



REPORT TO THE HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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Presented to: The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025
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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 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. January marks the beginning of a new year and is marked by 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.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Feast of the Epiphany

On January 6, we celebrated the Epiphany across our system. Schools recognize this day that we remember the revelation of God of the Three Wise Men through the birth of Jesus Christ. Students learned about this special day through lessons in our elementary schools and staff acknowledged the day through special traditions such as a Kings Cake. This officially marks the end of the Christmas season.

Feast of St. André Bessette

The Feast Day of St. André Bessette, the patron saint of our Catholic school board and a humble servant of God known for his unwavering faith and devotion to St. Joseph was celebrated on January 6 throughout our system. Schools engaged in special prayers and learning activities to honour our patron saint. We continue to seek his intercession for hearts that are faithful and humble, as we strive to grow together as a Catholic education community. In the words of St. André, "It is with the smallest brushes that the Artist paints the best paintings."

Catholic Student Leadership Team Update

Final preparations are underway for the Catholic Student Leadership Team retreat that will be happening in February. The theme of the retreat is “We are Called” (Micah 3:8). Students will be reflecting on their gifts as Catholic students and how God is leading them in their faith. Guests from the Diocese of London, including Fr. Danny Santos (Vocations Director), the Chaplaincy team from King's University, and local Huron-Perth Deanery members will be leading sessions focused around this theme. Plenty of opportunities for team-building and fun will be provided. This event is happening at Camp Kintail, located in Huron County. This is being planned by our Religion and Family Life Coordinator in partnership with our secondary school Chaplains.

LEADERSHIP

Leaders' Learning Council (LLC) - January 14 (virtual)

Our monthly virtual Leaders' Learning Council convened on January 14, beginning with a warm welcome and a heartfelt prayer led by one of our administrators. The focus then shifted to Shared Leadership.

Our Registered Behaviour Analyst provided our administrators and Learning Coordination Team with professional development on Universal Supports. She presented a comprehensive overview of best practices for providing effective support to all students within the education system. Following this, our Multi-Language Learning Support Teacher presented the valuable resources available on our MLL website. Additional information regarding this new resource is explained in greater detail in the Student Achievement portion of this report.

Superintendents then shared that School Visits would be scheduled over the next week and that the agenda would include discussing each school's respective School Improvement Plan, Pastoral Plan, and analyzing literacy and numeracy data related to our Strategic Plan including discussing EQAO preparation plans.

Leaders' Learning Council (LLC) - January 28 (in-person)

Superintendents, principals, vice-principals, learning coordinators, and other system leaders will gather for a full day of professional development at the Catholic Education Centre in Dublin on January 28. The morning session will focus on two strategic priorities: Math and Literacy. Participants will explore strategies to prepare schools for provincial standardized testing (EQAO). The literacy and math learning coordinators will co-lead these sessions, guiding principals in analyzing historical EQAO data trends and planning best practices to support student success.

In the afternoon, Dr. Richard Zayed will deliver an insightful session on the key elements of leading mentally healthy schools and fostering resilience. This will provide principals with an opportunity to consult and discuss their critical role in creating mentally healthy school environments. The session will emphasize actionable strategies for effective school leadership, leaving principals with practical tips and ideas to implement immediately in their schools.

Strategic Planning for Board Math Leads

Our system's board math lead (Superintendent of Education) and math learning coordinator attended a provincial wide Math Achievement Action Plan (MAAP) strategic planning session on Wednesday, January 15. During this virtual session, we heard from three other boards in the province and how they have been implementing their own MAAP.

International Education

There are several new developments to report. Five students from Brazil will be attending Huron-Perth CDSB secondary schools in February 2025. Three students will be attending St. Michael CSS and two students will be attending St. Anne's CSS. These five Grade eleven students will be enrolled for the entire semester. They are coming to Canada through a Scholarship Program for the start of their third year of high school. This program is funded by the Brazilian Government and their government hired an international agency to place high school students throughout Canada. Griffie International Education from Brazil is the agency that was awarded the contract. These students come to the Board from Parana, a state just south of Sao Paulo.

Principal Grace has secured a second student for September 2025 and this Grade 10 student will be attending St. Michael CSS for the entire academic year. This student comes to us from Madrid, Spain, via Language Kingdom, one of the largest international education agencies in Spain. This will be the second student from Language Kingdom attending St. Michael CSS. Currently, there is a Grade 9 student attending St. Michael CSS from this same agency for the 2024-25 academic year.

