



REPORT TO THE HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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BOARD HIGHLIGHTS FOR SEPTEMBER

Public Session

BACKGROUND

Many activities take place every month throughout the district to ensure that our students have rich, 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, and Managers of activities that take place under their leadership.

DEVELOPMENTS

The spiritual theme we anchor the 2023-24 school year in is “Go Forth!” and it builds upon the Gospel story of the Road to Emmaus which has been guiding our district over the past three years. The Holy Spirit continues to guide our district and lovingly supports us as we cycle through states of encounter, accompaniment and transformation. As we begin a new school year, we go forward with incredible enthusiasm, ever grateful for the many gifts of our students, families, staff members, parishes, and communities. Together, we are on a journey of discipleship. We are people of hope and we delight in the many signs of God’s love and joy in our schools and facilities.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Back to School Liturgical Celebrations

Many of our schools are hosting September or Fall Open Houses to welcome families back to school. These community-building events include opportunities to meet staff, liturgical celebrations, book fairs and more. Each school hosts an opening school Mass or liturgy in September too. Staff in all schools are continuing to seek meaningful ways to embed faith into all aspects of our school day and to nurture the goal of faith leadership among students and staff.

Religious Education & Faith In Action Monthly Bulletin

A new initiative this school year is the sharing of a monthly newsletter for all educators that highlights resources, ideas and events related to nurturing our Catholic faith and culture. Aspects of the religion and family life curriculum will be highlighted as well as ideas to further enhance the school and classroom environment. Information and resources related to faith development for staff, students and families will also be included.

Huron-Perth Deanery Meeting

We are happy to be hosting the Huron-Perth Deanery meetings at the Catholic Education Centre this year. The first deanery meeting was held on September 15th and included presentations from the two Secondary School chaplains and the Religion and Family Life Learning Coordinator. Our inclusion in these meetings helps strengthen the home, school, and parish relationship and we look forward to many opportunities to work together throughout this school year.

Development and Peace Schools (D & P Schools)

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board continues to be a national leader in our board-wide implementation of the D&P Schools program. The D&P School representatives have received training on the program (a refresher for those who are using the program for the second year) and worked together to plan out badges that each school will work toward this Year.

Awe & Wonder

Awe and Wonder serves as a valuable tool for educators, bridging the realms of Science and Faith within the teaching landscape. Our objective, within the HPCDSB schools, is to deepen the integration of our Catholic faith into every facet of daily instruction. This month, our Science Learning Coordinator, in collaboration with the Curriculum Support teacher, commenced working closely with teachers spanning grades 1 through 6. Together, they are crafting Science units of study that embrace a faith-based perspective, drawing inspiration from the resources provided. To empower our primary and junior teachers in this endeavor, each will receive a copy of the comprehensive teacher guide. We are actively supporting teachers as they plan lessons through a Catholic lens and nurture faith in science classes. We hope that this serves as a model and reinforcement for how this happens in all curriculum areas and ensures that the lens of our faith is always at the forefront in our planning, teaching and learning, and assessment.

September 5th Professional Development Day

All staff of the board engaged in professional learning and training at their school or work site on September 5th. The morning began with an opportunity for all school staff members to meet with their principal for prayer and a welcome back liturgy. Following this, there were professional learning sessions hosted by members of the Literacy Team for elementary educators (teachers, DECEs, EAs, principals and vice-principals) related to the new language curriculum while in secondary schools, staff met in departments to focus on their school improvement goals and implementation of de-streaming in subject specific-groups. Members of the Learning Coordination Team provided targeted workshops for other staff groups, where appropriate, including French teachers, Music teachers and VAP teachers (who engaged in subject-specific learning). The afternoon focused on annual mandatory Health and Safety training to ensure safety for staff and students in our schools and at the Catholic Education Centre.

Grade 1 French Immersion (FI) Program at St. Mary's Catholic School in Listowel

We are proud that the board has officially launched this exciting new French Immersion program in September. The French Immersion Program at St. Mary's Catholic School in Listowel is the Board's third elementary program to be developed, with established FI programming at St. Mary's Catholic School in Goderich and at Jeanne Sauvé Catholic School in Stratford. We have secondary FI programs at St. Michael CSS and St. Anne's CSS. Our French Immersion programs focus on the development of students' ability to communicate in French as well as a deep understanding and appreciation of French culture both in Canada and globally. Currently there are 11 students in the Grade 1 French Immersion class at St Mary's in Listowel. We began offering French in the Kindergarten program at the school last year and this has

supported the early development of and interest in learning a second language. We are aware that there are many interested students and families in the current JK and SK program who intend to choose French Immersion as well as others with preschool aged children.

