



WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



Director's Annual Report TO THE COMMUNITY 2022

“Let them sing before the Lord, for He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.”

-Psalm 98:9

Since last January we have made tremendous progress towards fulfilling our mission of knowing every student, inspiring them to follow the example of Jesus and empowering them with the knowledge and skills they need to live purposeful, meaningful lives.

This mission is deeply ingrained in the mindset of so many of our employees who live it, and put it into practice every single day. As I travel around to our Catholic schools, it's extremely rewarding to see it come to life in our classrooms.

As a Catholic school community, we support the priorities that form this vision - our students, our faith, our team, our community, our resources - and over the next few pages, you will see how we have delivered tangible results for each of them.

One of the most important priorities we've focused on over the last year has to do with equity.

For the composers who authored the Psalm quoted above in the 5th century BC, God's judgment of the world being meted out in a righteous and equitable manner was something to be celebrated. Equity is a virtue we continue to celebrate to this day, however we know that in order to make our schools truly equitable, we still have plenty of work to do.

Over the last year, we have begun that work. We launched our Equity Action Plan and are currently collecting data from our student census, which will help us identify and remove barriers that may prevent some students from achieving success.

In addition to our two Graduation Coaches who work with Black, African and Caribbean students, we recently hired an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor. Together, we continue to move forward as a Catholic school community to live up to the equity goals we've established for ourselves.

We've had plenty of other great news to celebrate in the past year too. With most pandemic restrictions lifted, we've returned to normal school life, with extracurricular activities back in full swing, as well as school masses where we celebrate our Catholic faith. Our Grade 8 students and high school leadership students returned to Muskoka Woods and it was wonderful to resume this experience. We're extremely grateful for the team of staff members who work so hard to make this a lifetime's worth of memories for our students.

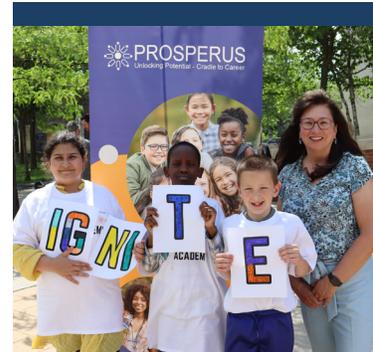
We're also very proud of our EQAO results, where our students surpassed provincial averages in seven of eight categories. This is a testament to our asset-based approach, where we determine where our students are academically, and help each of them move forward so they can achieve success that's consistent with their individual aspirations.

And finally, we are putting the finishing touches on our brand new Catholic Central High School, that opened on January 10, 2023. It's a magnificent new school, and we're extremely grateful for all of the talented and dedicated people who made it a reality.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone in our Catholic school board community who continue to support our vision of "Building communities of faith, hope and service."

Sincerely,

Emelda Byrne
Director of Education





Priority: Our Students

- Students exceeded provincial averages in seven of the eight EQAO categories, achieving results that were among the highest in Southwestern Ontario.
- Graduation rates increased and once again exceeded provincial averages.
- Continued to review and analyze achievement data, school climate surveys and other data in order to respond to the needs of our learners.
- Provided a virtual learning option for elementary and secondary students, as required by the Ministry of Education.
- Provided a Back to School Transition series to support students and parents returning to school in September.
- Provided academic, mental health and special education support to both in-person and virtual learners.
- Established a Jack.org mental health chapter in each high school to empower students in identifying and breaking down barriers to positive mental health.
- Collected voluntary student self-identification data to address systemic barriers in order to serve all students in the areas of achievement and well being.
- Provided additional support for self-identified Indigenous students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. One example is Tutors for Self-Identified Indigenous students.
- Continued re-engagement support for intermediate students in specific schools in support of transitioning to a de-streamed curriculum.
- Expanded support of board-wide reading programs with a specific focus on Structured Literacy to support early literacy skill development.
- Supported English Language Learners with evidence-based strategies such as small group instruction to further support their language acquisition and comprehension.
- International Baccalaureate (IB) Programs continued at Assumption College Catholic High School and Middle School, Cardinal Carter Catholic Secondary School and Middle School and Christ the King French Immersion Catholic Elementary School.
- Expanded the implementation of the STEM program in Grades 1 to 6 through aggregate prep curriculum delivery at every elementary school. Continued STEM Academy programming in three of our secondary schools.
- Offered in-school and after school tutoring programs for elementary and secondary students with a focus on enhancing skills in Mathematics, Science, English and French.
- Expanded the Summer Learning Program for students in Grades 2 and 3. This included support for French Immersion students and English Language Learners in the areas of literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional skills.
- Continued our International Education Program by welcoming students from various countries.
- Provided high quality summer employment experiences to 47 secondary students through the Ministry of Education's Focus on Youth Program.
- Returned to in-person summer school programming with a focus on English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction for new Canadians.