Two new International student recruitment agencies have signed non-exclusive contracts with the Board. As a result, there are now twenty-two 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.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Educational Assistant Google Classroom & Professional Development Modules

In January, all Educational Assistants (EAs) were added to a Google classroom and our first online PD module was launched. EAs were required to complete one module by the end of January, and will have two modules for each remaining month of the school year (February, March, April, May, June) totalling 11 modules by the end of June 2025. Each module will include the main material, additional resources and information so that there is an option to extend learning, as well as a quiz and feedback form that must be submitted. The current focus for PD modules will be "Universal Supports". Over the next 5 months, SERTs, Principals, and Inclusion Reps will also learn about Universal Supports in order to build capacity within schools, and in turn improve student achievement and well-being outcomes.

Early Years Planning

During January, meetings and planning began to take place in order to begin to ensure success for all learners as we welcome our incoming JKs with Special Education needs to our school board in September 2025. Learning Coordinator of Special Education, and System Special Education Resource Teacher met with System leaders in Avon Maitland DSB and our Early Years Resource Consultants within Huron and Perth to begin this important transition planning and preparation.

Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) Meeting

On January 9 all SERTs gathered at the Catholic Education Centre for a full day SERT meeting. SERTs explored topics related to Universal Supports, Attendance, Literacy and Intervention, Speech and Language Services, Behaviour Referrals, and worked with Facile Perth to learn about inclusive Transition Planning and Pathways for all students.

DIGITAL TOOLS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

Grade 7 and 8 STEM Workshops

In preparation for the upcoming District Skills Competition in February, students have been participating in STEM workshops led by learning coordinators and our guidance and transitions teacher. They are developing foundational coding skills and applying programming concepts to create functional, technology-driven projects. Using digital tools, students are engaging in the engineering design process by planning, designing, and iterating their prototypes to enhance performance. Through hands-on activities, they are building and testing machines such as wind turbines and driving bases, leveraging digital resources to make informed modifications. These initiatives underscore our commitment to equipping students with the technological and problem-solving skills essential for success in STEM-focused pathways.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Elementary Mathematics

The Math Team, consisting of three Math Facilitators and one Math Learning Coordinator, began the new year by preparing scope and sequence lessons for Term 2. They also provided teachers with sample report card comments that align with the Term 1 lessons. The team visited elementary schools for one-on-one check-ins with teachers, gathering feedback and discussing next steps for each class. Math Facilitators also met with each elementary principal, discussing student data and an area of focus for each school. By the end of January, the team returned to their regular schedule, offering ongoing Math support to teachers and students across all schools, with additional support days dedicated to priority schools.

Additionally, the Math Team played a key role in the rollout of *MathUP Student*, a new supplementary practice resource that complements both our scope and sequence and our core resource, *MathUP Classroom*. This resource offers printable and digital practice materials, as well as student-centered instructional videos accessible both in class and at home. The team also worked closely with schools to provide additional manipulatives, ensuring every class has the necessary tools to build a strong conceptual understanding of the Ontario Math Curriculum, with an emphasis on Grades 4 to 9. These manipulatives are integral to the Universal Design for Learning approach, particularly the Concrete-Representational-Abstract model, which underpins our Scope and Sequence lessons. Using these tools and representations allows students to develop a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts before transitioning to abstract notation.

Elementary Literacy

Starting January 6, our two Literacy Resource Teachers initiated a six-week cycle of early reading interventions, taking place two full days per week at Sacred Heart, St. Mary's Goderich, St. Ambrose, and St. Aloysius. This targeted intervention is designed for students in Senior Kindergarten (SK) through Grade 2 and is based on early reading screening data collected in October. Schools were selected for participation based on the results of these screenings. The intervention is being delivered in small groups or through individualized sessions, with a focus on specific areas of student need, including phonological awareness, phonics, word-level reading, and fluency. This approach aims to provide students with tailored support to enhance their foundational literacy skills.

In parallel, the System Literacy Team, led by Learning Coordinator MJ Drager, is preparing for the second round of screening across all schools. This screening will follow a process similar to the initial round. As part of this, all classroom teachers (SK-2) will be granted release time and provided with lesson plans to administer the Middle of the Year (MOY) Acadience reading screening to their students. The Literacy Team will support teachers by modeling the screening process and providing guidance through shadow scoring each subtest. This phase also presents an excellent opportunity for in-the-moment professional learning for educators, particularly in the area of structured literacy. Teachers will gain valuable insights into effectively supporting students within the regular classroom setting, ensuring ongoing development of literacy skills across all grade levels. This collaborative effort is part of our ongoing commitment to enhancing early literacy outcomes for all students.

