



## REPORT TO THE HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Prepared by: Tara Boreham and Sean McDade, Superintendents of Education  
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Submitted by: Karen Tigani, Director of Education and Secretary

## 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 Strategic Plan is “On Fire With The Spirit: Awaken! Illuminate! Rejoice!” Inspired by the Holy Spirit and enlivened by the Pentecost story, we continue moving forward 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 semester in our secondary schools and a new term in elementary. It is also the beginning of Lent. Our schools and offices are marked by a deep 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**

#### **Lent**

Many of our schools celebrated Shrove Tuesday on February 17, enjoying pancakes for lunch in preparation for the start of Lent. Schools celebrated Ash Wednesday with Masses, many of which took place in Catholic churches within our partner Families of Parishes and some of which took place in the schools. Where Mass was not possible, schools celebrated prayer liturgies led by students and staff. Throughout the season of Lent, our schools will be engaging in many examples of prayer, almsgiving and acts of charity. This is a beautiful season for us to reflect on our Catholic mission and vision. It’s an invitation to consider how we can strengthen our faith, both individually and as a community, as we walk the path of daily living and learning together

#### **Development and Peace Schools (D & P Schools)**

Across our board, schools are putting faith into action through the Development & Peace Schools Program. This Lent, our students are taking on the Major Mustard Challenge to support the 'On Track for Justice' campaign. These efforts are more than just a fundraiser; they are a powerful act of unity, connecting our district with the global push for a more just world.

### **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 Equity Learning Coordinator, 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, and 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, bulletin boards, and social media posts about Black Saints, authors, actors and humanitarians.

### **OCSTA Catholic Identity Posters**

Each school received a set of the OCSTA Catholic Identity posters. Schools that offer French Immersion programming also received a set in French. These posters will be displayed in the hallways as a visual reminder of some of the core foundations of our Catholic Faith. Lessons and activities to support these posters are being developed by the Religion and Family Life Learning Coordinator and will be shared once completed. We are grateful for OCSTA's continued support of resource development for our schools.

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## **LEADERSHIP**

### **Indigenous Education at King's**

Superintendent Sean McDade, Indigenous Lead Heather George, and Indigenous Graduation Coach Joshua Pagan attended a special event hosted at King's University College in London: *Vatican Indigenous Repatriations: A Dialogue*, held on Monday, February 9, 2026.

This important dialogue explored the recent repatriation of Indigenous cultural belongings from Vatican collections, and situated this moment within broader histories of colonialism, Church involvement, and the ongoing work of truth, reconciliation, and healing. Moderated by Dr. Robert Ventresca, the event featured insightful contributions from Dr. Cody Groat (Western University) and Noah MacDonald, JCL (Regis College, University of Toronto). The evening offered a thoughtful and respectful conversation grounded in scholarship, lived experience, and shared responsibility. Huron-Perth Catholic DSB is grateful for opportunities like this that deepen understanding, strengthen relationships, and support our ongoing commitment to Indigenous education, reconciliation, and Catholic teaching.

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### **Assessment Working Group**

The assessment working group brought together a diverse cross-section of educational leaders, including teachers and principals from both elementary and secondary panels, learning coordinators, and superintendents, to ensure a unified approach to assessment practices in our system. Grounded in prayer, the session centered on a review of Policy 2.2.8 and the digital procedure resource, emphasizing that assessment should be a transparent, asset-based

process that prioritizes student learning. By leveraging the perspectives of both classroom practitioners and board-level administrators, the group provided feedback on operational procedures to ensure fairness across all grade levels and reviewed the current diagnostic list to support differentiated instruction. The meeting concluded with a commitment to integrate this collaborative feedback into a refined policy draft and a communication plan, ensuring that our assessment and evaluation practices remain rooted in the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.

### **Grade 3 and 6 EQAO Professional Learning Sessions**

Starting in February, the Literacy and Math Coordinators began hosting small-group sessions for teachers who are new to Grades 3 and 6. 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 deeper 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.

### **Leaders Learning Council (LLC)**

A virtual LLC was hosted on February 10, with a major focus on Professional Learning regarding PPM 140, which mandates the use of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The session reinforced that ABA is an essential, evidence-based instructional approach designed to support skill acquisition, positive behavior development, and academic performance. Administrators reviewed critical expectations, including the requirement for formal transition plans, the need to tailor instruction to individual profiles within IEPs, and the mandatory collection of data to track progress. Significant emphasis was placed on implementing "Universal Supports" such as visual schedules and positive reinforcement. It was noted that while these strategies are vital for students with ASD, they create healthy classroom practices that benefit all students.

