

Media Release

Tuesday, September 15, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HPCDSB and AMDSB Host Annual SSAC Symposium to Strengthen Collaborative Supports for Children, Youth and Families

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board (HPCDSB), in partnership with the Avon Maitland District School Board (AMDSB), recently welcomed school-based service providers and community agency partners to the annual School Service Advisory Committee (SSAC) Symposium. The event brought together professionals providing services within schools to strengthen partnerships, share expertise, and deepen their understanding of key community frameworks, including the Huron Perth Mental Health & Suicide Crisis Response Protocol and the Huron Perth Child & Youth Sexual Violence Support Guide (Erin's Law). Through interactive learning and discussion, participants explored tiered approaches to student mental health and well-being and identified opportunities to enhance coordinated supports across Huron-Perth.

The event was privileged to feature Dr. Jennifer McTaggart, Child Psychologist and a leading expert in child and youth mental health, who facilitated learning focused on supporting children and youth with high-acuity and complex needs. Drawing on her extensive experience across hospital, community, and educational settings, Dr. McTaggart challenged participants to examine barriers to care and highlighted the importance of functioning as an integrated system of support. Through collaborative dialogue, attendees explored how strong partnerships among schools, families, healthcare providers, and community agencies can improve service coordination and outcomes for children, youth, and families.

Building on the day's professional learning, HPCDSB and AMDSB were pleased to once again offer a community caregiver workshop, Parenting With Confidence, facilitated by Dr. McTaggart. The evening session provided caregivers with practical, evidence-informed strategies to better understand their child's evolving emotional needs, strengthen family relationships, and support healthy development.

Together, the symposium and caregiver workshop reflected a shared commitment among school boards and community partners to ensure that both professionals and caregivers have access to the knowledge, relationships, and tools needed to support children and youth. As a new school year begins, the events also highlight the hope, connection, and shared sense of purpose that emerge when communities come together in support of student well-being.

For media inquiries and event details, please contact:

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Left to Right:

Kaitie Westbrook, Mental Health, Lead Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board, Dr. Jen McTaggart, Heather Hirdes, Mental Health Lead, Avon Maitland District School Board



Participants of the SSAC Symposium, Stratford Intermediate School, Stratford, ON