



REPORT TO THE HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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BOARD HIGHLIGHTS 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, the OYAP Project Lead, and Managers of activities that take place under their leadership.

DEVELOPMENTS

The spiritual theme anchoring our new Strategic Plan is “On Fire With The Spirit: Awaken! Illuminate! Rejoice!” Inspired by the Holy Spirit and enlivened by the Pentecost story, we continue going forward into a new year 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 school year. February marks the beginning of a new school year and is marked by enthusiasm and commitment on the part of our students, staff, educators and families. We are delighted to highlight some of the activities and opportunities that took place this month across our district.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Daily Reflections for Elementary Schools

Principals and educators will receive monthly resources that have been created by the Religion and Family Life Learning Coordinator to support daily prayer, scripture reflection, connections to the saints, highlighting the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, Catholic Social Teachers and Virtues. These can be used as part of the morning announcements, in the classrooms and include a calendar that can be shared with parents and guardians that provides prompts for at home conversations. We hope this resource will be widely used by all and will continue to support our Strategic Goals of ongoing Catechesis and Faith Formation.

Flat Luce Pilgrimage Across the Huron-Perth Catholic DSB for the Jubilee Year

This project aims to unite students and staff across the Huron-Perth Catholic DSB in a shared faith experience during the Jubilee Year by creating a travelling Flat Luce figure that visits elementary and secondary schools. It aims to deepen students’ understanding of Catholic traditions, connect them to sacred spaces, and encourage creativity, collaboration, and community-building.

Luce (pronounced lù-ce) is the official mascot of the Jubilee Year created by the Vatican. In Italian, Luce means “light”. She is made in the Anime style. Flat Luce, inspired by Flat Stanley,

will symbolize the light of Christ. As part of the Jubilee Year celebration, Flat Luce will make a "pilgrimage" to each school and associated parish within the Huron-Perth Catholic DSB. This initiative will:

1. Foster faith formation and community engagement.
2. Highlight sacred spaces within schools and parishes.
3. Encourage student participation through creative activities.

This project was created by the Religion and Family Life Learning Coordinator. Flat Luce has started her pilgrimage this month and we look forward to learning about her journey throughout our system.



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. A collection of resources was provided by the Learning Coordinator responsible for Equity which included morning prayers and announcements highlighting Black Catholics and Canadians, over 60 book titles in French and English with links to lesson plans and activities, slide decks with lessons, links to online resources such as Edwin, My Place in This World, ON-Core, and more! 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 that teachers can use for engaging conversations and deeper learning 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.

LEADERSHIP

Leaders' Learning Council

On Tuesday, February 11, the Director of Education, two Superintendents of Education, principals, vice-principals, and learning coordinators gathered in person for an LLC session. The day of learning began with a presentation on the critical role of universal supports in developing executive function skills in students, led by the Special Education Learning Coordinator and the Behaviour Consultant and Lead Trainer. Next, the Literacy and Math Coordinators guided a session on EQAO data trends and system-wide supports for this year's Grade 3 and 6 students, offering insights into strategies for student success. The day concluded with a discussion led by the Superintendents of Education, emphasizing the value of principal walkthroughs as a key practice for enhancing student learning and instructional effectiveness. This learning will continue when we gather on Tuesday, February 25th with a continued focus on our strategic priorities.

Grade 3 and 6 EQAO Professional Learning Sessions

Starting in February, the Literacy and Math Coordinators began hosting small-group sessions for Grade 3 and 6 teachers. As part of our commitment to strengthening student assessment practices, this professional development initiative was designed to equip educators with the knowledge and strategies needed to prepare students effectively for the EQAO assessments. These sessions provided teachers with a deep understanding of the EQAO assessment framework, best practices for student preparation, and techniques to create a supportive testing

environment. Educators also explored test administration protocols, instructional strategies aligned with the Ontario Curriculum and EQAO expectations, and methods for analyzing assessment data to guide future instruction.

