

IGNITING HOPE



DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT
2019-2020

MISSION & VISION

Mission

The mission of Catholic Education in Hamilton-Wentworth, in union with our Bishop, is to enable all learners to realize the fullness of humanity of which Our Lord Jesus Christ is the model.

The Catholic Community of Hamilton-Wentworth believes the learner will realize this fullness of humanity if the learning process

- begins at home and is part of family life
- is nurtured in the Parish
- is anchored in the Catholic Faith
- takes place within the context of worship, sacraments, and the life of the Church
- is enhanced by the school community
- is embraced by the learner as a personal responsibility for life

If learning takes place in an appropriate and challenging environment

- in which members of the school community exemplify the teachings of Jesus Christ
- which reflects Gospel values and responsible use of human, financial and natural resources
- which promotes academic excellence and clear indicators of achievement

Vision

Learners from Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Schools will demonstrate:

- knowledge and practice of their Catholic Faith
- the capacity of nurturing a strong family unit
- esteem, respect and responsibility for self and others
- academic competence
- the ability to listen accurately and express knowledge clearly
- independence, critical thinking and effective problem solving
- proficiency with technology in order to adapt to a changing world
- the values, attitudes and skills for effective partnerships
- the ability to transform our society

To enable learners to achieve this vision, the faith community of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board will reflect

- the centrality of Jesus Christ in our lives
- the teachings of the Catholic Church
- exemplary role models
- social justice, respect and fairness for all
- a dedicated staff
- a curriculum that is dynamic, practical and relevant
- high standards
- an environment conducive to learning
- effective partnerships
- accountability at all levels

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Unprecedented. It became the defining word of 2019-2020.

Inspired by our Catholic Education Week theme, "Igniting Hope," we began the 2019-2020 school year full of hope for the year to come and eager to ignite hope in our world.

"Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire," extolled St. Catherine of Siena.

And we did. Through peace activities and community volunteerism, the annual "Walk with Christ" pilgrimage walk, a youth eco summit, various mental health and wellness initiatives, numerous sports achievements, and other notable successes, our students and schools kept the flame burning bright.

The first inkling of foreboding came on January 27, 2020 in a communication from the Ministry of Health warning of the first cases of the novel coronavirus on our northern shores. Within two months, our schools were closed and our communities in lockdown as we sought to flatten the curve. It was unprecedented.

What was not unprecedented was the way our students, teachers, staff and parents responded to the global crisis. They not only ignited hope, but throughout the school closure, would serve as beacons of light and hope for our world. To those who kept the torch lit during the dark days of the pandemic, I offer my deepest thanks.



David Hansen
Director of Education



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

In a 2017 TED Talk entitled, "The Future You," Pope Francis delivered an inspiring discourse on the healing power of love.

"To Christians the future does have a name. And its name is hope," he stated. "Feeling hopeful does not mean to be optimistically naïve. Hope is the virtue of heart that doesn't lock itself into darkness, that doesn't dwell in the past, does not simply get by in the present but is able to see tomorrow."

Igniting Hope, the theme of this year's Catholic Education Week and Director's Annual Report, is a recurring theme in Catholic Education, but never has its flame been so crucial as during this past year when we, as Catholic Christians, were called to bring light and hope to our families, parish and school communities, and world. As Pope Francis reminds us, hope is cause for encouragement, challenge and renewal.

Hope was clearly present this past year – a year that began as usual with all the programs, services, activities, and celebrations that are such an important part of Catholic school life. It remained firmly in place during the mandatory school closure through the heroic and faith-filled service of our system and school leaders, teachers and support staff who rose to the challenge and kept the flame of hope burning bright in our schools.

I would like to recognize our staff, parents and parish partners and colleague Catholic trustees for their hope-filled commitment to "place Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church at the centre" of students' learning experiences.



Patrick J. Daly
Chairperson of the Board



COVID-19

The novel coronavirus disease was first reported in Wuhan, China, in 2019. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a highly infectious disease caused by the SARS-Co-V-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2) virus that spreads easily from an infected person through droplets and aerosols.

On January 25, 2020, Canada reported its first presumptive case of COVID-19. By March, there were 725 confirmed cases in Canada, and more than 100,000 world-wide. A global pandemic was declared on March 11. That same day, Ontario reported its first COVID-19 related death.

In a nation-wide effort to flatten the curve, by late March all provinces mandated the closing schools, universities, public playgrounds, and non-essential businesses. Other measures included travel bans, quarantining travelers entering Canada, capacity limits, rigorous testing for COVID-19, case and contact management protocols, and research into a COVID-19 vaccine.

The school closure would remain in effect for the remainder of the school. Ontario's Framework for Reopening, unveiled on May 19, outlined a 3-stage plan for reopening, with Hamilton entering the final stage on July 24.

As of July 13, 2020, Canada had documented 107,861 COVID-19 cases and 8,787 COVID-19 related deaths.*



*Detsky, A.S. (2020, August 10). COVID-19 in Canada: Experience and Response. JAMA. jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2769439.

COVID SCHOOL CLOSURE TIMELINE

January 25, 2020

Ontario identifies first presumptive confirmed case for the Wuhan novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

March 12, 2020

Ministerial Order implemented to close all publicly funded schools, effective March 14 to April 5, 2020

March 14, 2020

HWCDSD schools close for 3-week period

March 16-20, 2020

March Break

March 24, 2020

Province announces mandatory closure of all non-essential workplaces

March 31, 2020

Province extends school closure to Friday, May 1 for staff and Monday, May 4 for students

April 6, 2020

Phase II Distance Learning begins (return to teacher/educator supported learning)

April 26, 2020

Province extends school closure until at least May 31, 2020

May 19, 2020

Province announces that schools will remain closed for the remainder of the school year

May 19, 2020

Hamilton moves into Stage 1 of Ontario's Framework for Reopening

June 12, 2020

Hamilton moves into Stage 2 of Ontario's Framework for Reopening

June 30, 2020

Expiration of Ministerial Order to close schools

July 20, 2020

Hamilton moves into Stage 3 of Ontario's Framework for Reopening

July 30, 2020

Ontario releases Plan for the Safe Reopening of Schools in September 2020



“IGNITING HOPE” IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

“Having faith does not mean having no difficulties but having the strength to face them, knowing we are not alone.” ~ Pope Francis

As communities around the world reeled from the impacts of COVID-19, students and staff across the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board focused on how to be beacons of light and hope during the darkest days of the pandemic. Here are some highlights:



3-D printers were redeployed to the Nicholas Mancini Centre where educational staff volunteered their time and expertise to produce headband straps for surgical masks. The parts were distributed to healthcare workers on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.



