nurture a smooth and successful transition into the new curriculum for their students and staff. Additionally, elementary principals and vice-principals will receive an update on the Early Reading Screening training that is taking place across the district, with an important overview that supports their ability to monitor and support this new learning for our teachers and DECEs. There will also be a presentation about budget priorities and budget planning for the upcoming school year. A few additional notes and reminders will be provided from Human Resources and the Superintendents.

A highlight of the February 27 LLC will be capturing a photo of the presentation of the Board employees' donation to the United Way Perth Huron campaign, which was well supported in our schools and at the Catholic Education Centre. We are proud to be a partner with this very important community partner.

Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers Association Retreat (OCSOA)

Director Roehrig and Superintendents Boreham, Ducharme and Tigani participated in a retreat hosted by OCSOA entitled "As It Is In Heaven". The retreat was facilitated by Canadian Theologian, Dr. Josephine Lombardi, who is presently the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs and an Associate Professor of Pastoral and Systematic Theology at St. Augustine's Seminary in Scarborough, Ontario. Dr Lombardi led the participants through a deeply reflective examination of the prayer Jesus taught us: The Lord's Prayer, and used her book "As It Is In Heaven" as a springboard for the insights she shared about each of the petitions in the prayer. It was a deeply moving retreat experience. In addition to the various talks led by Dr Lombardi, there was time for private and communal prayer, liturgies, and the celebration of the holy Mass led by Reverend Monsignor Con O'Mahoney. This annual retreat for Ontario's Catholic Directors of Education and Supervisory Officers is planned and led by the Catholic Faith and Leadership Committee, which is chaired by Superintendent Tigani. The music ministry for all liturgies and Mass was led by the members of our senior team along with colleagues from several other boards in attendance.

Religious Education Congress

A small delegation consisting of Superintendent Tigani and our Religion and Family Life Coordinator attended the Religious Education Congress hosted by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles this month. They were joined by several other Catholic educators from across Ontario and from around the world. This event is the largest annual gathering of Roman Catholics of its kind in all of North America and brings members of our faith community together from across the globe. The conference was entitled "Be Loved" and provided numerous, powerful opportunities to experience and celebrate our Catholic faith with thousands of fellow Catholics who are educators, parish and diocesan leaders, clergy and religious, youth leaders, music ministers,

faith animators, motivational speakers, authors, and more. There were several Eucharistic liturgies, prayer services and opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, available in many languages. A highlight was the opening Eucharistic celebration with Cardinal Robert W. McElroy as presider, with many Bishops and Priests from multiple countries. In his letter to participants as well as in his opening remarks, Most Reverend José H Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles, said the following, (quoting Pope Francis in part): “God, who is Love, has drawn near to you, to me, to everyone, in his Son Jesus, and wants to share in your life, your work, your dreams, and your thirst for happiness. Love is the true meaning of our religion. Spreading that love to the ends of the earth is the Church’s mission”. The many engaging speakers and faith animators throughout the conference rooted their remarks and prayers in the words “Be Loved”. We will be drawing upon the experiences of our staff who attended this incredible prayer opportunity to inform our ongoing faith leadership and formation efforts in the district. This was a profoundly faith-filled, Spirit-led professional learning and faith development opportunity for our Board’s leaders in Catholic faith.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Life Promotion for Educational Assistants - Feb. 1 and 2

On Feb 1 and 2, Educational Assistants and members of Secondary Guidance Departments and Student Success Teams participated in a Life Promotion Literacy for school staff training workshop facilitated by Kaitie Westbrook, Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board’s Mental Health Lead and Caroline Thuss, Religion and Family Life Learning Coordinator. 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.

Moving Inclusion Forward - Inclusion Rep Working Group Meeting #1

As a key component of the Moving Inclusion Forward initiative, the System Special Education team led a session with representatives from across the system. Representatives from all working groups from both elementary and secondary were present. Agenda items included review of the Board’s philosophy of inclusion and key focus areas of this initiative: moving students from presence to contribution, auditing IEPs, increasing peer support, advocacy and awareness and universal supports. Participants had a chance to reflect on their own inclusive practices and identify some barriers that might exist in their school building to promote full inclusion.

Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) Meeting - Feb. 16

Members of the System Special Education Team delivered a comprehensive presentation on the Moving Inclusion Forward project to Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs) in February. 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 re-evaluating our system’s practices and guidelines pertaining to Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with special educational needs. During the presentation, we emphasized 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 emphasized the importance of reinstating adherence to the team meeting procedure and the response-to-intervention model.

DIGITAL TOOLS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

Virtual Workshops - Friends of the Environment

To begin term two, the Huron-Perth CDSB has partnered with both Scientists in Schools and TD Friends of the Environment to offer virtual science workshops to students and teachers in Grades 1-6. Teachers are able to use the device in their classrooms to connect with a scientist in a Google Meet video call. The facilitator leads students through a variety of hands-on experiments over the course of one hour. These virtual workshops ensure that the students in HPCDSB have learning opportunities that reach far beyond our physical classroom!

Coding, Robotics and More!

On February 21, students in Grade 7 and 8 across the entire district participated in the first-ever HPCDSB District Skills Competition. Students worked with teachers, learning coordinators and program team members, as well as parent/community volunteers for months to prepare for this competition. Over 125 students competed in the four competition categories, which include: robotics, mechanical engineering, green energy, and construction. In each of the categories, students were able to use the digital tools available to them in the classroom to help to prepare. Students used coding software, 3D imaging software, and digital research tools to learn more about their specific competition category. The winners of the competition will now move on to represent our Board at the provincial level at Skills Ontario in May.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mathematics

The Math Team remains dedicated to enhancing the teaching and learning of mathematics across our educational system through the Math Achievement Action Plan (MAAP). This plan is structured around three primary objectives: ensuring fidelity to the curriculum, advancing educators' mathematical content knowledge, and tailoring tasks and support systems to meet the needs of all students. To achieve these goals, we have devised comprehensive implementation strategies at the board, school, and classroom levels. Our team members actively participate in Ministry meetings related to the MAAP, including strategic planning sessions and specialized math content knowledge learning series. We maintain close collaborations with partners such as EQAO, MathUP, Making Math Moments, and Knowledgehook, utilizing their expertise to gather and analyze data crucial for monitoring the plan's key performance indicators (KPIs). Elementary teachers of Math were offered release time to access professional learning resources on the Making Math Moments platform in order to further develop their own mathematical knowledge for teaching. Our Math Facilitators play a pivotal role in supporting targeted student groups at priority schools, identified both by the ministry and the board. By fostering conceptual understanding and operational fluency, they assist students in achieving numerical reasoning. Additionally, they provide invaluable guidance to both new and experienced teachers across the system upon request. Continuing our commitment to excellence, we continually curate a rich collection of resources for the Math Depot, a valuable repository utilized by the Board's educators to enhance their teaching practices.

Literacy Early Intervention

Our two Literacy Resource Teachers have embarked on providing literacy intervention at two new schools for the second half of the school year. Sacred Heart School in Wingham and Holy Name of Mary School in St. Marys will now benefit from some early reading intervention in SK and Grade 1 classrooms. This intervention will focus on phonemic awareness and basic

phonics skills for students who are at risk for further reading difficulties. Another important feature of this intervention is that it is done in collaboration with the classroom educator and mostly done directly within the classroom. We continue to engage teachers in a variety of collaborative efforts to build capacity in the area of early reading across the district. In addition to the targeted intervention taking place at these schools, there is ongoing support and partnership with teachers across the district to further embed the components of small group instruction to ensure access to the very best evidence-based reading strategies, resources and support for all students.

Early Reading Screening Training

This month has been filled with many professional learning opportunities for our K-2 educators. Each teacher and DECE have received a full day of release time in order to gather to learn about early reading screening. In response to one of the recommendations from the Ontario Human Rights Commission Right to Read, our teachers have been learning how to administer and interpret the results from Acadience Reading Screening. The literacy team has skillfully crafted a day for educators to learn the importance of determining which of their students are at risk of further reading difficulties using this screening tool but more importantly being provided with practical ways to address these gaps early and in through both whole class and small group instruction.

