

# DIRECTOR'S Annual Report 2023-2024



## Director's Message

The Director's Report this year once again refers to the Board Strategic Plan, which includes the tenets of Nurturing, Learning, Protecting, and Believing. In keeping with our obligations to the Ministry of Education, the plan was previously updated to include the Ministry's Three Provincial Priorities:

- Achievement of Learning Outcomes in Core Academic Skills
- Preparation of Students for Future Success
- Student Engagement & Well-Being

Establishing a broadly shared mission, vision, and goals founded on aspirational images of the educated person is a competency under the Catholic System Level Leadership Framework and is reflected in the work currently being undertaken by the Director of Education.

We are embarking on the process of multi-year strategic planning using an approach that reflects the traditions of the Catholic faith. Ongoing synodal engagement has been taking place among the schools, stakeholders, and communities of the board. A number of themes are emerging that allow us to understand how our system feels about the board's future priorities and goals. From mental health and wellbeing, to resources, to a whole child approach to teaching and learning, we are working to build consensus on the future direction of the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario.

Our vast consultation, which will be facilitated through *ThoughtExchange*, will take place at the end of December in keeping with our timeline to bring the renewed Strategic Plan to our Board of Trustees in April. And while we set direction that will see us through the next several years, we continue to move forward with intention through the tenets of the current Strategic Plan.

Our best expression of Catholic education can be found in the following tenets and priorities of the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario.

Laurie Corrigan  
Director of Education



**Nurturing**



**Learning**



**Protecting**



**Believing**

The CDSBEO multi-year plan can be found at:  
[cdsbeo.on.ca/strategic-plan](https://cdsbeo.on.ca/strategic-plan)

To view the video version of this report please visit:  
[youtube.com/CDSBEOVideo](https://youtube.com/CDSBEOVideo)



## Student Learning

CDSBEO is focusing on using evidence-based resources and high-impact instructional strategies to support student learning. Professional development for elementary teachers included instruction on universal design for learning and differentiated instruction. The Summer Learning Program enhanced the literacy and numeracy skills of 359 students from grades 1 to 6. Reading intervention teachers assisted school teams in implementing structured literacy approaches and small group interventions. In 2023-2024, the CDSBEO had an 86 per cent success rate on the OSSLT, a 2 per cent increase from the previous year. Primary and Junior EQAO results in reading and writing are approaching the provincial average, guiding further steps to enhance student learning. The CDSBEO Math Achievement Action Plan focused on curriculum fidelity, strengthening mathematics teaching content knowledge, and understanding learner needs. Math facilitators collaborated with educators and principals, implementing digital math tools to engage students and enhance understanding. Although EQAO math scores slightly decreased, this prompted a reflection on current practices and identified areas needing support.

De-streaming efforts promoted equitable outcomes by focusing on high-impact instructional practices. Collaboration through the de-streaming advisory committee ensured alignment in literacy and numeracy practices across grades 7 to 10, with professional development emphasizing Universal Design for Learning and differentiated instruction. FSL educators achieved high success rates in DELF sessions for grade 12 students and students had the opportunity to engage in cultural activities in Quebec City and France. Multilingual Language Learner (MLL) students grew to over 1,050, approximately 8.5 per cent of the student population in 2023-2024. STEP assessments guided programming, with targeted support through digital resources and small group sessions. Professional development for staff focused on effectively supporting MLLs and their families.

## Parent Involvement

The Parent Involvement Committee had a busy year with meetings held on November 14, March 7, April 29, and May 6. On November 14, Senator Bernadette Clement spoke at Holy Trinity CSS, sharing her personal journey as a Black woman in politics. Her keynote address aimed to inspire Black students to pursue their dreams, emphasizing the importance of being a good neighbour, volunteering, and embracing diversity, and intersectionality.

On April 29, 2024, PIC hosted an evening with author Waubgeshig Rice where he shared his personal story on becoming a storyteller, and read an excerpt from his latest book, *Moon of the Turning Leaves*. Attendees received signed copies of the book. Regional meetings were held throughout the Board jurisdiction, significantly boosting the PIC group's membership.

## Mental Health

The Mental Health (MH) team facilitated numerous initiatives this school year, enhancing professional development and boosting school staff capacity to support student mental health. The MH team obtained certifications to deliver Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and ASIST suicide intervention workshops, and vice-principals received MHFA training, with principals to follow in 2024-2025. Three two-day ASIST training sessions were offered to staff in various roles, and all student support workers participated in workshops on School Mental Health Ontario resources. The MH team also trained all grade 7/8 teachers on the new mental health curriculum modules. To support parents, consultations with MH professionals were available in July, along with information sessions on anxiety, self-regulation, self-care, and vaping awareness which were offered throughout the year. In secondary schools, Student Mental Health Champion teams were created, supported by social workers and vice-principals. Initiatives included 'Fresh Fruit Fridays,' multilingual mental health posters, exam goody bags, and fundraising for mental health activities. The program was a resounding success, and the MH team looks forward to building on this momentum.