St. Mary's MakeShift and St. Jean de Brébeuf's SJB Odyssey robotics teams repurposed their 3D printers to produce face shields for healthcare workers at St. Joseph's Healthcare. SJB Odyssey and St. John Henry Newman's robotics teams also built sterilization carts for three long-term care homes.



After learning that many students were experiencing hardship due to COVID-19, St. John Henry Newman CSS staff collected \$2,700 and partnered with Genuine Bakery to provide hot meals for families in need.



Staff at St. Clare of Assisi CES raised funds for De Mazenod Door, an outreach that provides 300 meals daily to needy individuals in the downtown core. Together they raised \$2,440 to purchase 300 lunches from Pita Pit which staff served to clients.

- A group of football parents from St. Thomas More CSS came together to raise money to feed healthcare workers at St. Joseph's Hospital. The group partnered with Paradise Subs to deliver over 300 subs to St. Joseph Healthcare on April 3.
- Staff at St. Agnes CES donated \$930 to support outreach efforts at De Mazenod Door.
- St. Margaret Mary CES organized a Zoom Trivia fundraiser in support of Food4Kids, an agency that provides weekend food packages for 1,200 students at 68 schools. More than 60 people throughout the system signed up, raising \$2,010 for the organization.
- A library clerk at the Nicholas Mancini Centre used her background in Fashion Technique and Design to sew masks for frontline workers at various hospitals and healthcare facilities.
- Students at Sts. Peter and Paul CES shared videotaped messages of thanks to essential and frontline workers.
- Grade 1 and 2 students at Our Lady of Peace CES created signs, posters, letters and art for the residents of Pine Villa Nursing and New Village Retirement Residences to remind them that they were being thought of during the COVID-19 shutdown.
- A student at St. Lawrence spread messages of positivity on sidewalks throughout her neighbourhood.
- When their music gala was cancelled, the BR Xpression vocal ensemble delivered an online performance as a message of hope to the Bishop Ryan community.
- Grade 1 students at St. Matthew CES prepared a video to show their appreciation to all the frontline workers who are keeping them safe from COVID-19.
- A Grade 11 student at St. Thomas More CSS used her musical talent to sing tributes to frontline workers. She sang one song a day on her porch since the start of the lockdown.
- Grade 5 and 6 students at St. Teresa of Avila CES participated in a Food Drive Challenge in support of Neighbour 2 Neighbour.
- A teacher at St. Ann (Hamilton) CES and her daughter sold hand-made masks with profits going to the local food bank.
- During Catholic Education Week, primary students at St. Michael CES wrote messages of hope and drew inspirational pictures for residents and staff at Macassa Lodge.
- St. Thomas More Healthcare Program delivered timbits and coffee to staff at St. Peter's Residence at Chedoke Hospital.
- Many students participated in a #HWCDSThankYou campaign, drawing pictures for and writing inspirational messages to our frontline workers. Messages of hope and support were also shared with the #HopeInHWCDSTwitter campaign.



THOUGHT EXCHANGE

A ThoughtExchange consultation undertaken by the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board in May 2020 sought feedback from students, parents and staff directly impacted by distance learning on what worked well, what didn't and what needed to improve.

A total of 2,099 participants took part in the consultation, sharing 2,864 thoughts and rating 50,798 others. A little more than half of the respondents were parents/guardians while staff accounted for 28% of the respondents and students the remaining 20%.

More than a third of respondents described their experience with distance learning as "challenging," while another third called it "stressful." Asked about the course workload, 47% of respondents felt that students received the right amount of work, 16% felt there was too much, and 13% felt there was too little. Three-quarters felt that the students' faith formation was supported during the school closure through online activities, religious-focused learning tasks and opportunities for prayer and reflection.

"Thoughts" shared on the online platform were organized into eight top themes:

- Lesson delivery/online learning;
- Connection/communication;
- Assessment, evaluation & reporting;
- Learning at Home digital supports;
- Equity in Learning;
- Religious Education & Faith Formation;
- Mental Health & Well-Being; and,
- Special Education.

Feedback from the ThoughtExchange was used by the board to support students' distance learning needs.



HWCDSB BOARD IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT 2019-2020

The Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA) 2019-2020 guides the work of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board to increase student achievement and well-being for all students and serves as a transitional document until the next Multi-Year Strategic Plan is approved. Strategies under the Believing pillar focus on student faith formation, religious education and the integration of faith teachings in all aspects of school life, Catholic identity, faith-filled learning environments and

parish partnerships. Under the Achieving pillar, strategies are aimed at improving student achievement and engagement, and include assessments, interventions, and programming in support of numeracy, literacy, and/or STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics). The Serving pillar continues to focus on the Catholic school environment, mental health and well-being, promoting vibrant physical literacy and activity programs, and respect for diversity.

MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

With the Mission & Vision of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board as the foundation, the Multi-Year Strategic Plan focuses on three strategic priorities that align closely with the Board's motto: Believing, Achieving, Serving.

- i. Believing: Nurturing Our Catholic Community*
- ii. Achieving: Student Achievement and Well-being*
- iii. Serving: Stewardship – Effective Management of Resources*

Through careful leadership, both formal and informal, guided by the principle of subsidiarity, and focused on inspiring the creativity and ingenuity of all in the HWCDSB, the Multi-Year Strategic Plan will allow the Board to deliver on its responsibility to enable all learners to realize the fullness of their humanity of which Our Lord Jesus Christ is the model.

BELIEVING: NUTURING OUR CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Educating students in a Christ-centred learning environment is at the core of Catholic Education. The focus of this strategy is to ensure that our schools deliver on the Mission of the HWCDSB to enable all learners to realize the fullness of humanity of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the model. This is achieved by promoting a vibrant

relationship with parishes and priests through faith formation, religious education and Christian service; and by cultivating authentic Christian communities in schools that support the physical, spiritual, social, emotional and mental well-being of students and staff.



"Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in the Catholic School...Without constant reference to the Gospel and a frequent encounter with Christ, the Catholic school loses its purpose."

(The Catholic School, The Sacred
Congregation for Catholic Education,
1977, #34, #55)

Equity and Inclusive Education

An equity and inclusive education policy, implemented in April 1993, sets out the policies, programs, procedures and practices by which the HWCDSB promotes and maintains a Catholic educational and working environment that fosters racial and ethno-cultural understanding. Despite the conviction that all people are created in the image of our loving God, recent examples of anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism challenged the board to review its current practices and commit to doing more to eradicate discrimination and racism in its schools and board buildings. In an open letter to the community, the HWCDSB acknowledged that “racism and specifically anti-black racism is a reality for far too many” and

that the Catholic school system “can and must do better.” Pledging to listen to the voices of black, Indigenous and other minority populations and to learn from those who have and continue to experience racism, in June 2020, the HWCDSB approved the establishment of an Anti-Racism Education Committee comprised of Black, Indigenous and other racialized staff, students and parents as a first step in the development of equity and anti-racism programs that support and build on the work being done in HWCDSB classrooms and schools. Other initiatives included the hiring of a System Equity Officer, a review of hiring practices and the development of more racially representative hiring strategies, and system-wide professional development in anti-racism education and training.





Equal Opportunities Initiative

The HWCDSB believes that a good education can provide a pathway out of poverty. Through the Equal Opportunities Initiative, schools with disproportionately large populations of socio-economically disadvantaged students receive additional resources and supports to mitigate the effects of poverty on student achievement. Interventions over the years have included additional instructional resources, school nutrition programs, after hours activities and out-of-class learning opportunities, parent engagement activities, reduced class sizes, additional Social Worker support, tutoring services, arts programming and access to community services. The strategies have resulted in improved EQAO reading, writing and math results and Kindergarten literacy scores and reduced secondary school drop-out rates. In addition to board funds, the Equal Opportunities Initiative receives financial support from community partners, including the Hamilton Community Foundation and Hamilton Bulldogs Foundation. In March 2020, in response to the provincial shutdown, the Bulldogs donated \$50,000 to Food4Kids to ensure that children who normally relied on school nutrition programs didn't go hungry. An additional \$55,000 from various groups, including the board's Spiritual Social Network, was used to purchase grocery gift cards for families during the school closure.

Walk with Christ: Justice for the Poor” Pilgrimage

The annual pilgrimage was established in 2003 as a system-wide service project for Grade 7-12 students to raise awareness about social justice issues in the Developing South, and to create a mechanism through which students could commit their support. Close to 3,000 students and staff participated in this year's event which kicked off on October 20, 2019, with a Eucharistic Celebration at Cathedral High School, followed by an 8km walk up the Escarpment Trail. In the past 17 years, the pilgrimage has raised over \$650,000 for development projects in Uganda, Haiti and the Dominican Republic.



Religious Education

Religious instruction is provided through the Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ elementary religious education program. The program is based on the Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document for Religious Education, Grades 1-8, which has been approved by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO). Growing in Faith, Growing in Faith are grade-level programs to engage learners in an exploration and appropriation of religious education knowledge and content. In 2019, the ACBO released the Grade 7 Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ resource; the program was implemented in Grade 7 classrooms in September 2019. Many Gifts, a custom Catholic resource by Nelson that integrates the Ontario Catholic Graduate School Expectations and Catholic social teachings into the curriculum, was also purchased for Grades 2 and 3. The revised Ontario

Health and Physical Education curriculum for Grades 1 to 8, released in August 2019, includes updated expectations in a number of areas, including mental health. The Healthy Living section of the curriculum which covers human development and sexual health is taught using the Fully Alive Family Life Education program sponsored by the ACBO. The program encourages students to grow in Christian maturity as they discover the distinctively Catholic view of human life, sexuality, marriage and family. At the secondary level, Religion and Family Life Education are integrated into the Religious Studies courses at each grade level. In addition to Religious Education, students regularly participate in liturgies, masses and the sacraments, and Catholic teachings and Gospel values are authentically integrated across all curriculum areas and throughout all aspects of school life.



Christian Service

The HWCDSB continues to provide ongoing opportunities for students to participate in authentic Christian service. Secondary students are required to complete a minimum of 40 hours of community/Christian service in order to earn their Ontario Secondary School Diploma. In 2019-2020, the Ministry of Education waived the 40 hours for graduating students, due to COVID-19. Christian service hours may take place in a variety of settings, including a 40 x 40 Christian Service Program offered to graduating Grade 8 students completed more than 40 volunteer hours.



Students who completed Christian Service Hours 2019-2020

GRADE	40+HOURS	LESS THAN 40 HOURS*	TOTAL STUDENTS
9	222		222
10	578		578
11	932	1	933
12	2676	277	2953

**Graduating students who completed less than 40 hours*

Catholic Education Week 2020

Catholic Education Week, held annually during the first week of May, is an opportunity for staff, students and families to give thanks for the precious gift of publicly funded Catholic education, and to celebrate the significant contributions that Catholic Education has made to our communities, province and country. The CEW theme for 2020, "Igniting Hope," was especially meaningful during this year of pandemic when Catholic Christians were called to bring light and hope to the world. Due to COVID-19 and the school closure, CEW activities were celebrated online, including a Diocesan CEW Mass celebrated by His Excellency, Bishop Crosby. A number of home resources were developed by the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) for students and families, including prayer services, book lists, movie samples, inspirational messages, and a host of family activities aimed at bringing hope to our community.