Priority: Our Resources

- Implemented new security measures on the Board's wireless network for both staff and students to create a more secure learning environment.
- Implemented a new Student Information System to track student achievement and aid in reporting to the Ministry of Education.
- Procured new computing devices to ensure that our students have a modern and safe learning environment.
- Developed a \$282.4M compliant budget for 2022-23 that supports student success and faith formation.
- Ended the 2021-22 fiscal year with a \$5.5M in-year surplus, bringing the accumulated surplus to \$31.5M.
- Continued construction for the new Catholic Central High School with plans to open its doors to our students and staff in January of 2023.
- Undertook numerous construction and renovation projects utilizing approximately \$42M of Ministry of Education funding in 2021-22.
- Utilized approximately \$3.7M in federal and provincial COVID Resilience Funding to improve ventilation, upgrade electrical services and improve building controls in our schools.
- Implemented energy saving initiatives through the continued installation of LED lighting in facilities, resulting in reduced utility costs.
- Increased the run time of all HVAC units throughout the WECDSB. Maintained the use of MERV 13 filters, the highest rated filters our systems can accommodate, and increased the frequency of filter changes to achieve compliance with all provincial recommendations.

Priority: Our Community

- Continued consultation with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) in supporting the health and wellness of students and staff.
- Collaborated with community organizations to further our work in equity and inclusive education, specifically in the area of anti-racism.
- Partnered with Family Fuse and Black Women of Forward Action in addressing systemic barriers for Black students and families.
- Worked together with local and provincial Indigenous communities and organizations including Grandmother's Voices, Point Pelee National Park: Parks Canada, John R. Park Homestead, Métis Nation of Ontario, and Caldwell First Nation (Elders).
- Continued partnership with Ontario Student Nutrition Program and Goodfellows to provide healthy snacks and breakfast for students.
- Partnered with United Way on various projects such as the Ignite Academy, On Track to Success, Summer Eats and Backpacks for Students.
- Continued to develop partnerships with community service providers such as Workforce WindsorEssex, John McGivney Children's Centre, New Beginnings, Children First, Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society (CAS), Regional Children's Centre (RCC), and Maryvale in order to provide additional support for students.
- Supported our newcomers by collaborating with community organizations such as the New Canadians' Centre of Excellence Inc. (NCCE), YMCA, Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County, and Unemployed Help Centre of Windsor Inc. (UHC).
- Continued partnership with St. Clair College and the University of Windsor to enhance learning opportunities for students.
- Continued partnership with the City of Windsor's Children's Services and licensed child care providers to offer quality child care to our students and families.
- Strengthened existing partnerships and developed new community partnerships to enhance our skilled trades programming by breaking down stereotypes associated with the trades and providing additional Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) opportunities for students.

Priority: Our Team

- Hired teachers, early childhood educators, educational assistants, professional/paraprofessional and other support staff to support student needs and respond to increased enrolment.
- Hired additional system teachers to provide support to elementary students in the areas of literacy and numeracy.
- Provided professional development sessions for senior and school administrators in the areas of equity, diversity, inclusion and human rights.
- Provided professional development to educators in the areas of mental health and well being, special education, literacy and numeracy, technology, anti-racism and anti-discrimination.
- Introduced de-streaming support teachers to assist staff and students in Grades 7 through 9 with the transition to a fully de-streamed Grade 9 curriculum.
- Provided resources and training to support secondary educators with the implementation of the new Ontario Grade 9 de-streamed Math and Science courses, introduced by the Ministry of Education, as well as the movement to de-streamed classes in English, French, and Geography.
- Expanded the Graduation Coach for Black, African and Caribbean Students Program.
- Welcomed an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor to provide system-wide leadership to cultivate and champion a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture throughout the school board.
- The Board's Community Ambassador continued to provide support to our newcomers as well as provided guidance and support to our English as a Second Language (ESL) Program at Catholic Central High School, ESL Adult Program and Elementary ESL Support Teachers.
- Delivered professional development that focused on Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP) for educators.
- Provided Indigenous Education professional development that focused on cultural competencies to educators at both elementary and secondary panels.
- Supported educators in the use of the Google platform (Google Workspace) to facilitate curriculum delivery in all modes of learning for both elementary and secondary panels.

