



## 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, October 27, 2025  
Submitted by: Karen Tigani, Director of Education and Secretary

# BOARD HIGHLIGHTS FOR OCTOBER

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 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 fall and observe the glorious changes in the seasons. October showcases the glory of God as the environment around us reveals colour, change and transformation. We are delighted to highlight some of the activities and opportunities that took place this month across our district.

---

## ***CATHOLIC EDUCATION***

### **Faith in Action**

Our schools participated in a variety of food drives connected with local Catholic service organizations, including significant support for the Society of St Vincent de Paul, throughout the month. We give thanks for our collective ability to serve and support our brothers and sisters in this manner. We appreciate the generosity of students, families and staff contributing to the food drives. We are also grateful to the leaders and volunteers of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul who regularly provide information and learning experiences for our youth, to help them understand more about the contributions they are making.

### **Student Leadership: Laudato Si and Catholic Social Teachings in Action**

We are pleased to share that a class from Holy Name of Mary Catholic School is continuing their participation in the Green Leaders Program through the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority. This is a year-long environmental education and civic engagement program, for Grade 6/7 and 7/8 classes. The program is centered around the “Community Action and Problem Solving Process”. This is a six-step process where each class identifies an environmental issue in their local community and then implements a sustainable solution to the issue. During the program, students take on the roles of investigators, researchers, analysts, decision makers and planners. They learn and work with stakeholders and local community experts. The students are challenged to think critically and solve problems creatively, focused on using Catholic Social

Teachings and the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. This allows students to take real action toward being stewards of creation. They also work as a team, collaborate on solutions, and learn how to engage in democratic decision-making.

### **Catholic Curriculum Corporation Council Meetings**

Members of the Learning Coordination Team, the Program Team, Superintendent Sean McDade and Director Karen Tigani recently attended the inaugural Catholic Curriculum Corporation Council and Board of Representative meetings for the school year. These councils, which include Elementary, Secondary, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and Faith in Education, provide a vital platform for collaboration and exchange among different boards. Our participation in these councils is instrumental in supporting the Strategic Plan of the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board. By engaging with colleagues from various Catholic education partners, we are able to discuss shared objectives, identify common challenges, and collaborate on initiatives that enhance our curriculum and align with our faith-based values. Through these meetings, we aim to foster innovative curriculum-writing projects that benefit not only our students and educators but also the broader community. By sharing best practices and resources, we strengthen our commitment to providing a faith-integrated education. This collaborative effort ultimately enriches the learning experience for all involved, ensuring that we remain focused on our mission to nurture both academic excellence and spiritual growth within our schools.

### **When Faith Meets Pedagogy Conference (WFMP)**

We were pleased to have 13 staff members attending the Catholic Curriculum Corporation's (CCC) When Faith Meets Pedagogy Conference in Toronto from Thursday, October 23 to Saturday October 25, 2024. The keynote speaker was Danielle Campo McLeod, and Mass was led by celebrant Rev. Ronald Bishop Fabbro from the Diocese of London. Of note is the leadership that Huron-Perth Catholic DSB teachers and system team leaders provide within the CCC and at this conference each year. Religion and Family Life Learning Coordinator Caroline Thuss and Secondary Teacher Marianne Braca presented workshops. Secondary Learning Coordinator Paul D'Hondt co-presented the work of Catholic Virtual Ontario and the resources it has developed to support our secondary educators online. Paul also co-presented with the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) on some online Grade 12 resources that were created. We look forward to seeing the new knowledge and the many fruits of the networking and faith formation with other Catholic educators brought back and used to nurture students and staff in our schools. Religion and Family Life Coordinator Caroline Thuss is a leader on the WFMP planning committee. Our Board is well represented and deeply respected within the CCC community, and we are proud to be part of this annual conference that brings incredible joy, faith and pedagogy together for Catholic educators and partners.

### **When Faith Meets Pedagogy Youth Forum**

18 students and the two chaplains from our Secondary Schools travelled to Toronto to attend the bi-annual Youth Forum as part of the When Faith Meets Pedagogy conference. The keynote speaker was Danielle Campo McLeod, who spoke of her mission to empower individuals to discover their "gold medal moments," uncover their strengths and achieve personal success. Featured speakers included Fr. Paul Magyar, OCY, who spoke about being led by the Gospel. Leaders from Development and Peace spoke about promoting justice, peace, and solidarity with the global community. Representatives from L'Arche led a session about building communities of belonging with people with intellectual disabilities. This faith opportunity is a highlight for many secondary students and helps them make connections with students from other Catholic schools across the province.