International Education

The start of Semester 2 meant the arrival of five students from Brazil on February 1 at Pearson International Airport after a ten hour flight from Sao Paulo, Brazil. The students were welcomed by staff from the Homestay Company, Muskoka Languages International (MLI) and transported on a Stratford Aiporter van to their host families in Stratford, Wingham and Seaforth. Three students are attending St. Michael CSS and two are attending St. Anne's CSS. All five students require a timetable that includes math, english, religion or a social science course along with a senior level science course. All five students will be attempting to earn credits that will be transferable to Brazilian Education requirements when they leave at the end of June 2025. Secondary Learning Coordinator Paul D'Hondt met the students at St. Michael CSS on Monday, February 3 and Principal Chris Grace did the same at St. Anne's CSS. Students were provided school uniforms, introduced to staff, and provided with a guided tour of the school prior to starting their semester with us. All five students were very excited to be here but were a little cold as this was their first experience with snow.

Principal Grace will be attending major recruiting events at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo and Osaka, Japan in March. The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board will be showcased to various agents from across Asia, including Japan and South Korea as well as many students and their families as they start planning for the child's visit to Canada for September 2025 or September 2026. The importance of this recruiting trip is extremely significant as close to 2,200 students from Japan come to Canada every year for a semester or multi-semester visit. Japan is the fourth leading source of students to Canada. South Korea, Germany and China round out the top three sources of students to Canadian High Schools yearly.

Two new International student recruitment agencies from Germany and Spain have signed non-exclusive contracts with the Board in the last month. As a result, there are now twenty four agencies that are signed that allow these agencies from across Europe, Asia, Australia, the United States of America and South America to recruit students for Huron-Perth Catholic DSB.

Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers Association (OCSOA) Retreat

The Director of Education and Superintendents attended the annual OCSOA Retreat on February 5-7. The theme was "Braving the Thin Places: Making Space for Grace" and was led by author and facilitator Julianne Stanz. The retreat included prayer, liturgies, Mass, music, reflection, and various opportunities for personal and community faith formation. This faith formation experience for senior leaders in Catholic school boards is an example of our strategic priority of faith formation in action. We prioritize Catholic leadership and the incredible importance of nurturing the faith formation of our leaders at all levels.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Planning For A Future Beyond High School

Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board and Avon Maitland District School Board have partnered to host three transition fair events for parents and caregivers of students with disabilities as they prepare for a life beyond secondary school. The first was a virtual panel discussion with our partners at Facile Perth on February 26 from 6:00pm-7:30pm. Parents and Guardians of students in grades 7-12+ were invited to this event. The topics included: Key

Changes at Age 18, Proactive Ways to Plan Ahead, Honouring Your Child's Voice, Strengths and Passion, and Available Resources and Support. Details were also shared about upcoming in-person transition fairs on April 12 at St. Michael Secondary School in Stratford, and May 3 at Central Huron Secondary School in Clinton.

Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

On February 10, our monthly SEAC meeting took place virtually. System Special Education Team Members shared two information items. The first session was about our Early Years Transition to School process and procedure. During the month of February we began to receive information from the Early Years Resource Consultants in Huron and Perth counties about the junior kindergarten students who we will be welcoming to our schools in September. The second presentation focused on the work of our Skills Development Facilitator as it relates to neuro-diversity training, peer mediated supports, and student voice. Some programs that were celebrated were PEER Pals, Schools on TRACKS, and Stay, Play, and Talk.

DIGITAL TOOLS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

Coding, Robotics and Experiential Learning

On February 19, students in Grades 7 and 8 across the district participated in the second annual HPCDSB District Skills Competition. After a successful inaugural event last year, this competition continues to grow, providing students with hands-on, experiential learning opportunities that align with career pathways in skilled trades and technology. For months, students have been preparing with the support of their teachers, learning coordinators, program team members, and parent/community volunteers. This year, approximately 200 students competed across four competition categories: Robotics, Mechanical Engineering, Green Energy, and Construction.