"Learning with Faith"

In 1997, ten years after the Bishops of Ontario published their pastoral letter, This Moment of Promise, the HWCDSB undertook a renewal process to reflect on how Catholic schools continue to "build communities animated by Gospel values" and retain their Catholic distinctiveness amid the challenges of a changing cultural landscape. The review resulted in a Learning with Faith: Our Catholic School Identity document which not only provided a clear understanding of a Catholic school's identity but served as a practical guide for the school to manifest and enhance its Catholic character. In 2019, the HWCDSB revisited the document to ensure, in light of current realities, that the necessary resources and most effective strategies continued to be directed to fundamental programs that distinguish Catholic education. Over the ensuing months, a review by elementary and secondary principals generated a gap analysis outlining areas of need for Catholic schools to strengthen Catholic education in schools. Their work was supplemented by further research using the National Catholic Education Association's Charism and Culture: Cultivating Catholic Identity in Catholic Schools. The document continues to be a primary resource for all school communities. It provides a description of the Catholicity of a school and an invitation to a school community to self-analysis and evaluation.

Stewardship of Creation

HWCDSB schools are Eco Schools. Ontario EcoSchools is an environmental education program designed by school boards to incorporate environmental education and environmentally responsible action into the school setting. Adopted by the HWCDSB in 2005, it continues to be the primary instrument through which the board's SERE (Social and Ecological Responsibility in Education) Committee supports Stewardship of Creation within the HWCDSB. The program is integrated with, and builds on, the Ontario academic curriculum, and engages students, staff, school administration and parents in an effort toward responsible stewardship through the development of green teams and green practices. Initiatives of 2019-2020 included pollinator gardens, active transportation, eco conferences, tree planting, recycling, litterless lunches, waste and energy audits, and anti-idling zones. Due to COVID-19, the annual Ontario EcoSchools accreditation process was conducted online. In other activities, several hundred Grade 7-12 students participated in a Youth Eco Summit at Mohawk College in October 2019 which showcased local eco heroes and the work that is being done at their schools to ensure a more sustainable future. Environmental education engages students in learning that will enable them to develop the knowledge, skills, perspectives and practices that they need to be active, environmentally responsible citizens.



ACHIEVING: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT & WELLBEING

This priority reflects our call to educate and to nurture all learners to achieve their full potential to transform their communities. This priority includes curriculum, assessment, and instructional strategies. This priority is realized through a focus on the whole

student in which academic achievement is supported by attention to the cognitive, mental, emotional, social, spiritual and physical well-being of each student.



"The (Catholic) school is an institution where young people gradually learn to open themselves up to life as it is, and to create in themselves a definite attitude to life as it should be." (The Catholic School, The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, #31

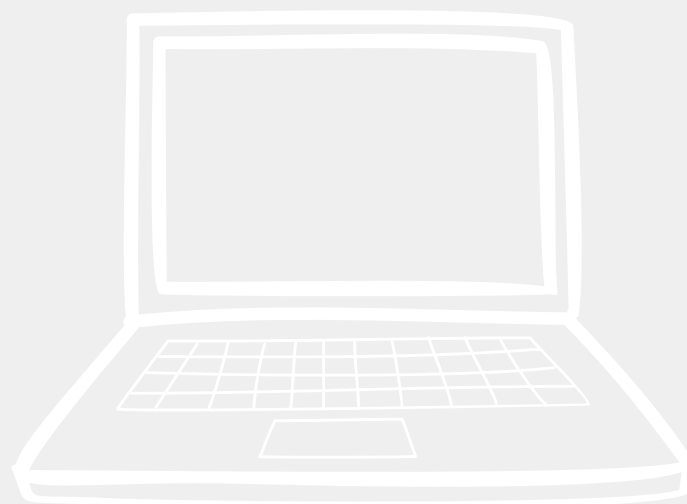
(The Catholic School, The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, #31)

Continuity of Learning During the Mandatory School Closure

On March 12, a Ministerial Order was issued to close all publicly funded schools in Ontario from March 14 to April 5, 2020. Schools would ultimately remain closed until the end of the school year as the province effectively shut down in response to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 outbreak. Following the announcement, HWCDSB curriculum staff developed a number of learning tasks that were made available to students through the myClass Learning Management System (LMS).

The Ministry of Education also provided curriculum-based learning resources through its Learn at Home portal for students K to Grade 12 which constituted Phase I of its continuity of learning program.

On April 6, 2020, the Ministry of Education launched the second phase of Learn at Home which re-established teacher-led learning through daily synchronous and asynchronous instruction. To support equity of access to distance learning, a large number of devices were deployed to students and families, including 772 iPads, 458 network laptops, and 100 LTE (data enabled) iPads for families without internet.



Distance Learning Metrics

	4/1/2020	4/13/2020	4/20/2020	4/27/2020	5/8/2020	5/15/2020	5/28/2020	6/1/2020	6/20/2020
Teachers	1,245	1,377	1,821	1,801	1,808	1,642	1,681	1,701	1,625
Elm. students	5,907	8,130	14,968	14,647	14,530	11,129	11,282	11,919	9,109
Sec. students	5,876	6,108	8,685	7,985	8,068	6,477	6,268	6,096	4,975
Total students	11,783	14,238	23,653	22,632	22,598	17,606	17,550	18,015	14,084

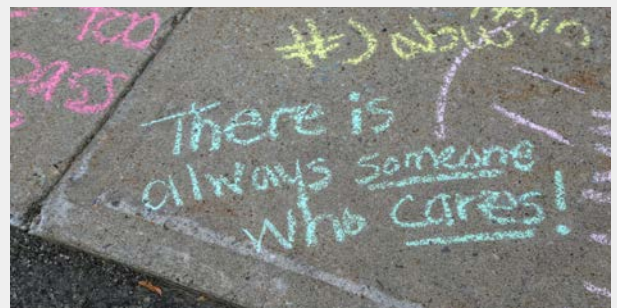
“Tell Them From Me” School Climate Survey

Per Bill 13: Accepting Schools Act, 2012-2013, school boards are required to conduct an anonymous, school climate survey at least once every two years to gauge perceptions from students, parents and staff members on school culture. Results from the Tell Them From Me school climate survey are used by participating schools to make informed planning decisions around bullying prevention and the promotion of safe and inclusive schools. Elementary school findings show that 61% of students feel safe attending school and that 25% of student report “moderate to high levels of anxiety.” In secondary results, 24% of students reported incidents of bullying and exclusion and only 51% of students reported feeling safe attending school. The data will be used by identify school specific responses in addressing areas of concern through whole school and classroom strategies to promote school safety, inclusion and a welcoming environment.