## **Sports Council Events**

The Elementary Sports Council successfully organized the district-wide Cross Country Meet this year. The Annual District Cross Country Meet took place at St. Joseph's and St. Anne's Catholic schools in Clinton on October 15, with nearly 700 student participants. This highly anticipated event was a tremendous success and clearly demonstrated the enthusiasm for physical activity among our students. The success of this event is a testament to the exceptional planning and organization provided by the Elementary Sports Council members. Their dedicated efforts foster community spirit and encourage a commitment to physical activity within our schools. The experience provided by the Cross Country Meet is invaluable and exemplifies the unity and sense of community that characterize the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board. We are grateful to the coaches, convenors, and various volunteers who made this event such a success.

---

## **LEADERSHIP**

### **System Leaders Deepen Faith and Instructional Leadership**

On October 28th, system leaders from across the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board will gather for the next in-person Leadership Learning Community (LLC) session.

The morning will focus on Faith Formation, continuing our journey through *Catholic Foundations*: a formation series from the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame. In Module Two: The Mystery of Creation, leaders will explore how Catholic teaching reveals creation as both an act of divine power and divine love. The session will examine how God's ongoing creative work upholds human dignity, invites us to be co-participants in creation, and reflects the Church's teaching that God creates *ex nihilo* ("out of nothing"), *cum tempore* ("with time"), *cum libertate* ("with freedom"), and *ex trinitate* ("out of love").

In the afternoon, we will be joined by representatives from EQAO, as an Education Officer presents research-based best practices and the effective use of data reporting tools to drive school improvement. The day will conclude with a principal panel, where leaders will engage in discussion around real, relatable "problems of practice" and receive feedback on how to ask curious, coaching-focused questions that help teachers make strong instructional decisions grounded in "knowing the math, the curriculum, and the learner." This will support our Math Achievement Action Plan and our strategic priority in Mathematics.

### **Elementary Faith Day and Progress Reports: October PD Day**

Elementary teachers gathered together on Thursday, October 10th to celebrate their Faith Day, reflecting on this year's theme: *On Fire with the Spirit: Illuminating Our Mission*.

The morning, led by each school principal, offered time for prayer, reflection, and shared learning. The day began with a liturgy and blessing of hands, a powerful reminder of the sacred work carried out each day in classrooms, hallways, and offices. Staff also reflected on how their individual roles connect to their school Pastoral Plans, sharing insights and celebrating the many ways Catholic education comes to life in our communities.

The session concluded with a personal commitment to live out the Works of Mercy—a simple yet meaningful way to keep the flame of Faith Day burning in the months ahead.

In the afternoon, teachers had the opportunity to work on progress reports, an important part of the ongoing partnership between teachers and parents. These reports help ensure that families and educators remain united in supporting each child's growth and success. Progress Reports will be sent home October 30th.

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

The NTIP Learning Coordinator (Christine Dale) along with other Learning Coordinators, met with new teachers on October 20 and 22. This comprehensive NTIP Orientation brought together 19 recent teacher hires (both permanent and LTOs) for a full day focused on foundational expectations and professional learning, all grounded in Catholic faith. The program is designed to build confidence and efficacy, improve instructional practice, and instill a commitment to continuous learning. Session topics included Religion and Faith Development, exploring the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs) and the Board's spiritual theme, "On Fire with the Spirit: Awaken, Illuminate, Rejoice." Other key topics included a philosophy of inclusion in Special Education (promoting Universal Design for Learning (UDI) and Differentiated Instruction (DI), effective Classroom Management broken down into the "3 C's" (Connection, Consistency, and Compassion), and Assessment, Evaluation, & Reporting, framed as a redemptive process. The day also provided an introduction to Blended Learning, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Indigenous Education. Crucially, new teachers were assured of continued support throughout the year, including time for mentorship and available subsidies for additional qualification courses.

---

## ***SPECIAL EDUCATION***

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

Special Education leaders from across the region participated in a conference focused on innovation, reconciliation, and research-informed leadership in curriculum and special education. The day began with a session on AI That Matters (Future Design School), where participants explored practical ways to integrate artificial intelligence responsibly to strengthen workflows, and apply tools across both curriculum and special education. This was followed by a thought-provoking session with Dr. Niigaan James Sinclair (Professor, Indigenous Studies, University of Manitoba and Columnist with The Winnipeg Free Press), who emphasized that reconciliation is not just a moral imperative but an essential skill for students, reflecting on the ten years since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action. Participants then had the opportunity to network and share successful practices, resources, and strategies with colleagues from across the region. During day two, Nidhi Sachdeva (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education) led a session on the science of learning, highlighting evidence-based strategies to support effective teaching and leadership. The day concluded with a collaborative discussion on current regional issues in special education, where boards shared challenges, successes, and potential solutions. Overall, the conference provided participants with actionable strategies, meaningful collaboration, and strengthened leadership skills to support students and staff across the system.