## Indigenous Education

CDSBEO supports Indigenous Education by listening to and implementing initiatives from the Indigenous Education Council. Key goals include closing the achievement gap, and increasing knowledge of Indigenous histories, cultures, and contributions. The CDSBEO Indigenous Education team, with equal Indigenous and non-Indigenous members, uses a "two-eyed seeing" approach to bridge gaps in Indigenous education. Over the past two years, self-identification for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students has doubled to 461 students. Additionally, 122 students received support from the Indigenous Student Success initiative, a tutoring program aimed at closing the achievement gap in Literacy and Math.

In May 2024, the CDSBEO cohosted a Regional Indigenous Education Leads' meeting at Thompson Island Cultural Camp, fostering idea exchange to enhance Indigenous education. Students in Construction Technology classes built picnic tables for the Healing Place Garden in Spencerville, inspired by Haudenosaunee teachings. CDSBEO partnered with the Ahkwesahsne Mohawk Board of Education to promote Every Child Matters, and secondary students attended the Indigenous Skilled Trades Fair to increase awareness of career opportunities. Five murals were created with Graffiti Artist Mique Michelle, featuring Haudenosaunee teachings.

High school classes received resources for the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Gender Diverse People, including the novel *If I Go Missing*.

## Equity & Inclusion

The Faith and Equity Advisory Committee (FEAC), brings together board staff, students, unions, and community members to foster discussion and collaboration while valuing diverse perspectives. Leadership opportunities and community partnerships have helped create an EDI learning community at CDSBEO.

CDSBEO gives special recognition to Black History Month, Asian Heritage Month, Pride Month, and Holocaust Remembrance. These were marked with prayers and biographies honouring contributions of Black, Asian, Jewish, and 2SLGBTQIA+ Canadians. Guest speaker Anthony McLean engaged students on Black History, and holocaust survivor Dr. Eva Olsson shared her powerful story of survival from Auschwitz-Birkenau. Students in grades 3 to 8 also received a copy of *The Long Road to Justice: The Story of Simon Wiesenthal*. Motivational speaker and police officer Jeff Martin delivered a keynote address on EDI and Self-Worth in high schools, and conducted workshops on Leadership in an Inclusive Society.

The 2023-2024 school year included data collection for the Anti-Racism Act Survey, required by the Ministry of Education, and facilitated by the Learning Bar. The CDSBEO Religious and Family Life and Equity and Inclusion Department developed an Equity Walk review process to enhance schools' social media and web presence. School equity teams examined their communities' celebration of diversity and equity practices, aligning with each school's Improvement and Equity Plan (SIEP).



## Experiential Learning & OYAP

Experiential Learning programs enhance education through community partnerships, enabling students to explore careers in skilled trades and STEM fields. During the 2023-2024 school year, secondary students participated in virtual reality simulations for trades like welding and carpentry, attended career fairs, visited the St. Lawrence College Connections event, and engaged in a hands-on day at the Morrisburg Operating Engineer Training Institute.

Students also joined an Entrepreneurship Pilot Project, developing business plans and engaging with community partners through a virtual speaker series, culminating in a provincial showcase where they presented to experts.

During the 2023-2024 school year, 238 Dual Credit courses were completed by students from 10 high schools at Algonquin and St. Lawrence Colleges, and 24 OYAP students finished level one programs in trades such as electrical, plumbing, welding, and carpentry.

The CDSBEO OYAP program, in collaboration with SHSM and Experiential Learning, continues to promote skilled trades and apprenticeships for grades 6 to 12. In 2023-2024, half of all co-op students focused on skilled trades. CDSBEO competed at Skills Ontario Provincial Competition for the first time, with St. John CHS students Max Antanovich and Preston Spencer winning gold. The Skilled Trade Summer Camp expanded to two locations, hosting 60 grade 6, 7, and 8 girls in July.

## Specialist High Skills Major

The CDSBEO Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program flourished in 2023-2024, offering hands-on, engaging learning experiences to our students. There were 27 robust programs running across eight different sectors in our 10 high schools. CDSBEO had 306 grade 11 students participating in the first year of the two-year SHSM program, and 274 grade 12 students. Our overall completion rate saw significant improvements with 235 students graduating with a Certificate of Distinction.