Priority: Our Faith

- Provided faith related in-service training to teachers in the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP).
- Continued to update and monitor Faith Improvement Plans in all elementary and secondary schools.
- Through Family of Schools Planning Committees, including both elementary and secondary representatives as well as parish pastoral team members, planned and delivered Together in Faith Day celebrations.
- Celebrated our Together in Faith Day in September 2022 around the Board Vision "Building communities of faith, hope and service."
- Partnered with Assumption University to provide faith related professional development to teachers.
- Continued to build relationships between school and parish to serve and promote the faith life in our school communities within the new reality of Families of Parishes.
- Celebrated and honoured students displaying exemplary Catholic Virtues through the annual Our Journey to Holiness Director's Awards.



School Board Profile

wecdsb.on.ca

The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board operates **32** elementary schools, **3** middle schools and **8** secondary schools, as well as an adult education program that provides quality Catholic education to **22,446** students. The Board employs **1240** full time equivalent elementary and secondary teachers as well as **909** support staff, which includes principals, vice-principals, educational assistants, psychologists, psychotherapists, child and youth workers, early childhood educators, sign language interpreters, speech pathologists, IT technicians, campus ministers, school office support, custodial and maintenance staff, as well as board office administration and other professional staff.

The Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan along with the Board's Mission, Priorities and Goals can be found at the following link: <https://wecdsb.on.ca/about>

Message from the Chair

The great industrialist Henry Ford once said that enthusiasm is the yeast that makes hope rise to the stars.

Looking back on 2022, I can say that it concluded with a renewed sense of enthusiasm about education, which gives us all a tremendous feeling of hope as we head into the new year.

We began the year still dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, but as our schools reopened in September, the feelings of optimism were plainly evident as the vast majority of our students returned for in-person learning and the resumption of extracurricular activities.

While we remain focused on ensuring that our students continue to achieve at a high level, we were certainly encouraged by the fact that they defied provincial trends by exceeding Ontario averages in almost all categories of the annual EQAO assessments. This is a testament to the direction established by our administration's student achievement team and all of the highly qualified teaching and support staff in our schools.

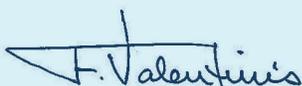
Perhaps one of the greatest accomplishments of the year was the completion of the new Catholic Central High School, which we took occupancy of in December. Along with many of my fellow Trustees and senior administrators, I had the opportunity to tour the building and we were all extremely impressed by the quality of the work. It's a magnificent new school that the staff and students have waited so long for, and were certainly not disappointed when it opened for the first day of classes on January 10, 2023.

This year we also said farewell to two Trustees who chose not to stand for re-election. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Fred Alexander and Tony Polifroni for their years of dedication and commitment



to our students and their families. Replacing them are Jason Lazarus and Joe Iacono, and I would like to extend a warm welcome to both.

In closing, I remain confident that we will maintain our collective enthusiasm for learning and continue with the positive momentum into 2023.



Fulvio Valentinis
Chair, Board of Trustees



Board Trustees 2022-2026

FRONT ROW FROM LEFT:

Lisa Soulliere (Essex County – Area 3)
Fulvio Valentinis (City of Windsor – Wards 1 & 10)
Mary DiMenna (Essex County – Area 2)
Mary Heath (Essex County – Area 4)

BACK ROW FROM LEFT:

Bernie Mastromattei (City of Windsor – Wards 3 & 4)
Joe Iacono (City of Windsor – Wards 2 & 9)
Jason Lazarus (City of Windsor – Wards 5 & 8)
Kim Bouchard (City of Windsor - Wards 6 & 7)
Frank DiTomasso (Essex County – Area 1)
Rev. Larry Brunet, Board Chaplain

Maya Mikhael (Catholic Student Trustee 2022-2023)
Adrian Yonan (Catholic Student Trustee 2022-2023)

Senior Administration

Emelda Byrne, Director of Education
Penny King, Executive Superintendent of Business
Melissa Farrand, Executive Superintendent of Education / Student Achievement K-12
John Ulicny, Executive Superintendent of Education / Human Resources
Steven Bellaire, Superintendent of Education / Student Achievement K-12
Kelly-Ann Bull, Superintendent of Education / Student Achievement K-12
Rosemary Lo Faso, Superintendent of Human Resources / Education
Colleen Norris, Superintendent of Human Resources
Joumana Tawil, Superintendent of Education / Student Achievement K-12
Joseph Ibrahim, Superintendent of HR / Education (Retired Dec. 2022)