



Trustee News

CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

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Crown Ward Project: Connected, Committed, Contributing

Among the highest needs students across Ontario are the Crown Wards and students receiving support from the Children's Aid Society (CAS). These students often struggle academically, and have a higher dropout rate provincially. A proposal from the CDSBEO outlining a transformative approach to supporting these students was accepted by the Ministry of Education, and funding was provided to support a new initiative. The focus has been to identify key strategies that have the greatest impact on student success, mental health and well-being of these vulnerable learners.

The new program, which is called Connected, Committed, and Contributing, was adopted by St. Matthew Catholic Secondary School. The initiative has helped Crown Ward students improve engagement, achievement, and mental wellness through five key program strategies that have had a tremendous impact on students. The school aimed to help students to be connected to their school community, committed to their studies, and contributing to their future.

The three main areas of the program include a focus on mental health and resilience, student progress and growth, and the creation of student portfolios that focus on students setting goals and monitoring their own progress to complete the statements "I am," "I have" and "I can."

"In the school, there was a need to address credit accumulation in a very unique way," explained Principal Joy Martel. "We had to create incentive to focus students on how to improve their credit accumulation and move forward toward their credit achievement goals. We were blessed to have a caring lead teacher who took on the role of meeting with the students, creating their portfolio binders, and ensure that the students had a caring adult to help them follow their progress. Each student had one caring adult. Teachers were also allowed to co-teach, co-plan and co-collaborate to help support teaching and learning. Another goal was to connect with our community partners; we've created a hub at our school, primarily for mental health community partners. These partners come into our building to plan, goal set, and ensure students are not falling through the cracks. We also have one CAS worker within this partner group who visits our school each week."

St. Matthew CSS is now looking at a growth model for this initiative; looking at what students can bring to the table, and tracking growth based on strengths and needs. Overall, the initiative has created a vision, and we are looking to expand the strategy for all students, and to other schools.

Eastern Ontario Skills Competition

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), has played a key role in the planning and delivery of annual skills competitions for students in our Board. Over the last nine years, the Board, in partnership with other school boards, has organized and planned the annual Eastern Ontario Skills Competition at St. Lawrence College in Cornwall. This year's event, which was held on March 1, featured 16 competitions at five locations.

The goal of OYAP has been to promote skilled trades as a viable and attractive alternative to traditional post-secondary programs. Each year, more and more students are choosing this pathway to receive the benefits associated with early registration as apprentices. One of the great elements of the program is the opportunity to participate in events, such as skills competitions, which help to develop skills, develop student interest, and showcase student talent. Annually, between 65 and 125 CDSBEO students compete in a wide range of events.

The hub of the competition activity took place at St. Lawrence College. This included competitions for: auto service tech, team carpentry, house building, cabinet making, welding, TV video production, small engines, photography, and drama. The hairstyling and esthetics competitions were held at Elegance College in Cornwall. Various culinary events including the Fourth Annual CDSBEO Culinary Arts Skills Competition, which includes events in team culinary, baking, and cake decorating, as well as a Master Chef Competition, took place at St. Matthew CSS and St. Joseph's CSS. The aviation competition was held at Summerstown Regional Airport.

CDSBEO students showcased their talents and placed in many divisions including gold medals in cabinet making, house building, and team carpentry.

Preliminary Enrolment Projections

Preliminary enrolment projections were presented to the Board by Superintendent of Business, Bonnie Norton.

"While current projections indicate a slight overall decline in enrolment for the 2016-2017 school year of approximately 1 per cent, it is helpful to keep in mind that new student registrations continue to come in each day," noted Mrs. Norton. Enrolment numbers for final budget approval will be presented in June.