CDSBEO continued to work with community partners such as the Carpenters Union Local 93, Apoetic Health, and SUGU World, enabling students to complete the certifications required to earn their SHSM seal. Students also fulfilled their sector-partnered experience (SPE) requirement by participating in the Financial Literacy course provided by Enriched Academy.

The 2023-2024 Expansion funding allowed many grade 7 and 8 students to experience a day in the skilled trades. The St. Lawrence College Mobile Learning Lab visited many of our elementary schools, promoting skilled trades with a focus on electrical and carpentry. St. Luke CHS was able to purchase a new planer for the construction program, and a new Hospitality and Tourism program was launched at St. Thomas Aquinas CHS allowing many students to experience more hands-on learning in the kitchen.



## Religious Education

This year, our focus has been on bringing the board's spiritual theme, *I Belong Here - Together we are God's good news!* to life. The Religion and Family Life Education, Equity, and Inclusion Department supported schools through centrally led liturgies and weekly prayers.

CDSBEO hosted American children's author Karen Kiefer for our youngest students, provided digital access to the Kindergarten Growing in Faith - Growing in Christ curriculum resource, and released new episodes of Breakfast with God. The CDSBEO Faith PD Day featured UK author David Wells, who delivered three virtual presentations on Presence, Authenticity, and Accompaniment. Additionally, the AQ course Religion in Catholic Schools, was offered by the department and facilitated by Faith Animator, Fr. John Whyte, and teacher consultant, Kate Veinotte.

The Board celebrated CDSBEO Week with the theme *Be Here! Be You! Belong!* and schools engaged in daily challenges celebrating Community, Diversity, Student Voice, Belonging, and Every-One. In February, 50 students and chaperones traveled to the Dominican Republic for a service trip, coordinated by the Religion and Family Life Education, Equity, and Inclusion Department and EF tours, where they experienced the local culture and faith while working with children and families. On April 3, Chaplaincy Leaders and selected grade 10 students gathered at the North Grenville Centre for Just-Us Youth Day. Keynote speaker and CDSBEO alumnus Ryan Hreljac, founder of The Ryan's Well Foundation, inspired students to share best practices and take action.

## Special Education

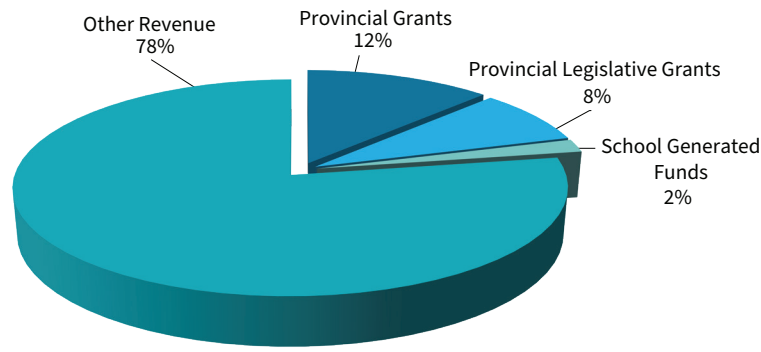
Every child embodies the image of God, and the Special Education Department is grateful for the opportunity to support learners in accessing their curriculum and social learning. The Special Education team thoughtfully addresses the unique needs of every student, providing the necessary tools, strategies and resources to ensure active participation in both the classroom and school community.

Opportunities to build staff capacity and maximize support for students was provided through ongoing professional development sessions in the areas of Behaviour Management Systems, Structured Literacy Reading Interventions and Individual Education Planning. In response to the Right to Read inquiry, CDSBEO continues the important work of educating school staff in the Intervention Approach to Reading. The Board will be maintaining its Empower Reading pilot for a second year, as a tier-three reading intervention. With the help of professional staff, school teams received timely professional development in order to identify student strengths and needs, and program accordingly. The Special Education team also provided instructional, assessment and environmental accommodation recommendations for students to attain their full potential.

Once again at the end of August, the Board was able to provide Summer Transition Programs at three locations. Students who have complex care needs or who require intensive support had the opportunity to connect with school staff in a safe learning environment and familiarize themselves with routines prior to the first day of school. The focus was on building a sense of belonging and trust while engaging in skill building activities.

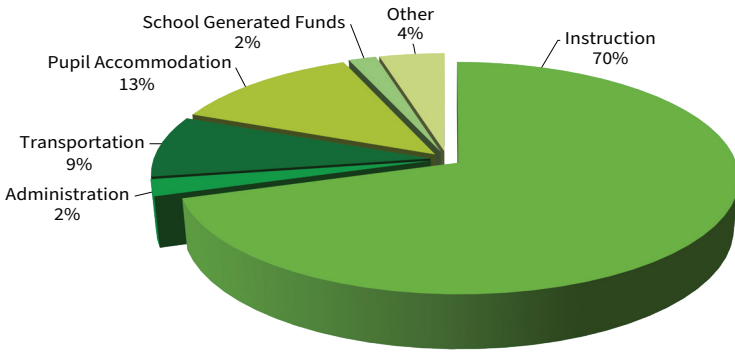
The CDSBEO Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) continues to provide a platform for advocacy and the sharing of information between our community partners and agencies. CDSBEO is thankful for the joint effort of its partners to improve programs and services that best serve learners, their families, and school teams.