LEADERSHIP

Leaders' Learning Council (LLC)

Tuesday, August 29th

Principals, Vice-Principals, Learning Coordinators, Managers and all members of the Senior Team met at St. Michael CSS for day one of the August LLCs. The morning began with messages from our Director, emphasizing our Strategic Plan and specific elements of our work that supports this. The Superintendents and Managers led interactive and informational workshops throughout the day on topics including:

- Monitoring performance and achievement
- Use of instructional time
- Budget, transportation and facilities
- Technology for education

In the afternoon, the focus for elementary leaders was on Literacy and the implementation of the new language curriculum. This included information about the new curriculum, new resources on the HPCDSB Literacy Warehouse, support provided by Literacy Resource Teachers, monitoring the Literacy Block in all grades, and using UFLI as a primary resource to support whole class foundational skills (visual drill, auditory drill, blending dill, explicit teaching, word work and connected text). The secondary team met to review the new Grade 9 de-streamed English curriculum and discuss the strategic use of the Literacy Coaches available for one period each day at both secondary schools this semester. They also discussed plans to support students who are multilingual learners (MLL) and who benefit from Student Success programs. The day concluded with a focus on policies and a thorough presentation on the new Student Behaviour and Discipline policy and the new Field Trips and Excursions policy.

Wednesday, August 30th

Our second day began with the celebration of Mass where we joined the Avon-Thames Family of Parishes at Immaculate Conception Parish at 8AM. It was a delight to join our school and system leaders with the parish family and reinforced the overall focus of our morning together which was nurturing our Catholic faith as leaders and by extension, for our staff members and students.

The morning session included a reflection on the components of an effective religion and family life block as well as considerations for weekly planning that integrates faith across all aspects of the school day. There was an overview provided of the new science and faith resource "Awe and Wonder" that will be used in Grades 1-6. In secondary there was discussion about leadership moves to nurture and support faith across all subject areas as well as the schools' pastoral plans and the ongoing collaboration between Chaplaincy Leaders to support faith development in our secondary schools. The morning included a presentation from the Executive Manager of Human Resources for Principals and Vice-Principals. Members of the Learning Coordination Team met to further develop their 2023-24 Strategy Maps that were developed at SLICE in May.

In the afternoon, there was an interactive and informational presentation surrounding the Elementary Math Curriculum which included a review of key resources and strategies that are essential to an effective Math Block, reinforcement of key resources including the Math Educator Site (long-range plans, blended grades resources, and other tools to support classroom teachers and school leaders) and support provided by our Math Facilitators.

There was an overview of the Ministry of Education's requirements for the new Math Action Plan that will be developed for our district which will include 3 priority actions: fidelity of curriculum implementation and use of instructional and assessment practices with a proven record of enhancing student achievement; engaging in ongoing learning to strengthen mathematics content knowledge for teaching; and knowing the mathematics learner and ensuring mathematical tasks, interventions and supports are relevant and responsive.

The final session of the day included a thorough presentation about the Mental Health Service Delivery Model which included a review of the many people and programs that are available in our schools to support all students. Information and resources to support student attendance were shared, recognizing that student attendance is key to student learning and success in school. Finally, there was a presentation surrounding Special Education resources and the related support personnel on the team in schools and at the board.

September 12th (Virtual Meeting)

We host monthly online LLCs to deliver information that is timely and supports leadership within our schools. Our intention is to ensure regular check-ins with school leaders and provide information in the online meetings that is appropriate for that mode of meeting, reserving more interaction and experiential learning for the in-person full day meetings. Our online LLC topics included the following: Math updates, Literacy updates, Assessment updates, Teacher Designate training information, Cell Phone policy reminders, Naloxone implementation plans and Emergency Preparedness reminders.

September 26th LLC (In-person)

The September 26th LLC will include interactive workshops on math data collection and further development of the board's Math Action Plan. It is important to engage principal, vice-principal and system leadership voices into the planning stages as well as defining the most effective leadership moves to support full implementation. We will be discussing a vision for using student achievement data to inform classroom instruction, school leadership and board leadership through a series of conversations and prompts. Principals will also engage in a follow-up workshop on fidelity to the implementation of UFLI in the primary classrooms. At the same time, secondary educators will engage in discussions about supporting the new de-streamed Language curriculum in Grade 9 as well as supporting literacy across the curriculum to reinforce key skills that are needed.

