



## 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, January 26, 2026  
Submitted by: Karen Tigani, Director of Education and Secretary (Designate)

# BOARD HIGHLIGHTS FOR JANUARY

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 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. January marks the beginning of a new year and brings renewed 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.

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## CATHOLIC EDUCATION

### Feast of St. André Bessette

The feast day of St. André Bessette, the beloved patron of our Catholic school board, was celebrated throughout our system on January 7. This humble servant of God, noted for his steadfast faith and devotion to St. Joseph, was honoured as schools held special prayers and learning activities. We continue to ask for St. André's help, seeking his intercession for the gift of faithful and humble hearts as we unite and grow as a Catholic education community. We remember his reassuring counsel: "Put yourself in God's hands; He abandons no one."

### Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations Alive in our Schools

In a variety of ways, our schools are celebrating students and staff as they intentionally demonstrate the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs). This is done through assemblies, prayers, certificates and videos as well as making a point of "catching people in the act" of being a "caring family member" or "collaborative contributor" or "lifelong learner" in real time. Students are educated each month about one of the OCSGEs in particular, and invited to find ways to share and show this in their actions and words. Staff and students alike go out of their way to acknowledge one another when they see the OCSGEs in action. It is

exciting to see students embracing these qualities and finding ways to weave them into their day to day life and learning. Director Tigani was blessed to be able to join some of these celebrations on her recent school visits as well as meeting with groups of students who are championing the OCSGEs in their clubs and in other ways at school. There is clearly a strong sense of student leadership being nurtured in our schools and this is exciting to witness and nurture.

### **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Recognized in Our Schools**

Our schools recognized the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, during the week of January 18–25, 2026, through prayer and reflection, supported by resources shared from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB). Rooted in the theme “There is one body and one Spirit” (Ephesians 4:4), this week invites students and staff to grow in spiritual ecumenism, the heart of the ecumenical movement, by praying for and with other Christians.

Resources developed for 2026 were prepared by the Department of Interchurch Relations of the Armenian Apostolic Church and adapted for use in Canada through collaboration among the Canadian Council of Churches and ecumenical partners, with representation from the CCCB. These resources supported prayer for unity in our school communities and reinforced our shared Christian call to witness, dialogue, and unity in Christ.

### **Holocaust Remembrance Day, January 27, 2026**

In preparation for Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, 2026, a comprehensive suite of resources is being provided to support educators and students in this solemn observance. To assist youth in developing strategies to counter intolerance and build inclusive communities, a variety of materials have been curated, including the Antisemitism Classroom Toolkit (ACT) and specific prayers for reflection. The Edwin Collection will serve as a core resource for Grades 6-8 teachers, complemented by digital access to books on SORA and materials from partners such as the Azrieli Foundation and the Toronto and Montreal Holocaust Museums. Furthermore, a series of student-focused webinars and workshops will be offered to ensure a deep and meaningful learning experience across the Board.

### **Junior Bordenball Tournaments**

The Junior Bordenball tournaments for our Grades 5 and 6 students are set to take place on January 29. Hosted by our secondary schools, this event will see Perth County area schools participating at St. Michael CSS and Huron County area schools gathering at St. Anne's CSS. This tournament provides a fantastic opportunity for our junior students to come together for a spirited day dedicated to fun, physical activity, and community building. We look forward to celebrating the excitement and sportsmanship of our students as they represent their schools.

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## ***LEADERSHIP***

### **Sharing EQAO Results**

The EQAO Learning Coordinator led presentations for both the Special Education Advisory Council and the Catholic Parent Involvement Council, sharing an overview of our most recent EQAO results in Primary, Junior, Grade 9, and the OSSLT. She addressed questions related to achievement trends and system goals, supporting informed discussion and ongoing collaboration with families and community partners.

### **Strategic Planning for Board Math Leads**

Our system's Board Math Lead (Superintendent of Education) and Math Learning Coordinator will attend a province-wide Math Achievement Action Plan (MAAP) strategic planning session on Wednesday, January 28. During this virtual session, they will engage with provincial leaders to deepen understanding of MAAP implementation strategies and approaches to improving student achievement in mathematics.

