



## CDSBEO Online Summer School

St. James Catholic education Centre is working to increase growth mindset in students and adults through wellness programming, equity and inclusion and improved pathway planning and credit accumulation in all schools that it oversees. There are seven schools under the St. James Catholic Education Centre umbrella (serving the intermediate and senior grades), including the CDSBEO eLearning program, continuing education, night school, literacy/numeracy school, summer school and the PSW adult day school program.

Jennifer Lentz, Vice-Principal of St. James Catholic Education Centre, provided an overview of the program offered as part of the 2020 Summer Learning.

"The 2020 Summer Learning was comprised of three programs including the summer Connections program, summer online credit courses, as well as support to the grade 7/8 summer learning program," began Lentz.

"As in past years, we partnered with RNJ Youth Services, the Children's Aid Society, Brockville City Police, and Employment and Education Counselling to offer a summer Connections program for at risk students who are below in credit count. The program is a small, intensive program, capped at 10 students which aims to provide academic and social supports to at-risk students. This year, we supported 8 youth."

Through the innovation of this program, students were able to acquire up to two academic credits over the two-month summer break. Students were supported remotely.

"We are pleased to say that we did have one graduate from the program and granted 13 credits," noted Lentz.

The largest program offered was the summer online program which delivered 76 courses to 948 secondary students and adults.

"Our most popular course continues to be grade 10 Civics and Careers. This year, we offered six sections in French, serving 154 students and eight sections in English, serving 152 students."

Of the 940 students registered, approximately 900 credits were granted and 82 students going into grade 9 took advantage of the Reach Ahead opportunities to earn an extra credit. Reach ahead opportunities for incoming grade 9's were focused on courses that may not be available during the school term including, Information and Communication Technology in Business (Open), Leadership through Literacy (Open), Learning Strategies (Open), Learning Strategies (Open - French Immersion), Spanish (Academic) and Personal Fitness.

"Personal Fitness was a new, innovative course we developed this summer that used personal Fitbit fitness trackers to help students push themselves beyond their baselines," noted Lentz.



"Students were provided with a personal FitBit and engaged in daily vigorous physical activity for approximately 30 minutes. Daily workouts were posted with instructions and students logged their progress in a fitness journal. Students were introduced to the Dynamic warm up, the importance of warm up and cool down, set and reps, circuit training and safety protocols including proper hydration, nutrition, sun safety and heat related illness."

Students in the Leadership through Literacy course worked to improve their literacy skills, while strengthening their understanding of themselves, and their roles as leaders in the community. Students were challenged to consider their own leadership potential, evaluate their current habits, and were encouraged to commit to making positive changes regarding personal organization, work ethic, and responsibility. They learned about various leadership styles and took personality and strength quizzes to identify their own leadership strengths. The course culminated with a community outreach campaign which had students put their leadership into action through connections with various individuals and organizations in their community, with leadership and communication as the focus.

"Thank you for the enthusiasm that you demonstrate for the programs delivered through St. James Catholic Education Centre. We are grateful to have creative and talented leaders providing these excellent programs," concluded Chair Lalonde.

## Religion and Family Life Education

The Department of Religious and Family Life Education has worked diligently to design and implement practices that adhere to the directives of the Ministry of Education and local public health authorities, while preserving and adapting practices of our faith and access to religious education. This year, the department will undertake many initiatives, as we all adapt to the new educational landscape characterized by virtual classrooms and electronic resources.

Principal of Religious and Family Life Education, Paul Mantha, outlined the many initiatives the department will be implementing this school year.

"In light of COVID-19, our work may look different however our vision continues to be inspired by the teachings of Jesus and our mission remains a determined endeavor to proclaim our Catholic faith in all we do. Through this presentation we hope to illustrate how we have adapted our work and through our adaptation demonstrate that living ones' Catholic faith is always an experience of learning and growth."

This year, the Board will conclude the very successful spiritual theme, Be Holy - Joy Springs from a Loving Heart! The Board will be leveraging the significant technological learning experienced over the last several months, by moving the final year resources online, providing easy access to teachers and learners.



By extension, the new spiritual theme, which will be implemented beginning September 2021, will be developed with the virtual resources in mind, using the assistance of teachers with wide-ranging talents and comprehensive technology skills to create enticing virtual and in-person classrooms. French teachers will also develop engaging lessons that captivate learners in our many French Immersion classrooms.

“Together with our schools, our department purchased a seven-year license for access to all online Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ resources for grade 7 students, teachers and parishes,” noted Mantha.

“This marked a departure from the traditional acquisition of hard copy teacher’s guides and student texts. Considering the reality of school today, it was a perfect time to make the change. In addition, we are currently investigating the possibility of upgrading our access to Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ resources from grade 1 through 6 from solely hard copy programs to online licensing for each of these grades. This would mean that this year, while we live through the new COVID reality and moving forward for several years to come, our students and staff along with parishes would be provided with full access to a wide ranging suite of resources that can be accessed from varying entry points – both paper and electronic.”

This year, schools will continue their work on Equity and Inclusion through a focus on experiences of discrimination based on poverty and socio-economic status. Through the use of various data, schools (in collaboration with Religious and Family Life Department and the Equity and Inclusion Committee), will work to establish practices that ensure equal access to all facets of school life, for all students.

The Board will also be introducing the Umbrella Project in 20 schools, including the CDSBEO Virtual Elementary School. This program, which was designed with Catholic students in mind, is a teacher-led curriculum created to help teachers, students, and parents to reframe the perception of challenges and provide tools to cope with stress.

“This is a perfect time to introduce this program, as it will have a significant positive impact on students, teachers and parents as we navigate these challenging times,” noted Mantha.

“As we endeavour to maintain strong ties between home, school, and parish, our department staff links ensure a continuous flow of essential information between and among Catholic stakeholders. There are many important and notable connections maintained between and within homes, schools, and parishes by our Faith Ambassadors, Chaplaincy Leaders and Umbrella Project leads.”

The department is also currently preparing many school activities to celebrate CDSBEO Week, which will take place October 5-9.