Additionally, leaders will engage in further learning about the role of assessment data in language and support the development of a plan for data collection and use as we implement the new language curriculum and explicit, structured literacy instruction.

In the afternoon, there will be a presentation on student attendance with discussion around the various ways that classroom, school and system staff can support attendance. This will be delivered through a lens of mental health and well-being. The latter part of the day will include opportunities for leaders to share and wrestle with "problems of practice" that they encounter in their daily work. This will include issues related to supporting the board's strategic priorities with an emphasis on the leadership moves that are most effective to nurture a learning environment for all, high quality and on-going improvement for all.

Catholic Curriculum Corporation (CCC)

Our board plays an active role in the CCC with many members of our Learning Coordination Team and Superintendent Tigani serving on the Board of Representatives, the When Faith Meets Pedagogy (WFMP) Conference Planning Committee, and the 4 Individual Catholic Curriculum Councils (Elementary, Secondary, Faith and ICT). During the month of September members of our system team attended the first in a series of WFMP conference planning meetings and the first board meeting. The Individual Councils will host their first meetings at the beginning of October. The goals of the CCC are to ensure rich opportunities to build, develop and share resources that support, sustain and promote Catholic Education in the province of Ontario. The CCC is an important voice and network of Catholic leaders and educators that ensures high quality Catholic resources and support. The CCC works in partnership with the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) and other Catholic educational partners provincially. This year's When Faith Meets Pedagogy Conference theme is "Awake, Arise, Announce: The Glory of the Lord is Within and Among You". It will be hosted from October 26-28th in Toronto. There will be a team of delegates from HPCDSB in attendance.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Summer Programming

During the summer of 2023 the Special Education team organized and offered two "Connection & Engagement Camps". One was offered at an elementary school and the other at a secondary school, both located in Stratford. We had approximately 70 students participate in these week-long summer camp experiences. Our Special Education Team also offered an online Lexia summer programming for the month of July with approximately 40 students across the system.

Empower Training

On September 14th and 15th, teachers who are new to teaching the Empower Reading Program attended a two-day training session. The Empower Reading program is a tier-three reading intervention program offered in all of our elementary schools.

Lexia

Over 850 Lexia Core5 Reading licenses were purchased for students across the system for the 2023-24 school year. Lexia Core5 Reading supports educators in providing differentiated literacy instruction for students of all abilities in Grades pre-K-5. The board purchased Lexia licenses for current Empower students, Empower graduates, as well as twenty additional licenses for each school to use at their own discretion (recommended for grade 1 students). Many schools also purchased their own licenses for their students in addition to centrally purchased licenses.

Special Education Resource Teacher Meeting

On September 20th, all Special Education Resource Teachers from across the system attended a meeting at the Catholic Education Centre. The morning session included UFLI Foundations literacy training. This program is an explicit and systematic phonics program that will be offered in K-2 classrooms across the system. Through training the Special Education Resource Teachers, we are prepared to offer additional intervention for students at a tier-two level using this valuable resource. The afternoon consisted of an overview of the board's Mental Health and Wellness service delivery model, an update from the board's Speech Language Pathologists, as well as other administrative items.

DIGITAL TOOLS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

1:1 Chromebook Program

The Huron Perth 1:1 Chromebook Initiative is an ongoing success, spanning across both elementary and secondary education levels. HPCDSB takes pride in ensuring that every student has access to a Chromebook, thereby bolstering their learning and academic accomplishments. During the first week of school, all Grade nine students and any new additions to the secondary school roster at Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board received a Chromebook. This distribution was contingent upon the signing of the Assumption of Responsibility Agreement, which underscores the responsibilities articulated in Policy 3B:5.

Learning Management Systems and Communication Practices

Every classroom within HPCDSB is seamlessly integrated with a supported Learning Management System (LMS). These virtual classrooms, encompassing Google Classroom and/or D2L, offer a versatile platform for blended learning, enhancing and augmenting the traditional face-to-face learning environments.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mathematics

September was a busy month for the Math Team. The Math Facilitators worked in classrooms supporting teachers and students with a focus on developing the pedagogical and mathematical knowledge for new and new-to-a-division teachers. They also worked in schools supporting the use of diagnostic tools to identify learning needs of students to be addressed in small groups. The Math Lead (Superintendent), Math Learning Coordinator, and Math Facilitators began working on the Ministry's Math Action Plan by attending a series of meetings with other math teams from across the province as well as the provincial math leadership team. They met with the principal of our new math priority school (designated by the Ministry of Education) to develop a plan to improve student understanding in mathematics, with an emphasis on junior and intermediate grades. The Math Action Plan and support for the priority school will be a significant area of focus throughout the year.