Multilingual Learners

A newly developed Google site has been launched to provide educators in our Board with a comprehensive range of resources designed to support newcomer students. The site covers key topics, including strategies for supporting students during their first days of school, literacy development, general classroom strategies, and technical solutions tailored to meet the needs of these learners. This website was officially introduced during a virtual LLC on January 14 and is now accessible to all staff. It offers valuable tools and insights to help educators effectively support newcomer students in their academic journey.

Secondary Mathematics

On Thursday, January 9, math teachers from St. Michael CSS met with Coordinators Christine Dale and Paul D'Hondt to review best practices for Grade 9 math, co-plan lessons, and connect these practices to the scope and sequence of Grades 7 and 8. During the session, they also explored available resources to support their teaching.

EQAO Math - Semester 1

Teachers at both secondary schools have been preparing students for the Grade 9 EQAO Assessment of Mathematics by incorporating targeted practice and review sessions into their curriculum. They have focused on reinforcing key mathematical concepts and problem-solving strategies to ensure students feel confident and ready for the assessment. Additionally, teachers have provided students with various mock tests and resources to familiarize them with the test format and expectations. Students participated mid-January.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS IN SECONDARY

Guidance Department Efforts

The guidance department has been diligently working to ensure all Grade 12 SHSM students meet the necessary course requirements to earn their SHSM Certificate upon graduation. We have been proactively reaching out to students who are missing requirements, including Co-op courses, and have informed them of after-school Co-op options available in Semester 2.

Cooperative Education Placements

Students are currently finishing their Semester 1 Co-op placements, gaining valuable hands-on experience in their respective fields.

New CNC Equipment

St. Michael CSS has received a new CNC Milling machine and five desktop CNC milling machines, which will be in operation starting in Semester 2. This equipment was funded through

a \$92,000 CTMA grant and will ensure that students are trained on the latest technology, keeping them competitive in today's workforce.

Dual Credit Courses

St. Michael CSS and St. Anne's CSS students successfully completed a Dual Credit Plumbing course which was highly successful. We are exploring the possibility of offering this course again in the future.

Semester 1 Dual Credit Report

We extend our gratitude to our college partners for offering a wide range of dual credit opportunities this semester. A total of 38 dual credits were earned, 38 college credits and 38 high school credits. These experiences will provide students with valuable insights as they explore various career pathways.

SMCSS Dual Credit Course Summary:

In partnership with Conestoga College, the following credits were earned:

- Introduction to Residential Electrical - 14
- Plumbing - 5
- Culinary - 1
- Early Learning and Care - 1
- Basic Food Preparation - 17

SACSS Dual Credit Course Summary:

In partnership with Conestoga College, the following credits were earned:

- Introduction to Residential Electrical - 6
- Plumbing - 11
- Culinary - 1

In partnership with Lambton College, the following credits were earned:

- Bakeshop Applications - 1
- Styling and Cutting Techniques - 1
- Criminology - 1
- Canadian Diversity and Strategies in Community Safety - 1
- Safety and Welding Basics - 2
- Introduction to Residential Electrical - 1
- Arboriculture and Chainsaw Practices - 2
- The Great Outdoors - 1

In partnership with Fanshawe College, the following credits were earned:

- Basic Food Preparation - 10

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP):

We are actively engaging with the Ministry of Education's new programming for potential OYAP students. In addition, we are preparing students for upcoming interviews as part of their application process.

OYAP Level 1 Program Update at SMCSS

We are pleased to announce the following students have been accepted into the OYAP Level 1 programs:

- 1 student accepted into the Conestoga OYAP Level 1 Plumbing Program (March 2025)
- 1 student accepted into the Lambton OYAP Level 1 Welding Program (April 2025)
- 1 student accepted into the Fanshawe OYAP Level 1 Truck and Coach Program (April 2025)

- 1 student accepted into the Fanshawe OYAP Automotive Service Technician 310S Program (April 2025)
- 4 students accepted into the Fanshawe OYAP Industrial Electrician Program (April 2025)
- 1 student accepted into the Fanshawe OYAP Residential Air Conditioning Systems (April 2025)

OYAP Level 1 Program Update at SACSS

SACSS is excited to announce the following students have been accepted into the OYAP Level 1 programs:

- 1 student accepted into the Conestoga OYAP Level 1 Electrical Program (March 2025)
- 1 student accepted into the Lambton OYAP Level 1 Welding Program (April 2025)

Fusion 360 Training:

On January 31, both St. Michael CSS and St. Anne's CSS school technology department teachers will receive Fusion 360 training during the PD day at SACSS. The instructor, Kevin Lee from Autodesk, will lead the session. The training will support the integration of our new 3D printers, CNC Milling machines, desktop milling machines, plasma cutters, and wood router CNC machines.

Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM):

Both St. Michael CSS and St. Anne's CSS continue to enhance our experiential learning programs, focusing on career readiness and technical skills. We are collaborating with local colleges and industry partners to provide students with relevant, hands-on experiences that align with current workforce demands.

Upcoming SHSM Training and Experiential Learning Opportunities:

St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School

- WHMIS, Health and Safety (basic) and Customer Service Training
- 2 sessions of First Aid/CPR Training - Feb. 24 - 27, 2025
- Jill of All Trades at Fanshawe College, Feb. 20 2025

St. Michael Catholic Secondary School

- CPR
- First Aid
- Working at Heights
- Health and Safety
- Elevated Work Platform Training

These events are essential for Co-op and SHSM students who require specific certifications for their placements.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Increased Social Work Support:

The Mental Health Team welcomed a new addition, Natalie Rosedale, to our dedicated team of Social Workers. Natalie graduated with her Master of Social Work from King's University College at the University of Western Ontario and has been hired temporarily to provide School Based Social Work support.

Through this we are positioned to offer more substantial assistance for student absenteeism and continue to develop our attendance and school engagement resources. Additionally, the team will be engaged in district level system support related to the development of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and resources to advance more Tier 1 and Tier 2 mental health and school engagement initiatives across the district.

This initiative is a significant step forward in our commitment to nurturing the holistic growth of our students and enhancing our school and family relationships. By redistributing our workload and boosting our support capacities, we aim to enhance student attendance, mental health and well-being, equity, and family engagement.

These changes align with our broader District goals to:

- Advance our Board's Strategic Priority: Student Attendance
- Progress the Mental Health and Addictions Roadmap and Action Plan
- Strengthen Multi-Tiered System of Supports for attendance, school engagement and positive school climate
- Integrate the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGE) with Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) for district-wide implementation
- Support our equity and inclusion initiatives

Supporting A Mentally Healthy Return to School:

The Mental Health and Wellness Team launched a January Wellness Month resource to promote mental health awareness and support the implementation of wellness activities for staff and students. The team prepared a weekly guide for both elementary and secondary educators to incorporate into their classrooms and help guide them in weaving wellness and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health Literacy in the Classrooms:

The Mental Health Team continued to prioritize Tier 1 interventions as we returned after the Holiday Break. In both our elementary and secondary panels, our School Based Social Workers facilitated 5 classroom-based SEL or mental health literacy sessions for students using evidence-informed resources. These resources were designed to help students recognize their emotions, stress, and worries, and provided practical ways to cope with difficulties. Approximately 155 students across both panels actively participated in these sessions, demonstrating consistent engagement and enthusiasm throughout the learning process.

Professional Development:

Members of the Mental Health Team completed an Identity Affirming Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT-IA) Training through School Mental Health Ontario. This provided a deeper understanding about using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) with students in a way that is identity affirming, culturally appropriate and client-centred.

The team also participated in a seminar with Dr. Richard Zayed regarding Attachment and Psychotherapy which supported our understanding about pairing relational approaches with evidence-informed psychotherapeutic practices to ensure positive outcomes for the students we work with.

FACILITIES SERVICES AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

Joint Health and Safety Committee

The Joint Health and Safety Committee met on January 8. Topics discussed included the following:

- Monthly inspections (updated)
- Annual inspections Review
- eBase - Staff Training and Incident Reporting
- JHSC access to online reporting tool
- Health and Safety Training for school representatives
- Annual workplace Risk Assessments
- Naloxone
- Electrical appliances in classrooms/offices
- First Aid training

Facilities Services

We have experienced significant snowfall over the past couple of months, and the cold weather has firmly set in. Our heating contractors have been working tirelessly to ensure that our buildings remain comfortable for all students and staff. Additionally, our snow removal contractors are diligently working to keep our grounds clear and safe.

We appreciate the dedication and hard work of our contractors during this challenging season. Their efforts ensure that our schools remain safe, warm, and accessible, allowing students and staff to focus on teaching and learning without disruption.

RECOMMENDATION

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