### **Educational Assistants Professional Development Day**

On October 10, Educational Assistants across the Board engaged in a day of professional learning focused on innovation, faith, and student well-being. Elementary Educational Assistants participated in their school-based Faith Day activities in the morning, while Secondary Educational Assistants gathered at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School and joined secondary teaching staff in exploring the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education. In the afternoon, all Educational Assistants came together virtually for a workshop with Dr. Jennifer

McTaggart titled *“Emotion Coaching: Practical Tools for Supporting Student Well-Being.”* The session provided practical strategies to help staff recognize emotional cues, validate student experiences, and use emotion coaching techniques to promote regulation, resilience, and a positive school climate. The day offered meaningful professional learning aligned with the Board’s commitment to faith, inclusion, and the well-being of all students.

### **Training Opportunities**

During October, staff participated in targeted training to strengthen student support and assessment practices. Empower Reading Intervention Teachers completed refresher training with Empower trainers on October 24, reinforcing strategies to support literacy development. On October 27, Elementary Special Education Resource Teachers received training on a new online platform for administering the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT) to students in Grades 4 and 7, enhancing assessment efficiency and data collection.

---

## **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

### **Mathematics**

The Math Team, led by Math Learning Coordinator Christine Dale and supported by Math Facilitators Hailey Cook and Brittany Wilson, continued to advance the implementation of both the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board Strategic Plan and the Math Achievement Action Plan (MAAP) throughout October. The Board’s Math Lead (Sean McDade) and Math Learning Coordinator participated in provincial meetings with all math leads and the Ministry of Education Math Team on September 11 and October 16. In addition, the Math Facilitators and Math Learning Coordinator joined other provincial teams in the Ministry’s content series on High-Impact Instructional Practices. These sessions provide valuable insight and direction to strengthen math teaching and learning across our system.

As outlined in both our strategic plan and MAAP, school-based support continues to include co-planning opportunities, classroom-level math coaching, small group assessment and instruction, assistance with Scope & Sequence lessons and core resources, and the implementation of the Do the Math intervention tool in select schools. The Math Team also supports teachers in adapting lesson planning in response to data gathered from multiple, frequent assessment opportunities (e.g., Early Numeracy Screen, common assessments, Knowledgehook, reasoning continua, and teacher observations). Working alongside educators, we strive to ensure that every student has equitable access to the curriculum and opportunities to build conceptual understanding through Universal Design for Learning and the Concrete–Representational–Abstract (CRA) approach.

### **Literacy**

The month of October centered on strategically building educator capacity and launching our early reading literacy assessment cycle. We started the month by delivering strategic one-to-one coaching sessions with classroom teachers. This targeted approach is designed to ensure fidelity in implementing high-impact reading and writing practices. These critical conversations covered the effective implementation of a Structured Literacy Block, methods for collecting and analyzing data, and collaborative planning for responsive whole-group instruction and focused small-group interventions based on current student needs.

Following this coaching phase, the system team launched its annual Beginning-of-Year (BOY) Early Reading Screening cycle, targeting all students in Senior Kindergarten (SK), Grade 1, and Grade 2 to establish baseline performance data in foundational skills. We utilize Acadience, our established universal screener, which assesses multiple critical reading subskills, including

Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), First Sound Fluency (FSF), Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), and Oral Reading Fluency (ORF). The classroom teacher conducts the assessment one-to-one, with our System Literacy Team providing essential on-site support throughout the process. This year also marks a significant operational improvement as we transition to the digital platform, Acadience Learning Online (ALO), for data management. This move ensures that all screening data is automatically collated, analyzed, and synthesized for immediate access, which streamlines the process, eliminates manual data entry, and guarantees that educators receive real-time, actionable insights to inform their instructional planning and intervention design immediately following the assessment window.

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

Our system French support teacher Lauren Quinlan has been out in schools supporting our second language teachers. She has touched base with our Core French teachers and is placing particular emphasis on our new FSL educators. On top of the coaching, Lauren has facilitated the implementation of our digital tool SMASH. This is a digital platform designed to support K-12 students and educators by offering a large library of educational resources, interactive lessons, and assessment tools. It acts as a virtual learning environment used to deliver and manage curriculum content, facilitate student-teacher interactions, and track academic progress digitally. This tool helps ensure consistency and accessibility of high-quality French educational materials across the district.

