



CDSBEO Strategic Plan Update

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario launched a new Multi-Year Strategic Plan in 2020. This plan was developed through consultation with many stakeholders to ensure that the voices of students, families, staff, parishes, and community members were celebrated and represented. The purpose of the multi-year strategic plan is to help the board set long-term strategic priorities and goals. Anchored by four tenets – believing, protecting, learning, and nurturing, the plan guides all areas of the board’s operations.

CDSBEO Superintendents Brent Bovaird, Dawn Finnegan, Heather Gerber and Norma McDonald, presented an update on the strategic plan, and provided many examples of how the goals and guiding principles come to life in CDSBEO schools.

The tenet of Believing responds to the universal human hunger to know and foster an intimate relationship with God. This tenant connects with many amazing board and school initiatives which are rooted in the Gospel, and which also support our board spiritual theme – I Belong Here: Together we are God’s good news! CDSBEO schools are safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments where everyone knows and feels that they belong.

“Our students are always learning about the importance of supporting our school communities as God calls us to do,” noted Superintendent McDonald.

A new and very popular addition to our Religious Education Programing this year is the “Breakfast With God” sessions. This 30-minute faith-based discussion is hosted by Father John Whyte, CDSBEO Faith Animator and Kate Veinotte, Religious and Family Life Education Consultant. Broadcast live via Teams to primary classrooms across the board, the session focuses on a Gospel message and the children engage in prayer, sing songs, and read a short story focusing on various themes such as sharing, love, and forgiveness.

The Believing tenant also came to life more recently through the many Lenten activities and fundraisers which took place in schools to support those in need. From collecting donations for local food banks, to providing education to a family living in poverty, CDSBEO schools participated in many ways, demonstrating how to live the Gospel, build partnerships, and celebrate differences.

The tenet of learning acknowledges the board’s commitment to support all students and staff on their faith and learning journey. Schools provide many opportunities for students to explore diverse viewpoints and voices with a special emphasis on marginalized and Indigenous voices. Much awareness and understanding has been built around First Nation, Metis and Inuit history, perspectives, and culture through amazing Indigenous community partners and innovative resources.

Each day, staff help students develop 21st century competencies through engaging and dynamic lessons. Using interactive technology, inquiry-based learning approaches, and



experiential learning opportunities students develop their creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills. Many examples were provided by Superintendent Bovaird.

"We continue to promote and focus on using the universal design for learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction approaches with our educators so that we meet the learning needs of all students," noted Superintendent Bovaird.

Protecting guides initiatives which promote action around environmental stewardship and in creating safe, welcoming, and inclusive school environments. Students are engaged in activities which encourage them to act wisely and justly. Superintendent Finnegan presented many examples of initiatives which support this tenant including participation in Earth Day, World Water Day, school recycling programs, breakfast and nutrition programs, equity and anti-racism guest speakers and resources, professional development, and mental health initiatives.

"Our staff engage in ongoing professional development sessions which focus on equity and inclusion. Dr. Nicole West Burns has been an integral component of leading these learning sessions which have explored the history of racism and oppression in the Canadian context and have had school equity teams engage in an equity inquiry based on the needs of their school communities," explained Superintendent Finnegan.

Lastly, the tenet of nurturing reflects the board's priority of creating welcoming, Christ-centered communities that foster safe, loving, and inclusive learning environments for all members of our Catholic school community. Superintendent Gerber provided an overview of some of the board's accomplishments connected to this tenant, which include engagement with stakeholder groups such as the Parent Involvement Committee, the Special Education Advisory Committee, and the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, providing opportunities for inquiry based learning, being responsive to student voice, engaging in many mental health initiatives, and welcoming feedback from families, community partners and other stakeholders.

"The board has created many opportunities to foster student well-being," explained Superintendent Gerber. "The Parent Involvement Committee hosted an engaging guest speaker for our students in late November. Scott Ste Marie, spoke to our students about mental health and he pulled on expertise from his lived experience with depression and anxiety."

"I think it is safe to say that the pandemic did not hold the CDSBEO back, and when I see all of this culmination come together, it makes me so proud to be part of this amazing board," concluded Superintendent Finnegan.

Vice-Chair Wilson noted that the presentation truly brought the board strategic priorities to life across the board.



CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

Board Meeting Highlights
From the meeting held May 3, 2022



"There are so many ways we are fulfilling the strategic priorities. I was delighted to see how they have manifested within our schools, and how they connect back to the Catholic Graduate Expectations. This is the best strategic plan that I have ever witnessed during my time as a trustee."

A video, which brings to life many highlights of the strategic plan in action was created by CDSBEO Communications and can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/TBOHfq_Nbxw