



Mental Health

CDSBEO has developed a three-year Mental Health and Addictions Strategic Plan, as well as an annual Action Plan to support student mental health and well-being. The Board works closely with School Mental Health Ontario who's practical, evidence-based resources help to ensure Ontario school boards are well-equipped to support our students.

CDSBEO Mental Health Lead Strategist Selina Mackie presented details of the board's mental health service delivery and outlined the roles of various professionals who support these programs. Additionally, an overview of the goals and priorities of the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy were provided, along with key highlights of the Action Plan.

At the provincial level, School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) assists school boards with services through the provision of evidence-based strategies, services, supports and data to identify needs and ascertain service provision. SMHO assigns an implementation coach to every board to support the development of strategies and plans which deliver targeted intervention supports and programming. Additionally, collaboration is supported through province-wide communities for professional groups (support staff, regulated mental health professionals, mental health leads) to network, share implementation ideas and participate in training opportunities. Classroom resources for teachers including lesson plans and back to school support packages are available.

"In CDSBEO schools, Mental Health and Addiction Counsellors offer intervention services for those with mild to moderate mental health concerns, as well as assessment and referral services for those experiencing more complex mental health concerns and who require more intensive services in the community," explained Mackie.

Twenty-one student support workers work closely with school teams to provide whole school and classroom mental health programming that is beneficial for all students.

"Their role is largely about promoting mental health and providing initial support where needed and carrying out referrals to our Mental Health and Addiction Counsellor, should there be a requirement."

The three-year Mental Health and Addictions Strategic Plan, which aligns with the CDSBEO strategic priorities, is a data informed document which outlines board mental health service provision including areas of strength, as well as goals which are the focus for program development. The goals include increasing mental health literacy and capacity of staff and parents to support students, expanding internal data collection, and establishing robust engagement and collaboration mechanisms.

The 2022-2023 Mental Health and Addiction Action Plan has been developed as an extension of, and to support the goals of the strategic plan. The plan outlines actionable tasks for the 2022-2023 school year including professional development days for staff, the implementation



of a digitized method of data collection and management, and the development of psycho-education groups to work with students to develop awareness and coping skills.

As part of the Action Plan, virtual parent sessions were offered in July which focused on anxiety, how to facilitate self-regulation, and supporting the back-to-school transition. Over 300 parents participated.

"It is certainly exciting to see the many ways our students are being supported, and the many facets of program deployment being provided to students, staff and parents," concluded Chair Lalonde. "We are grateful that our students will reap the benefits of such a comprehensive approach to their wellness."

Remote and Online Learning

Remote and online learning are two virtual learning opportunities available for CDSBEO students. Remote courses offer a synchronous component where children are learning together at the same time through instruction by a qualified educator. Online learning is the asynchronous option, where students are provided work created by a qualified educator to complete individually, at different times than their peers.

Virtual Learning School Principal Catherine English and eLearning Coordinator Karen Tobin, shared information with the Board of Trustees on the current offerings regarding virtual learning, as well as requirements for remote learning under Policy Program Memorandum (PPM) 167.

"Over the past few years, we have seen our education system change and evolve to continue to meet the needs of students, and we are learning to adapt and meet the needs in creative and innovative ways," began Principal English.

"Two ways in which CDSBEO student learning is being supported includes opportunities to access remote learning and online learning."

The provincial *Requirements for Remote Learning* are set out in PPM 164. Remote learning replicates a school day and includes mandatory synchronous learning blocks with minimal asynchronous learning blocks. A qualified teacher instructs the remote elementary class or secondary courses directly with students. Students receive a 300-minute instructional day with breaks and lunch. Remote learning is an option available to grades K-12 students in CDSBEO.

"CDSBEO joined a Catholic Consortium of comprised of six Catholic school boards to deliver remote learning to secondary students. Educators within the consortium can focus on one instructional delivery model. It is important to note that remote learning provided under PPM 164 does not count toward secondary students' two Ministry of Education mandatory online course requirements," explained Principal English.



On February 1, 2022, Policy Program Memorandum 167 was released. The memorandum outlined the two legislated online courses for secondary students, that the Ministry requires to be completed prior to graduation. These online learning credits are different from remote learning as these courses are designed to be completely asynchronously. The requirement is intended to help support the development of digital literacy and transferable skills.

“As it is this year’s grade 11 students who will be first affected by this new graduation requirement, our Board focused on supporting these individuals by offering additional grade 11 courses via our online learning day school classes,” noted Tobin.

According to the memo, online learning courses are grade 9 to 12 credit courses delivered entirely using the internet and do not require students to be physically present with one another or with their educator. Students may take these online courses during any period during the day.

In addition to joining the Remote Consortium, the Board is also a member of Catholic Virtual Ontario, which helps to focus on Catholic education and best practices within a virtual environment. Recently, TVO released several courses that were built without Catholic content. Catholic Virtual Ontario had teachers from across the province, including some CDSBEO teachers, participate in embedding Catholic Graduation Expectations into these courses. With more courses on the way, this consortium has released 22 new courses that are readily available to support students and educators in high school. These courses can be used in blended learning, a remote and/or an online learning capacity.

“We look forward to continuing to support all learners within the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario with these various modes of learning,” concluded Tobin.