# Financials



## Revenues

Source	Amount	Percentage
Provincial Grants	\$30,646,046	12%
Provincial Legislative Grant	20,050,925	8%
School Generated Funds	4,799,356	2%
Other Revenue	192,738,379	78%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$248,234,706</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Expenditures

Category	Amount	Percentage
Instruction	\$171,780,444	70%
Administration	5,719,210	2%
Transportation	21,121,905	9%
Pupil Accommodation	31,131,380	13%
School Generated Funds	4,527,811	2%
Other	10,618,470	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$244,899,220</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Accumulated Surplus

Increase in Operating A/S	\$3,048,277
Decrease in Internally Appropriated A/S	-
Increase in A/S Unavailable for Compliance	251,209
<b>In-year Accumulated Surplus</b>	<b>\$3,335,486</b>

# The Early Years

Upon registration, all Kindergarten Students received a Welcome to Kindergarten bag filled with many items to stimulate inquiry and learning. The bags included a book titled *Lessons from Mother Earth*, to inspire conversation and imagination.

The CDSBEO Indigenous Education team provided professional development workshops for Early Childhood Educators, integrating Indigenous teachings and nature-based education. Topics included Wampum Belt Teachings, Medicine Walks, and the Natural Curiosity resource. Additionally, Reading Intervention Teachers trained Kindergarten to grade 2 teachers and administrators on structured literacy to build system-wide capacity. Under the Ministry of Education’s guidance, CDSBEO Kindergarten teachers completed the Early Development Instrument Questionnaire in May, to measure children’s developmental health upon entering school.

The CDSBEO remains committed to fostering our community partnerships with childcare providers, Consolidated Municipal Service Managers, and the Ministry of Education Early Years and Childcare Programs and Service Integration Branch. Under our Early Years Leadership Strategy, we have set specific goals and conducted parent surveys to identify childcare needs for the 2024-2025 school year. Additionally, we have established partnerships with our local municipalities to address these needs effectively.

# Trustees



LEFT TO RIGHT TOP ROW: Sue Wilson, Chair (Prescott-Russell County); Karen McAllister, Vice-Chair (Dundas County & Stormont County); Jennifer Cooney (Lanark County); Christopher Cummings (City of Brockville, Town of Smiths Falls, and Leeds County)  
LEFT TO RIGHT BOTTOM ROW: Brent Laton (Grenville County & Elizabethtown-Kitley Township); Donna Nielsen (City of Cornwall & Glengarry County); Karen Torrie-Racine (City of Cornwall & Glengarry County)

# Student Senate

Under the leadership of CDSBEO Student Trustee Chloe Finner and Associate Student Trustee Brooke Guindon, our Student Senators convened four times throughout the year. These meetings featured insightful presentations from CDSBEO CIO Steve Payne, who discussed the importance of establishing a positive online presence, and CDSBEO Mental Health Strategist Selena Mackie, who addressed emotional well-being and the impact of stress on teen mental health. The students were highly engaged in building their leadership skills and enhancing the culture in all ten of our secondary schools.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Student Trustee Chloe Finner, Associate Student Trustee Brooke Guindon

# Senior Administration



LEFT TO RIGHT TOP ROW: Laurie Corrigan, Director of Education; Brent Bovaird, Superintendent of School Effectiveness; Dawn Finnegan, Superintendent of School Effectiveness  
LEFT TO RIGHT BOTTOM ROW: Heather Gerber, Superintendent of School Effectiveness; Julia Graydon, Superintendent of School Effectiveness; Ashley Hutchinson, Superintendent of Business & Treasurer; Tracy O’Brien, Superintendent of School Effectiveness.

# School Board Profile

The CDSBEO operates 39 schools that provide quality Catholic education to over 13,600 students. The board employs 877 full-time equivalent elementary and secondary teachers, as well as 623 support staff, including principals, educational assistants, student support workers, early childhood educators, school office support, custodial and maintenance staff, administration, chaplaincy leaders, computer and library technicians, and other professional staff employees. The CDSBEO works diligently to implement inclusive practices for staff recruitment and hiring, and to prevent systemic bias and barriers through equity training programs.