



TRUSTEES' REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

SEPTEMBER 2024

ON FIRE WITH THE SPIRIT

Welcome Back

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 go 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. September 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.

Summer Programs

Several programs took place over the summer due to summer programming and transition funding. These programs offered in August launched ongoing transition support for students in our elementary and secondary schools:

- St. Anne’s Summer Programming - “Welcome to the Nest”
 - Students entering Grade 9 had the opportunity to attend St. Anne’s for two days to engage in many opportunities to help build relationships with peers.
- Grade 6/7 Connection Camp Day
 - Approximately 16 students entering Grade 6 or 7 at St. Boniface School met for a full day of engagement and connection.
- Transition Support
 - Other opportunities for transition support were offered during the week of August 26 and the month of September including Special Education Team members supporting school teams and Education Assistants to meet and greet students and help transition students back to school.
- Summer Wellness Line for Students
 - The Board established a mental health and wellness line so that students would have access to support over the summer months.

Huron-Perth Catholic DSB
Summer 2024 Wellness Line

226-921-0653

July 2nd-August 29th
Monday - Thursday 3pm-5pm (excluding holidays)

Caregivers and Students Grade 6-12

We can connect you with services. We can support with a mentally healthy return to school. We can provide information on social emotional learning, including positive coping skills for home and school.

This is NOT a crisis line
If you are in crisis, please visit your nearest emergency room, or call the Huron-Perth Crisis line at 1-800-426-7444

Catholicity

Many schools are holding September Masses, liturgies, and open houses to welcome students, staff, and families back. These events include meeting staff, liturgical celebrations, and book fairs. Every school hosts an opening Mass or liturgy in September, and staff continue to integrate faith into daily activities, fostering faith leadership.

International Education Program

The Board welcomed two international students in September from the south of Spain. St. Michael CSS welcomed a Grade 9 student from the southeast part of Spain, a second student in Grade 10 is attending St. Anne's CSS. Both students come to our schools after partnership agreements were signed with two different international recruitment agencies in Spain. To date, the board has thirteen agreements with agencies in Europe, Asia and Australia that are recruiting students.



Leadership

School and system leaders met to review policy-related material including cell phones, enrolment, annual policy and administrative procedure reminders, a Human Resources update, messaging about consistent use of Board-vetted and approved learning materials and resources, attendance and the referral process for support, and emergency procedures.

On September 24, learning and collaboration surrounding leadership moves to support our Literacy and Mathematics plans were a focus of the learning council. Leaders engaged in a student attendance workshop and met with our school-based resource officers from Huron and Perth OPP.

Religion and Family Life

The Religion and Family Life Team, led by Caroline Thuss and Kate Dobson, has been planning the implementation of the new Family Life curriculum and the Grade 1 resource "Blessed and Beloved." Starting September 11, they began school visits for professional learning on these resources, which will continue throughout the year as part of the strategic plan.



Indigenous Education

Schools across the district recognized Powley Day on September 19th in a variety of activities. Now known as "Powley Day", September 19 celebrates the anniversary of the landmark Métis rights victory at the Supreme Court of Canada. Many opportunities were provided for students and staff to participate in Truth and Reconciliation Week from Sept 25-29.

Improving Student Achievement - Mathematics

The Math Team began the school year by visiting all elementary schools to introduce the new Math Scope and Sequence lesson plans. These two-day lessons focus on collaborative problem solving and practice, aligning with the Ontario Math curriculum and core resources like MathUP Classroom and Knowledgehook.

Improving Student Achievement - Literacy

The Literacy team began the year by aligning their goals with the new strategic plan. On September 11, 12, and 17, they provided K-2 educators with training on the Early Reading Screener (Acadience). Starting September 23, they began supporting K-3 teachers as they screened students for reading difficulties.

Multilingual Learners (MLL)

The Board MLL Support Teacher has begun providing invaluable support to our multilingual learners across all elementary and secondary schools. Numerous initial STEP assessments have been conducted with our newcomer students. Currently, we have 159 MLL students from Grades 1-12, representing 18 different languages and 30 countries.

Secondary e-Learning

This semester, our secondary schools offer e-Learning courses in subjects like Grade 12 Economics, Religion, Science, English, and Grade 11 Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology. Taught by qualified Board teachers, these courses provide flexibility and, through our partnership with Catholic Virtual Ontario, access to hundreds of courses province-wide. Nearly 50 students from over a dozen Catholic boards are enrolled in our e-Learning classes, expanding course options for all.

Experiential Learning Programs in Secondary

SHSM students from both secondary schools were able to attend Canada's Outdoor Farm Show in Woodstock on September 12. St. Anne's CSS students had the opportunity to visit various trade programs at the Guelph and Reuters campus of Conestoga College on September 17.

SHSM Certifications and training are taking place in First Aid/CPR, working at heights, and elevated work platforms.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Mental Health and Wellness Team (MHWT) hosted an employee seminar with Dr. Zayed, on supporting students through relationships. In September a “Parenting with Confidence” webinar series was offered to parents and caregivers in collaboration with Avon Maitland District School Board.

The MHWT has developed the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board’s Mental Health and Addictions One-year Action Plan and Three Year Roadmap. In addition to the growth and development of the whole person, the roadmap will focus on the following key priorities:

- Establishing Organizational Conditions for Effective School Mental Health
- Building Capacity in Mental Health Literacy and Social Emotional Learning
- Providing Equitable Access to Evidence-Informed, Culturally Relevant, and Identity Affirming Mental Health Supports
- Increasing Student Attendance, Safety, and Family Engagement

Assistance with summarizing content from Board Highlights with the assistance of Chat GPT 3.5.

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.