Literacy

Our Literacy Team kicked off the year by delivering an informative session to educators on the September 5th Professional Development (PD) day, focusing on the 2023 Ontario Language Curriculum. During this session, we shed light on the curriculum's vision, goals, and the revamped structure of its strands. In addition to this, we seized the opportunity to introduce and provide access to valuable resources stored in the HPCDSB Literacy Warehouse, designed to facilitate the seamless adoption of this fresh curriculum. Furthermore, our dedicated system team has actively commenced assisting educators within our schools, offering guidance and support in utilizing the newly launched phonics resource, UFLI and continued work with our junior and intermediate educators on Morphology.

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 including an art activity with Moses Lunham, Kettle and Stony Point First Nation - Art to Inspire Action, literacy activity for elementary schools, and virtual workshop opportunities with The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

Secondary Teacher Collaboration

In the month of September, we continued the process of de-streaming in Grade 9. Following the successful introduction of a new curriculum for Math (2021) and Science last year, we embarked on the implementation of an updated Grade 9 English Curriculum this year. To ensure a seamless transition and provide valuable support during this phase, we have three teachers acting as "coaches" in both math and literacy. These educators will collaborate closely with department heads and assist Grade 9 teachers in their exploration and implementation of high-impact instructional methods to enhance learning outcomes for all students. We continue to explore opportunities to collaborate with colleagues in the Intermediate classrooms in elementary as well as system leaders to ensure our students are meeting with a high degree of success in all classrooms and are well prepared for the transition between Grade 8 and Grade 9.

Secondary e-Learning

Our schools offer a variety of e-Learning courses this semester including Grade 12 English, Grade 12 Mathematics for College Technology, Grade 12 Earth and Space Science, Grade 11 Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology, Grade 12 Religion, and Grade 11 Business Marketing. These courses provide our students with flexibility in their studies. We also have a partnership with Catholic Virtual Ontario that allows our students to take courses from other Catholic boards across the province. Currently, over 60 students are enrolled in these courses.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS IN SECONDARY

Specialist High Skills Major Events & Certifications

Canada's Outdoor Farm Show – Woodstock, September 13

SHSM students from both secondary schools attended this event. This was a great opportunity for SHSM Agriculture students to network with industry professionals and learn more about innovations in the sector.

Working at Heights Training

SHSM Construction and SHSM Agriculture students participated in Working at Heights training in September. This certification is highly valued by employers and looks great on a resume.

Elevated Work Platform Training

SHSM Construction and SHSM Agriculture students participated in Elevated Work Platform training in September. This training was held at the LiUNA Training facility in London.

First Aid/CPR Training

All SHSM students had an opportunity to receive their First Aid/CPR certification in September at both secondary schools.

Team-Taught Food Classes - Fanshawe College

We have partnered with Fanshawe College once again to run two team-taught food classes. Students are looking forward to working with Chef Reid and they will earn a Safe Food Handling Certificate - this is a great addition to their resume.

P.A.R.T.Y. Program – September 26

St. Michael Catholic Secondary School students pursuing a Health and Wellness SHSM, traveled to Sunnybrook hospital in Toronto. The P.A.R.T.Y. takes young people through the path of a trauma patient as they are rushed through the trauma room doors, into surgery, rehab and, if lucky enough, recovery. Participants heard from police officers, paramedics, doctors, nurses, the blood and tissue bank, rehabilitation professionals, and injury ambassadors. Students heard first-hand experiences from the people who experienced them.

New Sports SHSM at St. Anne's CSS

We are pleased to offer the new "hockey course" during Semester One at St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School. Students are enrolled in the brand new Sports SHSM and will be earning a variety of certifications including refereeing and coaching.

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) and Co-operative Education

St Michael CSS and St. Anne's CSS have many Co-op students this semester in a wide variety of fields. Many SHSM students are doing placements in the healthcare field, along with a number of students in trades like AST, Ag. Equipment Tech, Hairstyling and Electrical.