Mental Health

2019-2020 presented numerous changes and challenges for students, parents and caregivers. While mental health and wellness are always important, they were especially so during COVID-19. To support children and families during the pandemic, the board’s Social Work staff compiled and developed a number of online resources for myClass. Other programs were provided over the summer which included short-term intervention blocks of service, wellness check-ins, and parent/caregiver and student sessions

where strategies to support positive mental health and well-being were shared. Throughout the school closure, school social workers continued to maintain their regular caseloads and to connect with students on an as-needed basis. A Kids Help Phone was also launched to 24/7 counselling and information for youth in crisis. Staff mental health resources included an online eBook staff library and access to a pastoral services-employee family assistance program online portal. In other initiatives, a “Youth with Complex Needs” protocol was implemented in 2019-2020. The protocol provides a comprehensive and coordinated approach across all community partners to respond to children and youth who have been identified as being at high-risk for suicide, and who have complex presentations and/or for whom community stakeholders struggled to ensure safety.



Student Success

Student Success is a collection of initiatives that the Ministry of Education has implemented since 2003 to help secondary school students – particularly those at risk of not graduating – earn their high school diplomas. Student Success Teams are established at all of the board's secondary schools to identify and implement interventions by which to address student learning gaps, particularly in at/in-risk students.

Other resources and programs in support of student achievement include experiential learning, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS), the Gap Closing Math Course, myClass/LMS online resources, Credit Recovery programs, Notre Dame House School, Program to Assist Student Success (PASS)/Student Opportunity to Achieve Re-entry (SOAR), Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL), School Within a College (SWAC), St. Martin's Manor, Wilma's Place, Native Youth Advancement With Education Hamilton (NYA:WEH), Dual Credits, Co-operative Education, the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program, AP Advanced Placement courses, and community building/transition programs.

Progress is measured by Individual Education Plans (IEPs), on-track credit accumulation of compulsory credits, EQAO, grad rate, attendance, and annual leaver rates. Through the MISA (Managing Information for Student Achievement) Initiative, the board has been able to build capacity in the area of data collection and management, human resources and technology.

Data is used extensively to track student performance and attendance, enabling early intervention by school Student Success Teams.

In 2015-2016, Math Special Assignment Teachers (MSATs) were hired to support mathematics learning. 2018-2019 data on EQAO school performance indicated that 57% of MSAT assigned schools showed increases in Grade 3 EQAO scores and 61% in Grade 6 EQAO scores.

EQAO

Due to the extraordinary circumstances of the global pandemic, all EQAO assessments were cancelled for the 2019–2020 school year.

Grad Rate

4 and 5-year graduation rates for students from the 2014-2015 Grade 9 cohort are 84% and 88% respectively. In the HWCDSB, 86.2% of females and 80.3% of males graduated in 4 years while 89.5% of females and 85.4% of males graduated in 5 years.



Special Education

The HWCDSB's Special Education Plan and accompanying Parent/Guardian Guide is updated annually and provides an overview of the many programs and services available to students with special education needs. Special education programs and services were challenged during the mandatory school closure (March 14-June 26, 2020) when learning moved online.

Professional and para-professional staff and educational assistants worked remotely to provide consultation and other supports to teachers and/or families where appropriate and on an as-needed basis. Digital devices were also deployed to support students with diverse learning needs in accessing the Ontario curriculum. Up until the school closure, secondary students with special education needs were able to participate in an employment experience to support the transition to meaningful, adult community engagement activities (e.g., employment, volunteering and daily living). Of the 65 students enrolled in the Supported Work Experience Program, 40% participated in day programs, 26% had work placements, 25% were in volunteer positions, and 9% were on track to enter a post-secondary program.

Other programs/services include Speech, Language and Hearing Services, Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Psychological Services. Data for 2018-2019 show the 2,134 students were seen by a Family of School Team Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) with 506 receiving blocks of direct intervention

by EAs and 133 referred to school-based rehabilitation services. Another 380 students were supported by the Complex Communication Team. Of the 2,465 students in the HWCDSB identified by the Identification Placement and Review Committee, 402 (16%) were identified as having autism, whether as a sole exceptionality, or as part of a multiple exceptionality. Approximately two-thirds of students with autism are in the elementary panel and one-third are in the secondary panel. In other support areas, 34 students with special education needs accessed psychological services in 2018-2019. Staff undergo regular training and professional development.



Early Years

The formative years (0-8 years of age) are a vital stage in a child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. Early years professional learning opportunities were provided in 2019-2020 on instructional and assessment practices to improve student achievement and engagement in students K to Grade 3. Activities focused on balanced literacy, counting and quantity, effective instruction and assessment to support learning in Kindergarten, social emotional learning in the early years, physical literacy, and Home Environments Supporting Learning Mathematics (HELMs). The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is used by Kindergarten teachers to measure children's ability to meet age-appropriate development expectations in the domains of physical health & well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language & cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge. The information is used by the board to understand the state of each child's developmental health by connecting the conditions of early childhood experiences to learning outcomes and those areas in which students need the most help.



STEAM

STEAM learning not only provides students with an understanding and appreciation of each of the core subjects of mathematics, science, engineering, arts and technology, but supports real-world learning and the development of transferrable skills. Elementary STEAM activities include FIRST Lego League, school coding clubs, the annual System Science and Engineering Fair, a Grade 7 Design Thinking & 3D Printing Project, career days/fairs, An Instrument for Every Child (AIFEC), junior vocal ensembles, out-of-school learning experiences, and summer science camps. Secondary programs are designed to support students in the exploration of post-secondary destinations and careers in the areas of STEAM, and include Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM), Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), dual credit courses through Mohawk College, FIRST school robotics teams, programming clubs, choirs, glee clubs and vocal ensembles, dance groups, photography clubs, and visual arts displays.

An Advanced Manufacturing MSSC (Manufacturing Skills Standards Council) certification training program offered at Bishop Ryan CSS and Bishop Tonnos CSS in partnership with ArcelorMittal Dofasco and Mohawk College focused on the core skills and knowledge students require to pursue pathways in the field of technological education, advanced manufactured, robotics, and STEM fields. In February 2019, an Aviation and a Transportation MSSC program were piloted at Bishop Tonnos. Of the 76 students who participated in MSSC programs, 71 met the requirements to challenge the MSSC CPT certification exam.



