



# TRUSTEES' REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

## APRIL 2025

### ON FIRE WITH THE SPIRIT

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## Introduction

The theme of "On Fire With The Spirit: Awaken! Illuminate! Rejoice!" continues to guide the Board's initiatives, emphasizing faith, hope, love, and joy, particularly during the Easter season. April was marked by a vibrant array of activities designed to support student learning, faith formation, and overall well-being, aligning with the Board's Strategic Plan.

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## Catholic Education & Student Faith Formation

April was deeply rooted in Catholic faith and tradition, with a strong emphasis on celebrating Easter and engaging students in spiritual growth. Many schools participated in Lenten activities leading up to Holy Week and the Easter Triduum. These included fundraising for the Share Lent Campaign, supporting projects like Project Precious and Chalice, organizing food drives for St. Vincent de Paul and local food banks, and holding prayers for peace. Prayer services and Masses were conducted across the district to celebrate the resurrection of the Lord. Priests from the Deanery also provided opportunities for students and staff to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in schools.

The Development and Peace Schools (D&P Schools) program saw widespread participation in the Major Mustard challenge during Lent, contributing to the Share Lent Campaign theme of "Turn Debt into Hope," focusing on debt justice and prioritizing people and planet over profit.

A Catholic Student Leadership Retreat at Camp Kintail brought together nearly 40 students from St. Anne's and St. Michael's Catholic Secondary Schools. Themed "Worthy," the retreat emphasized human dignity and the preferential option for the poor. Highlights included a session led by Fr. Tom Donohue on his work with L'Arche, an activity addressing food insecurity, and a faith talk and Eucharistic Adoration with Fr. Tony Laforet. Students also participated in a "Stewards of Creation" walk and a closing Mass. The retreat fostered spiritual growth and leadership skills, inspiring students to serve their communities.

Junior Bordenball tournaments for Grades 5 and 6 were successfully held at St. Michael's and St. Anne's, promoting student athleticism and teamwork. These events engaged numerous students and required significant coordination from coaches and organizers.

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## Student Achievement and Digital Tools

A grant allowed for the integration of French as a Second Language (FSL) Experiential Resources, connecting French language learning with STEM opportunities. The Leaders Learning Council (LLC) focused on inclusive practices, special education programming, Indigenous culinary arts, and faith-based initiatives, including Catholic Education Week and the "Stop, Pause, Pray" initiative.

The Math Team focused on enhancing math instruction, particularly for Grades 3 and 6, with an emphasis on problem-solving and preparation for EQAO assessments. The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) was administered on April 9, following preparation sessions and practice tests. A Secondary Math Learning Session allowed teachers to discuss assessment and curriculum spiraling.

Multilingual Language Learners (MLL) received ongoing support, with a focus on inclusivity and confidence-building. Networking with outside agencies like Immigration Partnership of Huron and YMCA Immigration Services began. Professional development for French as a Second Language teachers included DELF exam preparation and Structured Literacy in the French Classroom.

The Literacy team conducted a system-wide coaching block, provided in-class support for EQAO preparation, and initiated primary literacy interventions for Grade 1 students. Learning Coordinators facilitated discussions about Middle of Year (MOY) screening results to refine Data Action Plans.

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## **Mental Health and Well-being**

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) presentations were delivered in elementary schools. Staff mental health literacy was enhanced through a book study on trauma-informed practices. School-Based Social Workers (SBSW) received professional development on topics such as suicide risk assessment, mental health interventions for students with special needs, and group facilitation.

The Mental Health and Wellness Team launched a Caregiver Engagement Series on PPM 128, focusing on the impact of trauma, stress, and coping mechanisms like social media and vaping. A community partnership with the Maitland Valley Family Health Team led to the launch of the Team UNBREAKABLE program, promoting mental and physical well-being through running-based activities.

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## **Special Education and Inclusive Practices**

The Coaching to Inclusion Conference, themed “All Means All: Reigniting the Commitment to Inclusion Education,” was a significant event, with the Huron-Perth Board leading the agenda. The conference featured guest speakers and presentations from St. Boniface Bulldogs staff and students. St. Ambrose staff members Angela Van Geel and Marianne Lupton were recognized with the Champion of Inclusion Award for their work advancing inclusion. World Autism Awareness Day was observed on April 2, with schools using resources to “Celebrate The Spectrum.”

The Infinite Horizons program for gifted students in Grades 4-8 began, featuring sessions on science, mindfulness, cooking, and arts. Transition Fairs, in partnership with Avon Maitland District School Board, provided information to students with developmental disabilities and their families about transitioning to adult life.

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## **Experiential Learning and OYAP**

Certification and safety training, including First Aid/CPR, were provided to SHSM students. Grade 10 students explored course selection options aligned with various SHSM programs. Specialized learning and field trips included visits to manufacturing facilities, tech and arts days for younger students, a kinesiology trip to the University of Waterloo, an Indigenous cooking event with Chef David Wolfman, and various industry certifications.

The Dual Credit Program continued, with students beginning an Aesthetics course through Fanshawe College. The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) saw students begin Level 1 apprenticeship training at colleges, and information sessions were held for parents and students. Skilled Trades Exploration Events were conducted for Grades 7 and 8, and Board leads attended the OYAP SWCOCA Regional Meeting. Staff also attended the OCEA Spring Conference and the PHBA Municipal Breakfast.

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## International Education Program

International students made notable progress in English language development and cultural adaptation, supported by bi-weekly meetings with the Multi-Language Learner teacher, Katherine Miller. Principal Grace attended recruitment events in Tokyo and Osaka, Japan, showcasing the Board to Japanese agents and families. These events generated significant interest for student enrollment in 2025 and 2026, and fostered relationships with schools in Japan interested in sending Grade 10 students to the district. A third student from Spain committed to attending the Board in September 2025, highlighting the success of recent international recruitment efforts.

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## Leadership & Professional Development

The Board focused heavily on leadership development and professional learning throughout April. Secondary NTIP teachers met for ongoing training on topics such as Board mission, student success, course planning, assessment, classroom management, technology integration, differentiation, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Principals and Vice-Principals received individual training on the EQAO testing platform, Vretta.

Provincial Math Leads from the Ministry of Education held strategic planning sessions, attended by the Board's Superintendent of Curriculum and Math Learning Coordinator, focusing on Math Achievement Action Plans. An Artificial Intelligence (AI) Network learning day brought together leaders from several school boards and various departments within the Board to discuss best practices and implementation plans for AI in the coming school year.

Senior executive team members attended professional development at King's Catholic University, focusing on post-secondary opportunities in Catholic education, special education, early reading screening, and staffing challenges.

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## Facilities Service and Health & Safety

The Joint Health and Safety Committee met to discuss topics such as Naloxone, eBase reporting, ORT training, Bill 190 updates, and annual inspections. Annual Health and Safety Week was observed from April 28 to May 2. Maintenance and operations focused on seasonal priorities like yard clean-up and preventive maintenance. Capital planning included efforts on new capital projects, Ministry reporting, and the proposed addition and childcare center at St. Mary's (Listowel).

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*To review the full version of the latest Board Meeting agenda and minutes check out our [Board Agendas and Minutes](#) webpage on our Board website. Any questions, please contact the Director's Office by emailing [directorsoffice@huronperthcatholic.ca](mailto:directorsoffice@huronperthcatholic.ca).*