The Learning Coordination Team also reviewed our Roadmap to EQAO, outlining a strategic timeline to support student success in the 2025-2026 assessments. Key next steps included a SERT meeting on February 13 to focus on data-driven interventions and a subsequent review at the February 24th LLC meeting. The roadmap establishes a clear schedule for the spring, featuring professional learning for Grade 3 and 6 teachers on the specifics of the reading, writing, and math tests, alongside system-wide support for Tier 1 students.

An in-person LLC will be hosted on Tuesday, February 24. The morning session will be dedicated to faith formation through the University of Notre Dame course, Foundations of Catholic Belief. In this unit, participants will explore the scriptural foundations of Catholic leadership under the guidance of Professor Leonard DeLorenzo. The session will invite leaders to engage in a close reading of Scripture to deepen their understanding of salvation and reflect on how Jesus Christ restores Creation. This formation aims to help leaders view Scripture as a living source of wisdom that sustains their work in Catholic education.

Following the faith formation sessions, the afternoon will focus on academic achievement with a deep dive into our Roadmap to EQAO. This session will provide an opportunity for leaders to examine data trends and insights to support student learning. This comprehensive plan aims to foster a collective belief in student success while ensuring that principals, teachers, and support staff are fully trained and prepared for the assessment administration period in April and May.

Superintendents of Education will also provide operational updates.

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## ***SPECIAL EDUCATION***

### **February SEAC Meeting**

In February, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) met for a collaborative and informative session focused on student well-being and system capacity. Members received an update from the Board's Mental Health Lead, highlighting current initiatives, emerging needs, and ongoing work to support student mental health across our schools. SEAC also heard from the Board's Behaviour Consultant, who shared an overview of the Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCI) rollout, including training priorities and implementation planning. These presentations supported meaningful dialogue and reinforced the Board's commitment to safe, supportive, and responsive learning environments for all students.

### **Full-Day SERT Meeting**

February also included a full-day professional learning session for Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs), focused on strengthening instructional practice, mental health literacy, and data-informed planning. The day included continued learning from the Mental Health and Special Education Literacy Course (Module B), an introduction to EQAO to support assessment practices, and dedicated time for data dives, trend analysis, and planning targeted supports. The session balanced learning, reflection, and collaboration, with time built in for planning next steps to support students with diverse learning needs. The day concluded with a shared commitment to applying these insights to enhance student outcomes and well-being across the system.

As part of the day, we were also proud to support Community Living Central Huron's 36th Annual Heartwarming Luncheon. This meaningful initiative raises awareness and funds for the many valuable programs Community Living provides within our communities, reflecting our shared commitment to inclusion, dignity, and belonging for all.

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

### **Connecting French Language Learning to real-world STEM Opportunities**

At Jeanne Sauvé, students in Grades 5–8 are engaging in authentic, real-world STEM opportunities through the FSL Experiential Learning “Growing Our Own” strategy. This program utilizes Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) resources to use STEM as a springboard for French communication. By integrating coding in Scratch and LEGO SPIKE robotics with FSL curriculum expectations, students are building both their technical literacy and their confidence in oral French. This initiative not only enhances student engagement but also aligns with provincial goals to increase proficiency and interest in French-language pathways through high-yield, hands-on learning.

### **Huron-Perth Catholic DSB District Skills Preparation**

Preparation is well underway for our annual HPCDSB District Skills Competition, with dedicated teams from every elementary school in the district working to refine their skills. Students are collaborating to solve complex challenges in four key categories: Robotics, Mechanical Engineering, Green Energy, and Construction. This period of preparation provides a unique form of experiential learning, allowing students to apply classroom concepts to practical, competitive scenarios. By engaging in these skilled trades and technology pathways now, our students are

developing the critical thinking and problem-solving abilities essential for success in the modern workforce.