Specialist High Skills Major/OYAP

The Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program was introduced in 2007 to support students in their chosen vocational pathway. The HWCDSB currently offers 47 SHSM programs in 12 sectors at its seven secondary schools. SHSM enrolment was 1,907 in 2018-2019, with 47% of students enrolled in Health & Wellness programs. Other high demand programs include non-profit, business, transportation, arts and culture, and construction. OYAP (Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program), first introduced in 2001, continues to attract students with an interest in the trades. 312 students participated in OYAP in 2019-2020 of which half were female students. Automotive Service Technician is the most sought after apprenticeship, followed closely by Child Development Practitioner and Construction Craft Worker.

Physical Literacy & Health

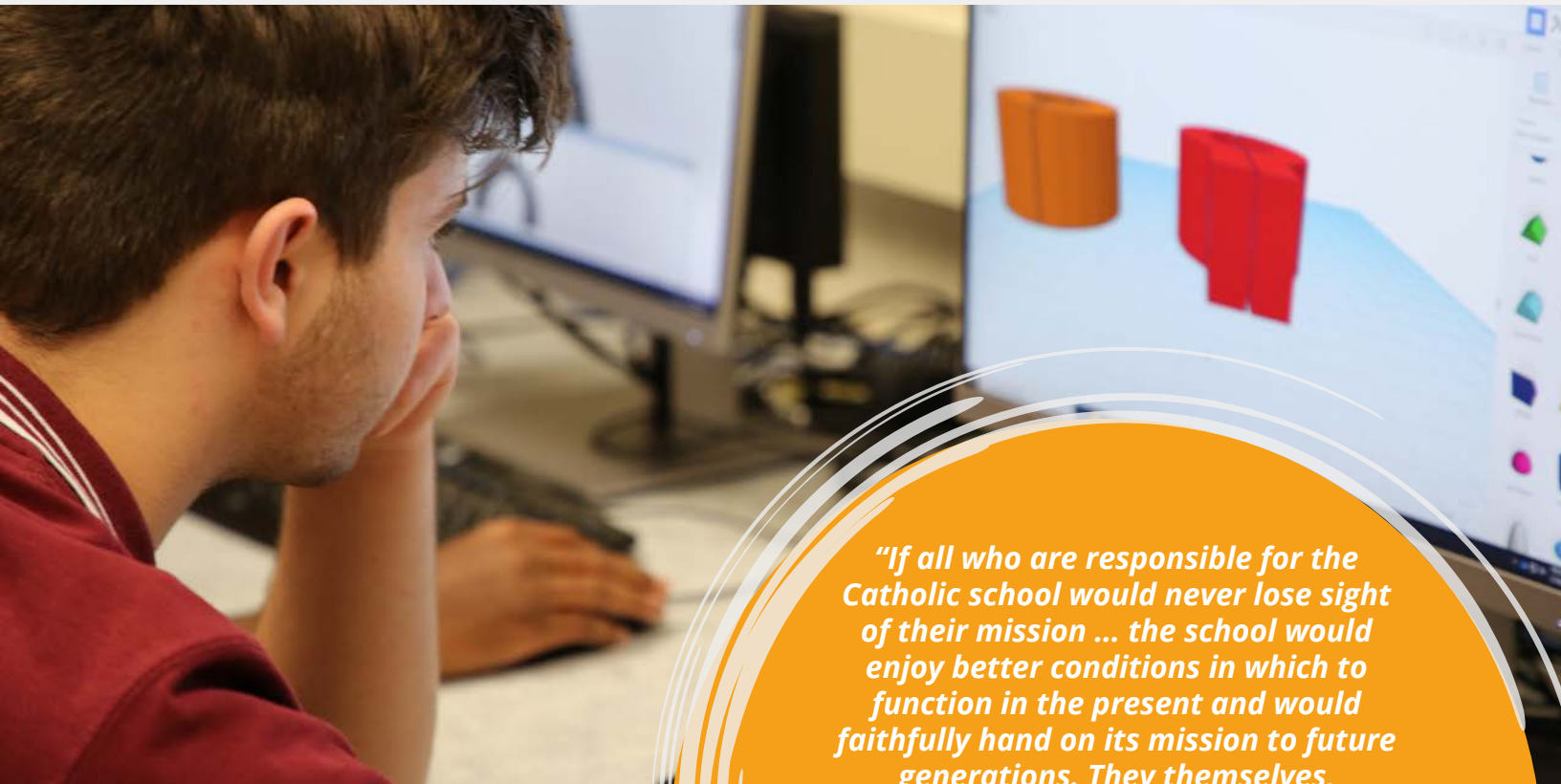
Beyond the physical benefits of exercise, students who are physically active have been shown to have better grades, school attendance, concentration, and classroom behaviours. That understanding is behind the HWCDSB's continued focus on Physical Literacy, a program that supports student achievement and well-being. Initiatives of the past year in support of students' physical literacy included building teacher capacity through the Ontario Physical Literacy Summit, the Hamilton Moves Project, CYO Coaches' Physical Literacy Training, and a new Daily 20 DPA Pilot Project. A L.E.A.D. (Linking the School, Energy on the Playground, All Play, Dynamic Leaders) recess initiative, implemented many years ago in several HWCDSB elementary schools, has also had a positive effect on students' overall success and well-being. The revised Health & Physical Education Curriculum Grades 1-8, implemented in September 2019, was designed to help students learn the skills and knowledge needed to lead healthy, active lives, and make healthy and safe choices. The Healthy Living section takes a more comprehensive approach to mental health and includes new sections on healthy eating; safety (home, school, online, community); drugs, alcohol and other substances and habits; human development and sexual health (including body image, consent); and mental health. Teachers were in-serviced on the new curriculum in October 2019.



SERVING: STEWARDSHIP: EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

This priority focuses on building and sustaining the infrastructure necessary to improve student achievement and nurture our Catholic community. This priority focuses on our leaders, our organization, and the utilization of our

resources. This priority also considers those policies and organizational structures that support pupils in pursuing their faith and educational goals.