### **Leaders Learning Council (LLCs)**

The virtual LLC on January 13 included a presentation by members of the Special Education team related to Autism Spectrum Disorder, information about the Board's FIAT Fellowships with an invitation for Principals to promote these exciting leadership and learning opportunities for staff at their schools, and a few updates from the Superintendents.

The in-person LLC on January 27 continues our ongoing commitment to faith formation, with system leaders engaging in the next session of the University of Notre Dame course *Foundations of Catholic Belief*. As part of this unit, Professor Leonard DeLorenzo will guide participants in a close reading of Scripture, inviting deeper reflection on the mystery of how Jesus Christ redeems our human nature and restores Creation to its original goodness. Through scriptural meditation and three lectures, leaders will deepen their understanding of what "salvation in Christ" means and develop a renewed appreciation for Scripture as a living source of wisdom that informs and sustains their leadership in Catholic education. The afternoon will feature a presentation from Dr Ross who has been a presenter in the past and is an incredibly valued resource for our leaders.

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## ***SPECIAL EDUCATION***

### **Crisis Intervention Training**

On January 30, all Educational Assistants and Secondary Hall Monitors will participate in Crisis Intervention training facilitated through the Safe Management Group (SMG). Members of the Board's Behaviour Team will serve as certified trainers, delivering three sessions at various locations across the district to ensure accessibility for all staff.

This training will better equip staff with the skills and confidence to:

- Recognize early signs of escalation and respond proactively
- Use evidence-based, non-violent de-escalation strategies
- Support student safety, dignity, and well-being during crisis situations
- Reduce the risk of harm to students and staff
- Foster safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments across our schools

This initiative reflects the Board's continued commitment to student and staff safety, inclusive education, and the effective support of students with diverse and complex needs.

### **Secondary Special Education Collaboration and Planning**

During January, the Coordinator of Special Education met with Secondary Administrators to review and discuss the various projects and initiatives underway in secondary schools to support inclusive education and students with diverse needs. These conversations highlighted the strong, ongoing commitment across secondary schools to responsive and inclusive practices.

These meetings served as an important opportunity for reflection and alignment as schools concluded Semester 1, while also supporting forward planning and shared problem-solving in

preparation for Semester 2. This collaborative approach strengthens consistency, builds capacity at the school level, and ensures that supports remain responsive to student needs.

**Special Education & January LLCs** \_\_\_\_\_ Special Education was a key focus at the January 13 LLC and will continue to be at the January 27 LLC, reinforcing the Board's commitment to inclusive education and informed, responsive leadership.

At the January 13 LLC, the Coordinator of Special Education and Behaviour Consultant facilitated a presentation focused on Autism. The session provided system leaders with foundational understanding, while also highlighting current research, emerging diagnostic practices, and up-to-date prevalence data. This learning supported leaders in strengthening inclusive school practices and informed decision-making to better meet the needs of students.

During the January 27 LLC, principals and system leaders will engage in an in-person session with Dr. Craig Ross of Zayed Consulting. Dr. Ross will lead a rich and practical discussion addressing frequently asked questions related to assessments, diagnoses, and exceptionalities. The session is similar to a session that Special Education Resource Teachers attended in November, and will enhance clarity, build shared understanding across the system, and support leaders in navigating complex special education processes with confidence and consistency.

Together, these sessions aim to strengthen leadership capacity and reinforce a shared commitment to supporting students with diverse learning needs across the district.

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

We are thrilled to share the successful launch of our new employee Artificial Intelligence (AI) Micro-credential Course, a significant milestone in our commitment to innovative and responsible education. This program empowers our staff to navigate the rapidly evolving digital landscape through the lens of our Catholic values, ensuring that artificial intelligence is used ethically and effectively to enhance student learning. By investing in the professional growth of our educators, we are not only staying current with technology but also modeling responsible digital citizenship for the students entrusted to our care.