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## ***STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT***

### **Mathematics**

During February, the Math Team, consisting of three Math Facilitators and one Math Learning Coordinator, continued to support the teaching and learning of mathematics by working alongside teachers and students in classrooms and providing targeted interventions to meet diverse learning needs. In the coming months, additional targeted support will focus on Grade 3 and Grade 6 students to strengthen understanding and readiness for the provincial EQAO assessments. Facilitators will work alongside classroom teachers to engage students with recently released EQAO mathematics questions using the high-impact practice of Teaching About Problem Solving. Problem solving is central to mathematical learning and to the development of critical thinking, perseverance, and responsible decision making. By exploring authentic assessment questions, students review key curriculum expectations while learning strategies for approaching unfamiliar tasks with confidence. Instruction emphasizes the problem-solving process, encouraging students to reflect on their thinking, learn from mistakes, and develop independence as learners. Math Facilitators model these practices with both students and educators, making mathematical thinking visible and fostering rich discussion in classrooms. This work is being strengthened through the team's participation in Ministry webinars on Deliberate Practice, which support educators in refining instructional moves, using evidence to guide next steps, and deepening professional learning focused on student impact. The Math Team also met with teachers and principals during release time to examine student achievement data, identify strengths and unfinished learning, and plan precise next steps, reinforcing the essential role of data in shaping responsive instruction. This collaborative approach supports equitable outcomes by ensuring students across the system have access to effective instruction that builds strong reasoning skills, resilience, and a positive identity as capable mathematics learners.

### **Literacy**

Throughout the month of February, the system Literacy Team successfully wrapped up the Middle of the Year Early Reading Screening at all schools and transitioned into a comprehensive data analysis phase. Teachers were and continue to be provided with the opportunity to meet one-to-one with a literacy resource teacher to examine their specific results and discuss instructional next steps. This individual coaching has proved to be incredibly valuable, as it offers dedicated time to discuss the unique learning pathways of individual students. Simultaneously, the team collaborated with the Superintendent to determine where potential interventions will be necessary across the system. Furthermore, the team completed their Acadience Mentor training, a step that increased the efficacy of our leaders to continue supporting the system with the most recent literacy research.

### **Multilingual Learners**

February was a busy month for our Multilingual Learner (MLL) support services as Mary Katherine Simmons visited every school with MLL students to update their Observable Learning Behaviours within the Clevr system. These updates are essential, as they define the specific next steps for each student's language acquisition and ensure our data remains current and actionable. During these visits, Mrs. Simmons met with teachers to discuss the individual learning needs of each student, providing tailored suggestions for classroom programming and instructional strategies. We are so pleased to have her expertise working within the elementary

panel, as this collaborative approach ensures our educators feel supported while our Multilingual Learners receive the precise programming necessary to thrive.

### **Secondary eLearning**

Semester 1 wrapped up 7 online eLearning courses being offered through our two secondary schools. This was extremely successful with 96% of these students earning their credits. In semester 2, we are offering 5 more eLearning courses, in which 112 Huron-Perth students and 34 external students are currently enrolled. In addition to this, we have 50 Huron-Perth students taking courses through another Catholic school board, as part of our Catholic Virtual Ontario consortium.

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

### **Certifications & Safety Training**

#### **First Aid/CPR Training**

On February 23 and 24 over 45 SHSM students from both schools had the opportunity to receive their First Aid/CPR certification. This certification is a requirement to earn an SHSM designation on the OSSD.

#### **Working at Heights Training**

During the month of February, St. Michael Catholic Secondary School (SMCSS) hosted specialized Working at Heights training for students in the Construction, Agriculture, and Arts and Culture SHSM programs.

- Feb. 11–12: The first sessions saw 24 participants complete their training.
- Feb. 24: Additional students finalized their certification later in the month.

This training is highly valued by industry employers and serves as a significant resume booster, ensuring students are safety-compliant and prepared for the workforce.

#### **Health and Safety Training**

All cooperative education students attended a Health and Safety Training presentation in early February. This is a requirement for both the Co-op and SHSM programs.

### **Dual Credit Opportunities**

Our partnership with Conestoga College continues to thrive, with St. Michael hosting a specialized dual credit course in Criminology and CSI. Led by veteran Stratford Police Detective Scott Campbell, the program provides students with an expert look into the industry. Additionally, registration is now open for Semester 2 programs at Conestoga, Lambton, and Fanshawe, giving our students a head start on their post-secondary journeys.

### **OYAP Apprenticeship Placements**

Students have commenced preparing for their apprenticeships. Semester 2 placements include electrical, HVAC, plumbing, and transportation programs.

### **Grade-Level Presentations**

Course selection presentations took place in the second week of February, with a focus on SHSM and Dual Credit pathways for Grade 10 and 11 students.

### **Annual Development and Peace–Caritas Canada Workshop**

On February 17, SHSM students from SACSS traveled to King’s University College in London to participate in the Development and Peace-Caritas Canada High School workshop. The event promotes social justice locally and globally and encourages student action through campaigns, solidarity tours, and social media.