Secondary Teacher Collaboration

Representatives from both secondary math departments met to plan further supports for grade 9 destreamed math with our district partners at Making Math Moments. We discussed the role of leadership in math education and high-impact instructional strategies. Working as a team within the math departments and between our 2 secondary schools, as well as accessing the expertise of our math partners is growing our collective knowledge and skills. We continue to work across math classrooms and grades to further embed destreaming and ensure all students have opportunities for success in this key subject area.

Secondary eLearning

As we wrapped up our 6 eLearning offerings from semester 1 in January, we immediately jumped into semester 2. This semester we are hosting 7 eLearning courses in our district: Grade 12 English (college and university pathways), Grade 11 Travel and Tourism, Grade 12 Religious Studies, Grade 11 Anthropology, Sociology, and Psychology, Grade 12 Data Management, and a Grade 11 Physical Education course called “Health for Life”. Between our two schools, we have 205 students enrolled in one of the courses we are teaching, or a course offered by another Catholic school board in our sharing consortium. To balance this, we are also welcoming 37 students from other Catholic boards this semester into our courses. These courses offer content created through Catholic Virtual Ontario that include Catholic content and context on top of the curriculum content.

Professional Development (PD) Day

February 2 was a PD Day across the district for all employees. Teachers engaged in activities related to reporting of student achievement and transition planning and implementation between terms and semesters. Non-teaching staff engaged in a variety of learning activities including Insignia Training for Library Technicians. Insignia is a program that is used to manage resources in the libraries. Educational Assistants engaged in life promotion training with board staff as well as learning more about inclusive practices to support students.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS IN SECONDARY

New CNC Ribbon Cutting at St. Anne's

On Monday, February 5, St. Anne's CSS was pleased to welcome Honourable Lisa M. Thompson, MPP for Huron-Bruce, Dave Lewis, the Project Manager of Career-Ready with CTMA's Expanding Opportunities Program, and Gaby Parejo from the Huron Manufacturing Association (HMA) for unveiling new CNC machinery. The machinery was funded by the Canadian Tooling and Machining Association (CTMA), the Ontario Council for Technology Education (OCTE) and the Ontario's Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) through Skills Development. We are very grateful for this \$90,000 investment in updating the school's manufacturing facilities. A press release was shared related to this exciting new equipment.

Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Training Opportunities

Health and Safety Training at St. Michael CSS

On February 8, FPS Occupational Health provided health and safety training to all Co-op students.

First-Aid and CPR Training

SHSM students at both secondary schools earned their first-aid and CPR certifications to prepare them for co-op.

Working at Heights Training

Students at both secondary schools received Work at Heights training, facilitated by LiUNA 1059.

Customer Service and Negotiation Skills

SHSM Business and Construction from St. Anne's CSS participated in Customer Service and Negotiation Skills training on February 20.

Mental Health Awareness

SHSM students from St. Anne's CSS participated in Mental Health Awareness Training on February 21.

Ambulation and Lifting Techniques Training

Health and Wellness SHSM students from St. Michael CSS school travelled to Lambton College to participate in Ambulation and Lifting Techniques Training on February 22.

Advanced Training in Fire Extinguisher Use

On February 22, 15 SHSM students from St. Michael CSS school travelled to Lambton College to put on full firefighting gear and learn to fight fires at the college's Fire Fighting Facility.

OYAP Level 1 Welding Orientation

Lambton College held their orientation meeting for students, parents and OYAP leads on February 8. Students interested in Level 1 Welding were able to tour the facilities, learn more about their curriculum expectations and visit accommodations where they will be staying for 9 weeks.

Pathway Event at Nuhn Industries - February 22

On February 22, in partnership with Conestoga College, Skills Ontario and our coterminous Board, we held a one-day hands-on trade pathway event at Nuhn Industries in Sebringville.