"If all who are responsible for the Catholic school would never lose sight of their mission ... the school would enjoy better conditions in which to function in the present and would faithfully hand on its mission to future generations. They themselves, moreover, would most surely be filled with a deep conviction, joy and spirit of sacrifice in the knowledge that they are offering innumerable young people the opportunity of growing in faith."

(The Catholic School, The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, #87)

Technology

As part of the HWCDSB's technology refresh for 2019-2020, 2,000 new iPads were purchased to sustain the board's 4:1 student to mobile device ratio. During 2019-2020 12,300 iPads were deployed throughout the system, including 2,400 dedicated iPads for students with special education needs. The iPads are managed centrally by ICT staff through the Airwatch mobile device management (MDM) solution. In technology infrastructure upgrades, in 2020 the HWCDSB migrated to a new student information system (SIS) to manage student information and related workflows. The Fujitsu/Follett Aspen system replaces Trillium which had reached its end-of-life cycle. The Fujitsu/Follett Aspen SIS is a comprehensive, secure, web-based platform for maintaining student information and providing real-time access to data for students, teachers, parents and administrators. In other upgrades, the Broadband Modernization Program (BMP) was implemented to enhance broadband internet services throughout the board. The transformation involved the provisioning of broadband internet services and SD-WAN (software defined wide area network) capable firewall

gateway appliances locally at schools and administrative sites. In addition to greater internet capacity, the appliances provide enhanced security and network redundancy.

This past year also saw an increase in myClass usage. The myClass Learning Management System (LMS) is a Ministry of Education supported tool offered to all publicly funded schools in Ontario. The platform provides teachers and students with a rich source of digital tools in a safe and secure online environment. During the COVID-19 school closure, myClass became the primary means through which distance learning was supported. In addition to housing a variety of learning resources, myClass digital classrooms were created to support teacher-led student learning during Phase II of the continuity of learning. myClass usage data for May and June 2020 show as many as 1,861 staff, 15,125 elementary students and 8,068 secondary students were logged into the system each day. To support student learning during the remote learning period, close to 900 iPads were dispatched to elementary and secondary students throughout the system.



Budget

In June 2019, the Board approved a balanced operating budget of \$358,064,606 and a capital budget of \$23,261,914 for the 2019/2020 school year. Strategic budget drivers and budget principles were developed to ensure that the budget remains mission-focused and that funds continue to be directed to priority areas. As in previous years, the establishment of an appropriated surplus enabled the board to continue to support excellence and equity through the funding of priorities such as the Equal Opportunities Initiative, the purchase of new elementary school religious education textbooks, math special assignment teachers, significant enhancements in classroom technology, staff well-being and adult faith formation, and improvements/upgrades to the condition of school buildings and properties. In support of its commitment to good stewardship of resources, the HWCDSB applied for funds under the government's Audit and Accountability Fund to undertake a focused review of programs and services to identify cost-saving efficiencies.

Facilities/Capital planning

In July 2019, the HWCDSB received approval from the Ministry to proceed with the construction of the new Catholic elementary school in Binbrook. The school, to be built at a cost of \$12,885,406, will alleviate overcrowding at St. Matthew Catholic Elementary school and accommodate future development in the area. At 4,964 m², the school will have a Ministry rated capacity of 458 students. In June 2, 2020, a motion to name the new school Our Lady of Hope was approved. In October 2019, architectural sketches for the new St. Patrick Catholic Elementary School were approved by the board. Designed by Svedas Architects Inc., the replacement St. Patrick School will employ a three-storey floor plan for a finished area of 4,711 m². Other features include a dedicated childcare centre, EarlyON parent centre, 2nd floor gymnasium, 2-storey vestibule, stained glass window of St. Patrick, and a windowed 2nd and 3rd floor corridor. In other construction updates, in February 2020, the board approved a Kindergarten playground expansion at St. Ann (Hamilton) Catholic Elementary School, subject to city approval to purchase and close the adjacent alleyway. In May 2020, the board received the green light from the Ministry to proceed with the tendering of a childcare retrofit at St. Augustine Catholic Elementary school. The \$1.3-million investment will provide 49 new childcare spaces for families in the Dundas community. In school conditions and renewal projects, \$11,858,991 was apportioned for HVAC, roofing, lighting, electrical upgrades, painting, exterior doors and windows, flooring, renovations and site improvements.

Community Use of Schools

The Community Use of Schools (CUS) Program was created to support an expanding demand for use of school spaces by community groups. A total of 2,450 permits were issued in 2018-2019; the number of permitted hours was 156,606. Priority continues to be given to school board and school activities. Secondary priority is given to Catholic parishes and the Catholic Youth Organization, followed by not-for-profit groups and lastly, commercial and enterprise ventures. The total value of all permits in 2018-2019 was \$1.15 million.