In each category, students applied their learning using the digital tools available in their classrooms. They have engaged with coding software, 3D imaging programs, and digital research tools to enhance their understanding and technical skills in their respective fields. The winners of the competition will go on to represent HPCDSB at the Skills Ontario provincial competition in May, showcasing their talents on a larger stage. We are proud of the dedication and enthusiasm our students bring to this event and look forward to celebrating their achievements. We thank all educators, staff, and community partners who make this opportunity possible for our students.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mathematics

During the month of February, the Math Team, consisting of three Math Facilitators and one Math Learning Coordinator, continued to support the teaching and learning of mathematics in all of our elementary schools. The focus for the next few months will be to provide grade 3 and 6 students with ample experience responding to multiple choice Math questions. Math Facilitators will work alongside teachers in grades 3 and 6 classes to prepare students for EQAO testing by using the [High Impact Instructional Practice](#) of "Teaching About Problem Solving" using recently released EQAO math questions. Problem-solving is a crucial skill that empowers students to think critically, persevere through challenges, and develop independent reasoning. These released EQAO questions provide an opportunity to review curriculum and teach students how to solve math problems. Teaching students about the problem-solving process helps make their thinking more intentional and explicit. It encourages them to engage in "self-talk," a valuable strategy they can use when approaching new challenges. When we teach problem-solving, we

guide students through the importance of productive struggle, learning from mistakes, and developing adaptive reasoning. Effective instruction in this area invites students to reflect on their thought processes, making unconscious strategies more visible and accessible. Math Facilitators model this approach, making their own thinking explicit to students and teachers, providing opportunities for discussion as students develop strong mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills.

Literacy: Early Reading Screening

Throughout the month of February, the System Literacy Team has been engaged in the Mid-Year Acadience Screening. All students in SK-2 have been assessed on key early literacy skills, including phonemic awareness, phonics, word reading, fluency, and comprehension. Classroom teachers were provided with release time and literacy lessons to facilitate the completion of the screening alongside a literacy resource teacher. The data collected is currently being compiled, and school team meetings are being scheduled to allow administrators, teachers, and system team members to analyze the results. These meetings will focus on developing targeted action plans for both classrooms and individual students based on the findings.

Reading Intervention

St. Ambrose, St. Aloysius, Sacred Heart, and St. Mary's Goderich are the four elementary schools currently receiving the targeted Early Reading Intervention. This Tier 2 intervention targets some students in SK-2 who have scored significantly below benchmark. These students receive targeted support from a Literacy Resource Teacher (LRT) twice a week, either in small groups or one-on-one sessions. LRTs are using the data from the beginning of the year screening data and additional diagnostic information to provide very targeted instruction. The goal of this intervention is to provide early, focused instruction to address reading challenges and prevent further gaps in literacy development.

Secondary Teacher Collaboration

We've had several groups of secondary teachers meet this month to continue planning program development and student achievement. Our technology teachers have met to explore the new grade 9 and 10 curriculum and the new engineering design process embedded there. Also we have had math teachers and social science teachers collaborating on program development to ensure consistency and explore best practices.

Secondary eLearning

As we wrapped up our 5 eLearning offerings from semester 1 in January, we immediately jumped into semester 2. This semester, we're offering 8 eLearning courses across our district: Grade 11 Marketing, Grade 12 Business Leadership, Grade 11 Travel and Tourism, Grade 12 World Issues, Grade 12 English (with multiple pathways), Grade 12 Religious Studies, and Grade 11 Anthropology, Sociology, and Psychology. Between our two schools, we have 206 students enrolled in one of our courses or a course offered by another Catholic school board in our sharing consortium. Additionally, we're welcoming 66 students from other Catholic boards into our courses this semester. These courses are created through Catholic Virtual Ontario, incorporating both curriculum content and Catholic values ensuring our students have access to quality materials when meeting this graduation requirement (2 eLearning credits).