### **Indigenous Education**

It has been an exciting month as we welcomed our fulltime Indigenous Education Lead Teacher to the team: Heather George. Working alongside others on the leadership and curriculum team of the Board, and in particular, working in partnership with the Indigenous Graduation Coach, we have and will continue to benefit from this investment in collaboration, idea-generation and enthusiasm, as our students and staff engage in ongoing learning. The Indigenous Education team undertook significant professional development and networking activities this month. Indigenous Education Teacher Lead Heather George and Indigenous Graduation Coach Joshua Pagan attended the Indigenous Leads Gathering, where they participated in a full day of valuable on-the-land learning and facilitated networking with other Indigenous education leads from across the province. Additionally, Indigenous Lead Heather George also participated in the "When Faith Meets Pedagogy" conference. Her focus there was on key workshops and sessions related to the intersection of Catholic faith and Indigenous education, including "Indigenous Influencers," "Empowering Faith in Grade 9: Introducing the New Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ Program," and "Faith, Equity, & Indigenous Education: Pathways for Accompaniment."

---

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

### **Secondary PD Day: Artificial Intelligence, Privacy & Cybersecurity**

On Friday October 10, secondary teachers, educational assistants, chaplains, and administrators gathered at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School to continue our discussions about Artificial Intelligence and its impacts in education. They discussed the opportunities that AI can bring, and its implications on online privacy, cybersecurity, and more. They explored board-approved tools, and identified where the curriculum requires/supports knowledge of AI.

### **Chrome Tablets for Early Literacy Screening**

Each school in the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board is now equipped with two Lenovo Chrome Tablets. These Chrome Tablets, which offer a similar form factor to an iPad and are

well-suited for our Google environment, have a specific and critical function: to facilitate early literacy screening using the Acadience digital platform. The primary goal is to provide a dedicated, reliable tool that streamlines the administration of these essential assessments, ensuring efficient data capture and accurate monitoring of our youngest students' foundational literacy skills. This investment directly supports targeted instruction and early intervention strategies.

---

## **EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS**

### **Women in Skilled Trades (WIST) – Welding & Manufacturing Experience**

On October 22 and 23 students from both secondary schools participated in the WIST Welding and Manufacturing Experience, hosted by the Technical Training Group (TTG). The morning consisted of hands-on welding training with industry mentors. The afternoon included tours of local Huron and Perth County manufacturing facilities. This experience supports women in skilled trades, provides mentorship, and connects students to potential apprenticeship and employment pathways.

### **Dual Credit Electrical Program – Conestoga College**

During September and October 2025, students from both secondary schools enrolled in this program to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. The focus was theoretical and practical electrical training aligned with OYAP Level 1 Apprenticeship preparation. Six students from SACSS and 13 students from SMCSS attended.

Other upcoming dual credit programs:

- Conestoga College – Plumbing: Nov. 4–Dec. 16, hosted at St. Michael (Tuesdays)
- Conestoga College – Gaming: Nov. 3–Dec. 15, hosted at St. Michael (Tuesdays)
- Additional Fanshawe dual credit courses pending (Arts, Health, and Trades pathways)

### **Dual Credit Programming with College Partners**

#### **Fanshawe College – Methods & Media in Drawing (Oct.–Nov.)**

Two students are attending the REACH Centre in Clinton to enhance visual arts and design skills.

#### **(Upcoming) Fanshawe College – Introduction to Paramedicine (Nov. 17–Jan.12)**

This new course combines theory with hands-on emergency simulation. There is collaboration with local paramedics, police, and firefighters. Nine students are exploring careers in emergency services.

**(Upcoming) Conestoga College – Applied Plumbing Techniques (Nov. 4–Dec.)** This is a hands-on introduction to residential and commercial plumbing systems involving eight students from Construction and Agriculture SHSMs. Two students are returning to upgrade skills and one student is pursuing OYAP Level 1 Plumbing.

#### **Lambton College – Online Dual Credit Courses,**

On October 9, six students enrolled in courses to earn high school and college credits:

- Bakeshop
- Criminology

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

### **Stratford Festival Trip**

On October 1, 2025, forty-four students from St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School (SHSM participants and two junior drama classes) attended a full-day arts experience. Activities included: SHSM Dance Workshop Certification, Q&A session with professional actors and a Performance of Annie. Stratford Festival subsidized bus costs, supporting student access to arts and culture.

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

On October 6 - 9, forty-five students across all SHSM sectors from SACSS attended two certifications. This training is mandatory for SHSM completion and highly valued by co-op employers.