### **OYAP Level 1 Program**

St. Anne’s CSS has three students enrolled in OYAP Level 1 Programs:

- Conestoga Plumbing – 1 student
- Conestoga Electrical – 1 student (previously waitlisted)
- Fanshawe HVAC – 1 student

On February 5, we hosted an OYAP Level 1 information session. Students gathered to explore apprenticeship opportunities and Level 1 programs available through our partnerships with Lambton, Conestoga, and Fanshawe Colleges.

### **Grade 10 Visits**

During February course selection, SHSM teachers at SACSS visited Grade 10 classes to discuss program benefits and enroll interested students for September 2026.

### **Dual Credit – Semester 1 Results**

Students earned both high school and college credits.

- Electrical Fundamentals – Conestoga (6 students)
- Applied Plumbing Techniques – Conestoga (10 students)
- Methods & Media in Drawing – Fanshawe (2 students)
- Introduction to Paramedicine/Emergency Services – Fanshawe (12 students)
- Digital Photography – Lambton (2 students)
- Criminology – Lambton (2 students)
- Canadian Diversity & Strategies in Community Safety – Lambton (3 students)
- The Great Outdoors – Lambton (1 student)
- Personal Wellness – Lambton (1 student)
- Introduction to Residential Electrical – Lambton (1 student)
- Bakeshop Applications – Lambton (1 student)
- Hairstyling & Cutting Techniques – Lambton (1 student)

Total Credits Attempted: 42 | Completion Rate: 97.6%

### **Grade 10 SHSM Course Selection Meetings and Presentations**

Course selection presentations and SHSM enrollment sessions were completed for Grade 10 students to prepare for the 2026–27 academic year.

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

### **Community Partner Survey on Attendance and Student Engagement**

Guided by our spiritual theme, *On Fire with the Spirit* to live with purpose, compassion, and hope, the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board recently engaged community partners in a survey focused on school attendance and student engagement. As valued members of our broader school community, these partners will offer important insights and experiences to

support our understanding of attendance-related challenges, effective supports, and opportunities for growth.

Supporting student attendance has always been recognized as a shared responsibility across families, schools, and community organizations. By gathering input from our partners, the Board will deepen its connections within the community and strengthen its capacity to provide meaningful support to students and families.

Grounded in our spiritual commitment to listening, reflecting, and acting with intention, the feedback collected through the Community Partner Survey will help inform ongoing strategies, outreach efforts, collaborations, and resource development aimed at nurturing environments where students feel supported, valued, and inspired to succeed.

### **Grade 7 Girls Social Dynamics & Healthy Relationships Group (Feb 12–Mar 5)**

St. Mary's School in Listowel will run a series of female empowerment workshops for all Grade 7 girls, focused on strengthening peer relationships, communication skills, and reducing exclusionary behaviours. Weekly sessions, facilitated by the School Based Social Worker, classroom teachers, and featuring a presentation from Marg Geurtz (OPP), will explore identity and belonging, emotional regulation, assertive communication, and strategies for fostering a more inclusive peer culture. Through scenario-based practice and reflection, students will build resilience, apply healthy relationship skills, and contribute to positive social change within their grade.

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

The Mental Health and Wellness Team (MHWT) developed a “grab-and-go” Pink Shirt Day Resource to support classroom discussions and anti-bullying activities promoting kindness across our schools on Pink Shirt Day, Wednesday, February 25, 2026.

In addition, school staff received *Bullying: Information for Educators*, created by the MHWT to enhance understanding of bullying and to support educators in responding effectively to students who may be experiencing bullying.

### **Caregiver Engagement: Introducing the By Your Side Caregiver Resource**

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*?

- Understanding school mental health supports
- Caring for yourself while caring for others
- Supporting children with stress and anxiety
- Building positive relationships and managing conflict
- Talking with your child about mental health
- Understanding stigma and promoting resilience

Schools across the board have received the materials and are actively sharing them with families to strengthen home-school partnerships. This initiative reflects HPCDSB'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**

The Joint Health and Safety Committee met on February 18.

Topics discussed:

- eBase Reporting
- Online Reporting Tool training, Occasional Teacher login, Principal follow up
- Health & Safety School Rep Training
- Walkie Talkies
- JHSC Terms of Reference Update
- Messaging of Safe School Incident Report and when to report

**RECOMMENDATION**

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