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS IN SECONDARY

Certification & Safety Training

- **First Aid/CPR Training**
Over 100 Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) students from both St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School (SACSS) and St. Michael Catholic Secondary School (SMCSS) participated in First Aid/CPR certification training in early February. This certification is required for students to earn the SHSM designation on their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).
- **Working at Heights Training**
SHSM students from the Construction, Agriculture, and Arts & Culture pathways attended Working at Heights training over three days in February. This certification is recognized by employers, enhances student résumés, and is mandatory for SHSM Construction students.
- **Health and Safety Training**
All Cooperative Education students at SMCSS attended a mandatory Health and Safety training session on February 18. This training is essential for both the Co-op and SHSM programs.

Specialized Learning & Field Trips

- **Non-Profit Leadership Trip**
SHSM students attended a Non-Profit Leadership course at King's University, titled *Reaping Our Right*, which focused on the challenges faced by small-scale farmers in the Global South. Students also received a tour of the university campus.
- **Arts & Culture Field Trip**
Students visited Conestoga College to explore programs in Media, Coding, and Information & Communication Technology (ICT). They participated in four hands-on workshops and toured the college campus.
- **Jill of All Trades Event - Fanshawe College**
On February 20, a group of SACSS students attended the *Jill of All Trades* event at Fanshawe College, where they explored careers in Carpentry, Plumbing, and Aviation.
- **Hair Demonstrations with Textured Hair**
On February 24, hairstyling students from SACSS and SMCSS welcomed a barber specializing in textured hair, particularly fades. Students gained valuable skills through this hands-on demonstration.

Dual Credit Programs

- **Dual Credit Aesthetics Program - Fanshawe College**
Students began registration for the Dual Credit Aesthetics program, which will commence after March Break.
- **Conestoga College Dual Credit Courses**
 - SMCSS students started classes at Conestoga College on February 21.
 - St. Anne students also began their courses on February 21, with one student enrolled in the **Cabinet Making Dual Credit course** and another in the **Security Guard Licensing course**.
- **Lambton College Dual Credit Courses**
Students enrolled in Lambton College's Dual Credit courses, including:
 - Intro to HVAC
 - Plumbing Techniques

- Intro to Residential Electrical
- Arboriculture and Chainsaw Practices
- Bakeshop

These courses started on February 20 and will allow students to earn both high school and college credits upon completion.

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

- **OYAP Placements**
Students are preparing for apprenticeships in Electrical, HVAC, Plumbing, and Transportation fields for the second semester.
- **OYAP Level 1 Meeting**
On February 11, Grade 11 students interested in Skilled Trades Co-op placements for the 2025-2026 school year attended an OYAP information session. The meeting provided details on OYAP participation and Level 1 programs offered by **Lambton, Conestoga, Fanshawe, and the Technical Training Group (TTG)**.
- **OYAP/Dual Credit Regional Meetings**
 - **RPT 10 Regional Meeting:** Monday, February 4
 - **RPT 7 Regional Meeting:** Tuesday, February 11
 - **OYAP Western Regional Meeting:** Friday, February 28
- **Grade 10 & 11 Presentations**
Course selection presentations took place during the second week of February, focusing on SHSM and Dual Credit opportunities for students at SACSS and SMCSS.

Elementary School Engagement

- **St. Anne's Grade 8 Tech Days**
From February 4-7, St. Anne's hosted Grade 8 students from Huron County's elementary schools for hands-on activities in Electrical and Plumbing. Conestoga College instructors led the sessions, and students were highly engaged, eager to work on their projects without taking breaks!
- **Grade 6 Tech Days & Grade 7 Arts Days**
From February 25-28, St. Anne's will welcome Grade 6 and 7 students from Huron County's elementary schools.
 - **Grade 6 students** will participate in a **tech rotation**.
 - **Grade 7 students** will engage in an **arts rotation**.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Pink Shirt Day: Anti-Bullying in Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board

The Mental Health and Wellness Team (MHWT) developed and distributed a *'grab and go'* PSD Resource to facilitate engagement in raising awareness against bullying while promoting kindness in our schools on Pink Shirt Day Wednesday February 26, 2025. 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.