Transportation

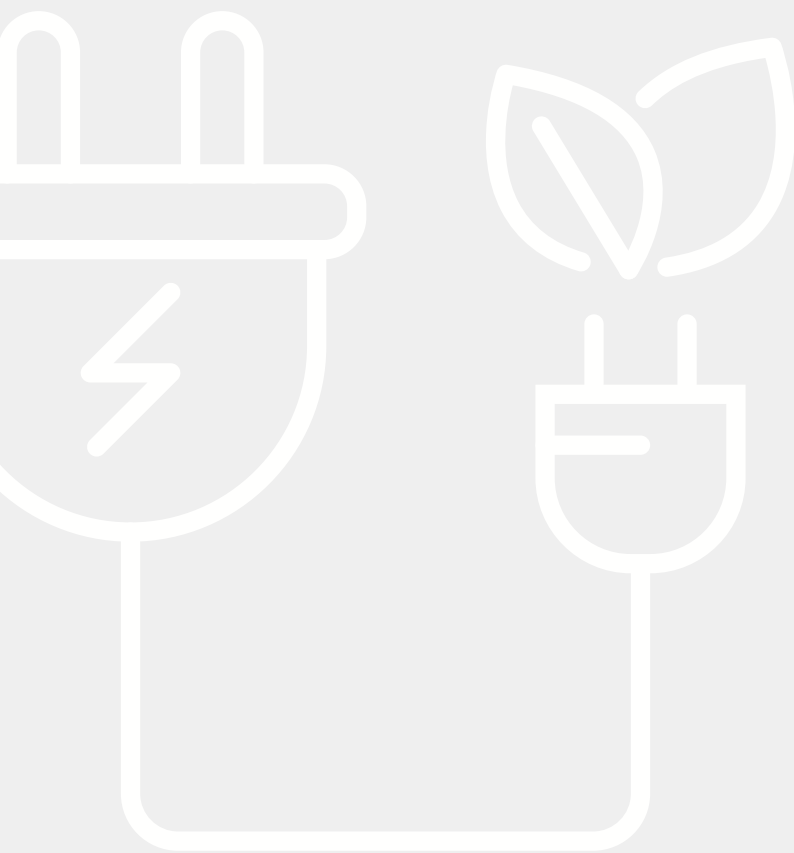
The bus driver shortage which created ongoing bus delays in 2018-2019 continued into 2019-2020. To assist with the transportation service challenges leading up to the 2019-2020 school year, an additional school bus operator was brought onboard in September 2019 to cover some of the routes. Despite that added measure, 14 bus routes continued to experience route challenges, impacting transportation services for approximately 515 HWCDSB students. In response to this and the anticipated significant increase in carrier costs when student transportation agreements come due in August 2021, the Transportation Governance Committee endorsed a bell-time study as one of many strategies to achieve greater efficiencies. The study was to examine the current bus routing system and school bell times with the goal of reducing costs through more efficient routing while maintaining a safe and effective school transportation system.

effective school transportation system. In March 2020, the study was paused as the two school boards looked instead to eliminate exceptions that were no longer required which, in the HWCDSB, reduced transportation services for 1100 students at 29 schools. The Active and Safe Routes to Schools Program will be promoted at schools to support the transition.

ASST Parent Engagement Strategy

An Active and Sustainable School Travel (ASST) Parent Engagement Strategy was piloted at six Catholic elementary schools this year. The strategy is one of five priority actions identified at a June 2016 ASST Sustainability Workshop to increase parental support for ASST and shift the current car culture around the school commute. Active transportation such as walking and cycling is not only environmentally friendly, but a proven strategy to increase physical activity in children and youth. The toolkit was piloted at Immaculate Conception, Regina Mundi, St. Joseph, St. Lawrence, St. Martin of Tours and St. Michael Catholic Elementary Schools.



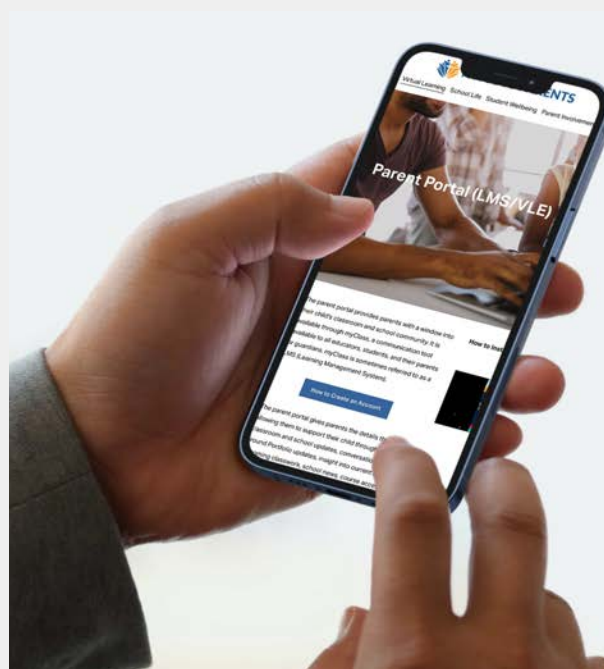


5-year Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan

A 5-year energy conservation and demand management plan, implemented in July 2019, aims to reduce energy use by 10.96% over five years which would result in estimated annual energy cost reductions of \$660,000. This is a considerable increase from the board's first 5-year energy plan, introduced in June 2014, which proposed a 5-year reduction of 2% in energy intensity, but in fact realized a 5.4% reduction. Other energy reductions are achieved through capital maintenance projects undertaken primarily for facilities renewal purposes, such as building, roof and HVAC roof replacements. Capital maintenance investments which contribute to energy reduction plans are estimated to increase cost savings to \$26.7 million over the next five years.

Parent Engagement

In 2020, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDSB) embarked on the final phase of the myClass Learning Management System (LMS) Parent Portal rollout. The parent portal provides a virtual window into the classroom, enabling parents/guardians to access resources, the classroom calendar of events, student assignments, messages posted by the teacher in the Activity Feed, and portfolio artifacts that showcase student work. The myClass parent portal became an especially valuable tool in the final months of 2019-2020 when the school closure moved student learning online. To support parents/guardians in this digital learning environment, step-by-step guides and videos were developed for parents on the access and use of myClass. An online Community Engagement Series was also offered to parents to support home learning. More than 2,100 parents/guardians participated in the five Zoom sessions.



Board Profile (As of October 31, 2019)

Total Enrolment: **29,486**

Elementary Enrolment: **19,148**

Students enrolled in Full-Day Kindergarten: **1,864**

ESL/ELL Students: **858**

Students with Special Education Needs: **2,206**

French Immersion Students: **1,281**

Self-identified Indigenous Students: **175**

Secondary Enrolment: **10,338**

ESL/ELL Students: **1,009**

Students with Special Education Needs: **1,800**

French Immersion Students: **150**

Self-identified Indigenous Students: **70**

St. Charles Adult Learners: **344**

St. Charles Elementary/Secondary

Program Enrolment: **2,041**

Average Class Size

FDK: **24.9**

Primary: **19.48**

Junior/Intermediate: **24.46**

Secondary: **23.4**

2019-2020 Actual Spending (Year ending August 31, 2020)

Total Expenditures: **\$359,820,740**

Instruction: **\$286,244,647 (79.55%)**

School Operations & Maintenance/

Pupil Accommodation: **\$54,572,438 (15.17%)**

Administration: **\$9,980,427 (2.77%)**

Transportation: **\$7,641,289 (2.12%)**

Other: **\$1,381,939. (0.38%)**



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