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### ***STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT***

#### **Indigenous Education**

This month, the Indigenous Education team made significant strides in advancing reconciliation and educational integration across the district. We successfully convened our first Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC) meeting for the 2025-26 school year, welcoming local Indigenous community members, AMDSB Indigenous Leader Matt Baker, Superintendent McDade, and system educators. The IEAC reviewed current team goals and provided invaluable insight into future Indigenous Knowledge Sharers who can work directly with board staff and students. Finally, the Indigenous Education Teacher Lead, Heather George, and the Indigenous Graduation Coach, Josh Pagan, are in the beginning stages of promoting and expanding the availability of the Grade 11 English: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices course (NBE), a process that included constructive meetings this month with JoAnn Henry, Education Officer at the Ministry of Education, and current NBE instructors at St. Anne's CSS. This is a course that we have offered in recent years at our secondary schools.

#### **Mathematics**

During the month of January, the System Math Team demonstrated a steadfast commitment to fostering academic excellence and supporting the diverse needs of our learners and educators. Central to our work was the collaborative update of key system resources, ensuring that our Scope and Sequence remains a robust roadmap for success; this included the integration of Number Talks for Term Two and the implementation of the Retrieval Practice routine to strengthen long-term retention of key mathematical concepts. To further align our local efforts with broader educational standards, the team participated in provincial webinars focused on the importance of Deliberate Practice, a key High-Impact Instructional Practice that ensures students build fluency through purposeful, goal-oriented repetition.

To further prepare students for provincial standards, the Math Team curated and embedded EQAO resources (i.e., released questions and vocabulary) specifically for Grades 3, 6, and 9. In schools, our Math Facilitators have been active, bridging the gap between theory and practice. Through meaningful collaborative conversations and by working directly alongside students in classrooms, facilitators have utilized data-informed small-group instruction to meet students where they are.

Furthermore, the team prioritized teacher support by providing dedicated release time for one-on-one data consultations. These sessions allowed for deep reflections on the latest common assessment data, empowering teachers to tailor their instructional moves and develop targeted interventions that uphold our mission of providing a high-quality, faith-filled education for every child.

### **Elementary Literacy**

This January, the Huron-Perth Catholic DSB System Literacy Team continued its commitment to foundational literacy. System Coordinator MJ Drager, alongside Literacy Resource Teachers (LRTs) Karen Kramers and Teresa Oud, travelled to every school across the district to conduct Middle of the Year (MOY) Early Reading Screeners for all students in Grades SK through 2. By centralizing this process, the team ensured consistency in administration and provided direct support to classroom teachers. This proactive approach allows us to capture a precise "pulse check" on our youngest learners during a critical window of their development.

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

Our commitment to linguistic excellence continues this month through targeted support for our French educators and students. System French Support Teacher Lauren Quinlan has been actively mentoring our new Core and Immersion teachers, ensuring they feel supported in their pedagogy and classroom management. One focus has been the integration of digital tools like Canva to create interactive resources that improve oral language production and student confidence in the classroom.

Looking ahead to the spring, preparations are well underway for the DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française) exam this May. Principal Shona Gracey and Coordinator MJ Drager are currently collaborating on a comprehensive refresher course and developing specialized materials to support our candidates. We are excited to announce that St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School in Clinton will serve as the host site for this year's examinations, providing our students with the opportunity to earn internationally recognized certification of their French proficiency.

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## ***EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS IN SECONDARY***

### **Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) – Level 1 Updates**

Students from both secondary schools have secured highly competitive placements in Conestoga College's OYAP Level 1 programs:

- St. Anne's CSS: 1 student (Plumbing)
- St. Michael CSS: 5 students (2 HVAC, 2 Automotive, 1 Truck & Coach)

These selections are a major accomplishment, as students earned their spots through a rigorous multi-board competitive process for a limited number of seats.

Fanshawe College Level 1 apprenticeship programs. This cohort is evenly split between the two schools, with St. Anne's CSS and St. Michael CSS each sending one student into the Electrical trade and one student into Refrigeration (HVAC). OYAP Level 1 programs allow students to begin formal apprenticeship training while still in secondary school, providing a strong foundation for careers in the skilled trades.