Grade 10 career class students had an opportunity to see firsthand the high energy and state-of-the-art production, work with community partners from Perth County and visit the Skills Ontario Trades & Tech Truck.

OYAP Level 1 Electrical

2 students from St. Anne's CSS started their OYAP Level 1 Electrical Program at Conestoga College on February 26.

Electrical Board Elementary Visits

On February 26, Conestoga Colleges resumed their electrical board visits with our Grade 8 students.

Livestock Production & Animal Housing

AgScapes facilitated a presentation about Livestock Production and Animal Housing to Agriculture and Health and Wellness SHSM students at St. Michael School on February 27.

Tools in the Trades - Boot Camp

On February 28, St. Anne's CSS will host 15 electrical students from both secondary schools to take part in a Ministry trade event. The Boot Camp will feature licensed electricians leading the students through a day of hands-on skilled trades-centred learning. Each participant will receive a complimentary tool kit.

Ethical Considerations

On February 29, representatives from Development and Peace will be running a training for the Non-Profit, and all other interested SHSM students.

Co-operative Education

139 of our secondary students are registered for co-op this semester. 54 of these students are registered for four credit co-op which involves working full-time and 85 of them are registered for OYAP Trade experiences.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Professional Development

As we endeavour to continue to build capacity and enhance our evidence-informed, measurement based care practices members of the Mental Health and Wellness Team participated in the Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) Informed Suicide Risk Assessment and Monitoring for students with chronic suicide ideation hosted by School Mental Health Ontario. This was a 2-day training that provided didactic learning topics, discussed Behaviourism, DBT skills/ strategies, and Chain analysis as well as offered opportunities for practice and role play. The team is looking forward to implementing their learning into practice with students to ensure safety and enhance outcomes.

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, offers a concise 30-minute virtual discussion on children's mental health and well-being topics. In February, Kristi Michel from Rural Response for Healthy Children presented: Nurturing Healthy Relationships Through Social Emotional Learning (SEL) for caregivers.

Pink Shirt Day: Anti-Bullying in HPCDSB

The Mental Health and Wellness Team (MHWT) developed and distributed a '[grab and go](#)' PSD [Resources](#) to facilitate your engagement in raising awareness against bullying while promoting kindness on Pink Shirt Day Wednesday, February 28, 2024. School staff were also provided with a [Bullying: Information for Educators](#) developed by the MHWT to assist with learning more about bullying and how we can assist our students who are experiencing bullying.

Anti-Human Trafficking Awareness Day February 22

Every year, February 22 is a day to encourage Canadians to raise awareness of the magnitude of modern day slavery in Canada and abroad and to take steps to combat human trafficking. HPCDSB continues our partnership with Victim Services Huron to provide the Recognizing Exploitation a Syllabus to End Trafficking (RESET) curriculum and anti-human trafficking presentations to students in Grade 7 and 8 attending our Huron Elementary schools. The remaining sessions were launched February 22, 2024 to coincide with the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day.

School Services Advisory Committee:

Our mid-year School Service Advisory Committee Meeting was held on February 6, 2024 in which we discussed the school-based services provided by our Mental Health and Wellness Coaches as well as the support our students receive in school from our community providers. During this month's meeting we engaged in a multidisciplinary discussion about best practices for early intervention, identification, support and appropriately navigating system pathways to ensure best outcomes for youth. The committee considered the current strengths, gaps and needs for school-based services throughout both Huron-Perth Catholic DSB and Avon Maitland DSB with community partners.

MAINTENANCE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

Naloxone Training

Naloxone training was provided to staff at the CEC on February 20, 2024. This valuable training will ensure staff are prepared in the event action is needed.

Health and Safety Committee

The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) met on February 21, 2024. Items discussed included the following:

- Workplace Violence Risk Assessments
- Annual review of Board Policies - Harassment and Violence in the Workplace
- Naloxone Training
- Monthly Inspection Reporting
- Incident Reporting

The JHSC meeting minutes are posted on the Board's Staff Intranet site.

RECOMMENDATION

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