Professional Development: SBIRT Training

The Mental Health Team participated in the Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Training facilitated by School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON). This training provided a full day of learning with Regulated School Mental Health Professionals from across the province to increase our understanding about the core components of SBIRT and

Motivational Interviewing (MI). The training also provided assessment tools to support our School Based Social Workers in screening for substance use and ensuring students are receiving the appropriate care that meets their needs and is identity affirming and we look forward to adding this to our continuum of service delivery.

Secondary Panel: Faith and Wellbeing

At the secondary level at St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School, our School Social Worker and School Chaplain collaborated to co-facilitate the Grade 10 student retreat. The retreat emphasized the role our Catholic faith plays in maintaining good mental health and well-being.

Elementary Panel: Classroom Presentations

At the elementary level, the MHWT provided Social Emotional Learning (SEL) presentations to 4 classrooms on a range of topics from managing stress to coping with big feelings. Approximately 80 students participated in these classroom SEL opportunities.

The Recognizing Exploitation a Syllabus to End Trafficking (RESET) curriculum is nearly fully implemented in our Perth county schools. The RESET curriculum seeks to prevent and raise awareness about exploitation, human trafficking and online/social media safety.

- From September 2024 to February, 2025 309 grade 7 and 8 students across our Catholic Elementary schools in Perth county received the RESET curriculum.
- Students reported a 20% improvement in their understanding of vulnerability to emotional and physical harm.
- There was a 20% reduction in students who felt uncertain about who they could turn to for help regarding unhealthy relationships and human trafficking.

School Services Advisory Council (SSAC):

Our mid-year School Service Advisory Committee Meeting was held on February 18, 2025 in which we discussed the school-based services provided by our community partners. During this month's meeting we unveiled a revised Huron-Perth Mental Health and Suicide Crisis Protocol that has been a project that our Mental Health Lead has worked on with the Avon Maitland District School Board Mental Health Lead as well as the Managers at the Huron Perth Centre, Huron-Perth CAS, Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (Crisis Response) and CMHA Huron Perth. SSAC also discussed the strengths, gaps and needs for school-based services throughout both Huron-Perth Catholic DSB and Avon Maitland DSB with community partners.

Attendance: Caregiver Webinar

On February 12, 2025 our Attendance Counsellor, along with representatives from the Avon Maitland District School Board and The Huron-Perth Children's Aid Society facilitated a 1-hour webinar titled "***My Child Does Not Want to Attend School.***" This presentation explored the barriers and challenges of school attendance and provided caregivers with practical strategies and insights to support their children attending school regularly. Available support and alternative education options for secondary students were also shared. A recording of the webinar will be available on our HPCDSB Mental Health and Wellness website.

School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON): New Resources for Parents

School Mental Health Ontario has updated the following caregiver resources – and these are now available to access in multiple languages!

- o [How to help your child have a mentally healthy return to school](#)

- o [Helping Your Child Manage Digital Technology](#)
- o [Noticing Mental Health Concerns for Your Child – Info sheet](#)
- o [Noticing Mental Health Concerns for Your Child – Worksheet](#)
- o [Prepare, Prevent Respond - A suicide prevention guide for parents and caregivers](#)

MAINTENANCE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

Joint Health and Safety Committee

The Joint Health and Safety Committee met on February 19, 2025.

Topics discussed:

- Naloxone
- eBase Reporting
- Health and Safety Training for School Representatives
- PPM 128 - Code of Conduct
- ORT - training/info sheet
- Bill 190 Update
- First Aid Kits
- Monthly and Annual Inspections
- Incident reporting
- Annual workplace risk assessment
- Annual Review of Policies
 - Harassment Policy
- Electrical appliances in classrooms/offices

RECOMMENDATION

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