### **SHSM Information Sessions Grade 11 Students at SACSS**

Throughout the month of October the following information sessions were promoted. The purpose is to build awareness of experiential learning opportunities, certifications, and post-secondary and career pathways.

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

### **GPS Training – Environment & Agriculture SHSM**

On October 23, 13 SMCSS students completed GPS and orienteering certification at St. Michael and TJ Dolan Park. They focused on real-world mapping and navigation skills essential for modern agricultural and environmental work.

### **SHSM Sector Partner Experience (SPE) – Teacher Training**

October 18, the SHSM Counsellor from St. Michael Catholic school attended a Ministry-led SPE training session in London. Training included: updated SPE expectations, best practices for planning and delivering high-impact experiences and access to new resources for programming. This ensures SPE events meet Ministry standards and provide meaningful engagement for students.

### **Grade 8 Arts & Culture SHSM Day**

October 27 & 29, elementary students from Perth County will experience Arts & Culture SHSM programs at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School.

### **St Michael CSS Aesthetics Program Outreach:**

- **Wee Warriors Program** - Open to students aged 8–13 interested in Hairstyling and Aesthetics. This is a four-week October program hosted at St Michael CSS that includes nail art, facials, hairstyling and special fx makeup. There are up to 20 participants each fall.
- **Pirates & Royalty Day** - Grade 1 students engaged with senior hairstyling students from SMCSS, transforming into pirates, princesses, and superheroes. There were 17 participants who attended this annual event.
- **CWL – Loving Hands Event** - October 29, members from Perth County Catholic Women’s League councils will attend a morning of faith, service, and self-care at SMCSS. Hairstyling students will provide manicures, facilitated prayer and fellowship, and hosted a shared meal.

---

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

### **Igniting Well-Being Through Professional Learning**

On October 10, the Mental Health and Wellness Team hosted a dynamic professional development session focused on student well-being and inclusive education. Led by Dr. Jennifer McTaggart, Clinical Psychologist and Director at McMaster Children’s Hospital, the seminar focused on Emotion Coaching—a practical, compassionate approach to supporting students through emotional challenges.

Staff learned to:

- Recognize emotional cues
- Respond with empathy and validation
- Apply strategies that build regulation and resilience

This session reflects the board’s deep commitment to mental health and inclusive practices.

### **Attendance and Student Engagement:**

In October we proudly recognized Attendance Awareness Month under the theme *“Here Today, Ready for Tomorrow,”* reflecting our shared commitment to student success and well-being. This work was deeply aligned with our board’s overarching vision, *“On Fire with the Spirit,”* as we continue to foster environments where every student feels supported and engaged.

Throughout the month, we advanced our Attendance Action Plan through a communication campaign, sharing resources and strategies for promoting regular attendance via our Monday Memos and social media initiative. In collaboration with Thought Exchange, we deployed surveys to caregivers, students, staff, and community partners, gathering meaningful insights to inform future planning.

Additionally, we addressed a key goal of the Attendance Action Plan: enhancing role clarity across schools. Targeted training was delivered to Special Education Resource Teachers, equipping them with clear guidelines on the referral processes, when and how to initiate them, ensuring consistent and effective support for students.

These efforts reflect our strategic commitment to continue to develop our Multi-Tiered System of Support, strengthening universal, targeted, and intensive interventions through improved communication, collaboration, and capacity-building across our school communities.

**World Mental Health Day:**

On October 10, the Mental Health and Wellness Team recognized World Mental Health Day, sparking a flame of awareness and empowerment. To fuel participation, the team developed a World Mental Health Day Toolkit, packed with resources to illuminate the path toward emotional resilience. A contribution from the Huron-Perth Public Health Unit added even more light, offering grade-specific lesson plans, videos, social media content, newsletters, and more; all designed to explore the impact of technology on mental health.

The Mental Health and Wellness team helped distribute these resources, ensuring every classroom had the tools to kindle thoughtful dialogue and reflection. Through these efforts, students were empowered to be safe, smart, and mentally strong, both online and offline, as they journey towards digital and emotional wellbeing. Together, we are igniting and illuminating a culture of care, compassion, and courage. The spirit is alive. The light is spreading. And our school communities are glowing with purpose.

---

***MAINTENANCE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY***

The Joint Health and Safety Committee met on October 15. Topics discussed included the following:

- Monthly inspections
- Annual review of Board Policies
  - Health and Safety P 3.1.1.
  - Workplace Harassment P 3.4.12.
  - Violence in the Workplace P 3.4.16.
- Annual workplace risk assessments
- Annual Drinking Water Reports

**RECOMMENDATION**

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