Dual Credit Programs

Dual Credit - Lambton College

On September 21, students started dual credit courses at Lambton College. Courses include Introduction to Residential Electrical, Styling and Cutting Techniques, and Criminology. Students have the opportunity to earn a high school credit and a college credit at the same time.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Mental Health and Wellness Team

This year, we have 3 Registered Social Workers, Sally MacDonald, Anne Culligan and Lindsay Durst, providing attendance, mental health and well-being services in schools across the district. The Mental Health Lead, Kaitie Westbrook continues to provide supervision and supports their school-based work in varying ways. The team will be working collaboratively to implement HPCDSB's 2023-2024 Mental Health & Addiction Action Plan that was submitted to School Mental Health Ontario in the summer.

Additionally, we have maintained our partnership with the Huron Perth Centre to provide School-Based Outreach (SBO) support. This year, the SBO roles are filled by Ashlyn Clarke and Julie Webster, who will provide 8 of our HPCDSB schools with targeted support. All team members have connected with their principals, landed in many school buildings and begun mental health and wellness work across the district.

Attendance and School Engagement

At HPCDSB, we are unwavering in our dedication to boosting student engagement and reducing absenteeism. To reinforce this commitment, we are placing a strong emphasis on our Attendance Counseling Services while formalizing procedures and responsibilities for our school

staff and Social Workers. Our collaborative efforts aim to significantly enhance academic outcomes for our students.

To kickstart this initiative, our Attendance counselors and Mental Health Lead facilitated an Attendance Workshop for our Leaders Learning Council on September 26. This workshop empowered our leaders with a deeper understanding of the referral process and clarified the roles and responsibilities we all share in the quest to improve student attendance. This supported our leaders in better understanding the process of referrals and the roles and responsibilities we all have in improving student attendance. The Mental Health Team has also created an [attendance newsletter for caregivers](#) that administrators have been encouraged to share with their school community.

SMH-ON HPCDSB MHL Panel Presentation

On September 14, 2023, HPCDSB's MHL presented to School Mental Health Ontario, Mental Health Leads and Clinical Supervisors across the province regarding HPCDSB's efforts to implement the Brief Intervention for School Clinicians (BRISC). BRISC is an evidence-based, solution-focused brief intervention designed explicitly for regulated mental health professionals working directly with students during the school day. This presentation allowed other districts to learn about the strengths, challenges and opportunities of implementing the BRISC model for student mental health from Grades 7-12.

School Service Advisory Council (SSAC) Symposium

In an essential collaborative effort, Avon Maitland District School Board and Huron-Perth Catholic District School Boards, in partnership with Huron Victim Services and the Ontario Provincial Police, hosted a School Service Advisory Council (SSAC) Symposium. This year's focus was understanding and responding to human trafficking concerns in the Southwest region. This initiative combined the resources and expertise of our community law enforcement and victim services organization to create a unique networking opportunity for school-based service professionals while equipping them with essential knowledge and skills to prevent and intervene when worries arise about human trafficking for students in Huron and Perth counties.

The SSAC Symposium provided an invaluable opportunity for school-based service providers to unite, foster connections, network, and build capacity in various areas to enhance their support for students across Huron and Perth counties. Our primary focus was to provide seamless system navigation and well-defined service pathways for children and youth within the education system. An event like this had not occurred since 2019. We hope that providers will come together each year to engage in mutual learning as we believe that the SSAC Symposium serves as a vital platform to empower service providers with the knowledge and tools they need to create a safer and more supportive environment for the young people they serve. Through collaboration and continuous learning, we can ensure that our communities remain vigilant and resilient against emerging challenges affecting our children and youth.

Professional Development

During September, the Mental Health and Wellness Team participated in 2 full days of training focused on the Foundations of Trauma and Attachment provided by Clinical Psychologist Dr. Richard Zayed. This training helps inform our mental health and wellness work across the district and ensures that we appropriately and effectively apply our key clinical frameworks during interventions with students. This training also supports us in weaving trauma-informed practices through our everyday interactions with staff, students and caregivers to support our initiatives in implementing a trauma-informed, resilience-focused and identity-affirming school district.

MAINTENANCE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

Emergency First Aid Training with CPR

First aid training was held at the CEC for custodial staff on August 3, 2023. Eight staff members were trained during this day-long session.

Joint Health and Safety Meeting

The Joint Health and Safety Committee held its first meeting of the 2023-24 school year on September 20, 2023. Items discussed including the following:

- Election of Co-Chair
- Health and Safety Representatives and training
- PPE update
- Incident reporting
- Hayes award
- Workplace Violence Risk Assessments
- Monthly inspections

The meeting minutes are posted on the Google Administrative site.

RECOMMENDATION

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