For the 2025–2026 academic year, a total of ten students are participating in the OYAP Level 1 programs, representing a strong commitment to skilled trades across the district. SACSS and SMCSS has three students enrolled, with one student each in Plumbing, Electrical, and HVAC. St. Michael CSS accounts for the remaining seven participants, with a diverse breakdown including one student in Electrical, three in HVAC, two as Automotive Service Technicians, and one in Truck & Coach.

### **St. Anne's CSS Huron Manufacturing Association (HMA) and OYAP Industry Tour**

This experiential learning opportunity was rescheduled for early January following a weather-related cancellation in December. Approximately 25 students participated in the event, which includes visits to three local Huron County employers: Jokey North America Inc., Acuren Wind Energy, and Epps Products. This tour offers students a valuable opportunity for direct exposure to regional manufacturing and skilled-trade career pathways.

### **SHSM Large Animal Handling – REACH Centre (Clinton)**

On January 12, thirteen students from the board, twelve from St. Anne's CSS and one from St. Michael CSS attended a "Large Animal Handling – Beef Day" at the REACH Centre in Clinton. This session allows students in the Agriculture and Health & Wellness SHSM pathways to earn their Large Animal Handling Awareness Certification, a Sector Partnered Experience in mathematical literacy, and participate in a specialized culinary experience. This event is the first in a series, with future sessions planned to focus on pork, equine, and sheep sectors.

### **St. Anne's CSS Grade 8 Skilled Trades Days (Jan 26–30)**

St. Anne's CSS will host Grade 8 students from Huron County elementary schools for a week of hands-on skilled trades learning in Plumbing and Electrical.

Each day:

- Two elementary schools attend
- Students rotate through half-day plumbing and electrical sessions
- Activities are led by Conestoga College instructors
- Supported by St. Anne's CSS SHSM students

These events promote early exposure to the skilled trades and showcase St. Anne's CSS strong technical programming.

### **Dual Credit Program Updates**

#### **Fanshawe – Introduction to Paramedicine (Emergency Services)**

From November 17 to January 12, eighteen students completed the Fanshawe Dual Credit Introduction to Paramedicine course, which follows the Emergency Responder curriculum. This cohort included 12 students from St. Anne's CSS and 6 from St. Michael CSS. Under the hands-on instruction of a local Huron-Bruce paramedic, students in the Health & Wellness and Sport SHSM pathways gained foundational skills essential for careers in paramedicine, firefighting, and other first responder fields.

#### **Conestoga – Applied Plumbing Techniques**

On December 16, fifteen students, 10 from St. Anne's CSS and 5 from St. Michael CSS completed a hands-on plumbing workshop through Conestoga College. The participants demonstrated high levels of engagement and technical proficiency, leaving a strong positive impression on the instructor. This session provided students with practical exposure to the plumbing trade and allowed them to showcase their skills in a professional training environment.

Throughout January, St. Anne's CSS and St. Michael CSS students continue to engage in high-impact OYAP, SHSM, Dual Credit, and experiential learning opportunities that directly connect them to post-secondary education, apprenticeship pathways, and the skilled trades.

These initiatives strengthen local partnerships, support workforce development in Huron-Perth, and provide students with meaningful career-focused learning experiences.

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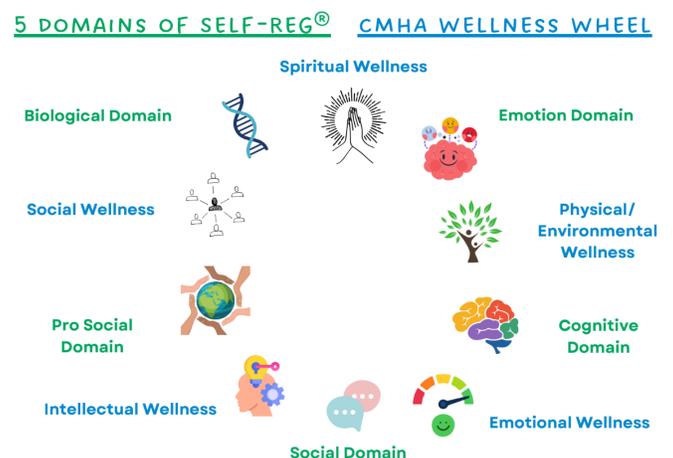
## **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

### **January Mental Health and Wellness Month**

Throughout the month of January, the Huron-Perth Catholic School Board embraced Mental Health and Wellness Month by **awakening** renewed attention to well-being, **illuminating** practices that support regulation and connection, and **rejoicing** in the strength of our Catholic community.

