



Date: **February 27, 2024**
Prepared by: **Scott Johnson, Director of Education**
Subject: **Rescheduled April PD Day**

Background

Throughout the past several weeks, the Director of Education has engaged in significant consultation with local emergency service partners, the Lambton County and Chatham-Kent Medical Officers of Health and our coterminous board regarding the affects on student safety of the total solar eclipse, which will occur on Monday, April 8, 2024. Totality during the eclipse is expected to occur between 2:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m., which is precisely the time students will be making their way home at the end of the school day.

Looking directly at a total solar eclipse can cause permanent and irreversible damage to the eyes, due to the intense sunlight that is still present even when the moon is blocking part of or all of the sun. Regular sunglasses do not provide sufficient protection for looking at a solar eclipse, as they do not block the harmful solar radiation.

In addition to the dangers of looking at the sun, dusk-like conditions approximately 50 minutes before and after totality may increase risk for our students and bus drivers, who will be leaving schools and travelling on the roads during the time of the eclipse.

For the reasons outlined above, and in alignment with most other Ontario school boards, the Directors of Education for the St. Clair Catholic and Lambton Kent (LKDSB) district school boards, took the decision jointly to move the April PD Day from Friday, April 26, 2024 to Monday, April 8, 2024.

The decision has been communicated jointly with LKDSB to all news media; and at St. Clair Catholic to our staff and parents/guardians by direct email. The information has also been posted to Newsdesk on the Board website and shared our social media platforms.

Parents/guardians and staff were also provided with resources for more information regarding safety during a solar eclipse; and further information regarding this rare astronomical event, at the following websites: [Canadian Association of Optometrists](#) [NASA Science Space.com](#)

Our guest speaker for the April PD Day is not available on April 8, so the day is being redesigned. Information will be forwarded to staff as decisions around the day are finalized.

The change in date for the April PD Day requires an amendment to our School Year Calendar 2023-2024, which has been reported to the Ministry of Education, per the *Education Act* and *Regulation 304: School Year Calendar – Professional Development Days*.

Recommendation

That the St. Clair Catholic District School Board receive the report: *Rescheduled April PD Day*, for information.