Simple, ready-to-use activities were shared across the system to encourage daily faith and wellness practices for staff and students. These “grab and go” resources supported the four areas of the wellness wheel and the four domains of self-regulation, helping classrooms integrate short, meaningful strategies that strengthened relationships and overall well-being.

In alignment with provincial expectations for fostering positive school climates, and as **Bell Let's Talk Day** approached, schools continued to promote mental health literacy and a culture of



care across the board, reflecting the spirit of our Catholic community.

## January 21st Caregiver Webinar

**From Worry to Wellness: Using Storybooks to Build Coping Skills & Emotional Awareness**

Avon Maitland District School Board and Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board are excited to welcome Western University to share their newly developed resource for caregivers: *Supporting Knowledge & Skills in Managing Anxiety Using Storybooks*. This guide blends evidence-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) strategies with storybooks to help empower caregivers to recognize and regulate symptoms of anxiety in children between the ages 3-12.

**What You'll Learn:**

- Practical strategies to help children manage anxiety
- Tools to spark meaningful conversations
- Ways to strengthen coping skills and empower your child

**Session Details:**

**Date:** January 21, 2026  
**Time:** 6:30 – 7:30 PM  
**Location:** This is a virtual event

Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to register:

On January 21, the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board and Avon Maitland District School Board Mental Health and Wellness teams welcomed Western University as they shared their newly developed guide for caregivers: *Supporting Knowledge & Skills in Managing Anxiety Using Storybooks*. This guide blended evidence-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) strategies with storybooks to help empower caregivers to recognize and regulate symptoms of anxiety in children between the ages of 3–12. The presentation offered a detailed exploration of the resource guide and provided caregivers with practical skills to spark meaningful conversations, strengthen coping strategies, and cultivate emotional awareness. We were thrilled to have over 220 registrants for this event, which welcomed both staff and caregivers.

## Supporting Our Children: Mental Health and Vaping Prevention Guide By Your Side - School Mental Health Ontario

The Mental Health and Wellness Team (MHWT) is pleased to share the launch of By Your Side—a collection of short, practical webinars and companion guides that support families in understanding and promoting student mental health. To make these resources even more accessible, the MHWT has curated and combined materials from By Your Side into one easy-to-navigate guide for caregivers and school communities.

### What's Inside By Your Side?

- School mental health supports: Understanding roles and pathways for help
- Managing stress and anxiety: Practical strategies families can use at home
- Building positive relationships: Strengthening connection and communication
- Talking with children about mental health: Age-appropriate guidance and tips

**By Your Side Learning hub**

Our new By Your Side Parent/Caregiver Learning Hub is live and packed with resources to help you support your child's mental health.

[smho-smso.ca/parents-and-caregivers](https://smho-smso.ca/parents-and-caregivers)

**Explore**

School Mental Health Ontario | Santé mentale en milieu scolaire Ontario | School Mental Health Ontario By Your Side | Parent/caregiver resources to support mental health literacy and well-being for every family

Schools across the Board have received the materials and are actively sharing them with families to strengthen home-school partnerships. This initiative reflects Huron-Perth Catholic DSB's ongoing commitment to fostering caring, faith-filled environments where every student feels supported and understood.

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## MAINTENANCE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

### **Joint Health and Safety Committee**

The Joint Health and Safety Committee met on January 7. Topics discussed included the following:

- Monthly and Annual Inspections
- eBase/SSIR Reporting
- Bill 190 Update
- First Aid Kits
- ORT - training, OT login
- H&S Rep Training
- Walkie Talkies
- Incident Reporting
- Annual Workplace Risk Assessment
- Annual Drinking Water Reports
- JHSC Terms of Reference Update

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

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