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Subject: Mental Health & Wellbeing Updates

Background:

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board (SCCDSB) is currently implementing its 2025–2026 Mental Health Strategy Implementation Action Plan. This plan focuses on fostering a "Future Ready" environment through leadership, capacity building, and evidence-based mental health programming. The strategy is designed to ensure timely access to support through a coordinated, tiered approach—including Right Time, Right Care—while maintaining alignment with provincial mandates such as PPM 169.

Progress and Successes to Date:

The following highlights represent key achievements and ongoing initiatives from the current school year:

Leadership and System Coordination

- Streamlined access to care by integrating updated consent forms and mental health referral processes into the board's electronic documentation system (EMHware).
- Collaborated with co-terminus school boards and community partners (Child and Youth Mental Health Lead agencies) to create a Memorandum of Understanding and pathways for services through Right Time, Right Care.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

- All principals and vice-principals continue to participate in six small-group learning networks that meet three times per year (October, January, and April). Within these communities of practice, leaders develop school-specific theories of action and collaborative inquiries focused on SEL. These sessions allow leaders to share outcomes, learn from peer successes, and determine evidence-based next steps.
- The Student Support and Wellbeing Team (SSWT) has been co-planning and co-teaching MindUP brain breaks and lessons with classroom teachers to ensure sustainable, daily practice.
- Increased focus on boosting student awareness of school-based mental health supports by diversifying communication channels and launching targeted information campaigns.



Capacity Building

- All staff completed mandatory online training modules focused on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. [Training Title: *Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention*]
- All staff participated in mandatory online training focused on trauma-informed approaches. [Training Title: *Crisis to Connection: Building Safe Responses to Big Behaviours*]
- New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) sessions provided new teachers with strategies to support students while maintaining their own mental health and wellbeing.
- SSWT, Indigenous Education members, and Special Education teams received two day (12 hours) training on *Navigating Trauma: Empowering Educators, Strengthening Schools*.
- All board Social Workers completed specialized training on *DBT-Informed Suicide Risk Assessment & Management* (2 days; 12 hours).
- All SSWT members completed certification in the *Columbia- Suicide Severity Rating Scale* (C-SSRS).

Student and Family Engagement

- Supported the implementation of specific Ministry of Education (MOE) and School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) lesson plans for Grades 6, 7, 8, and the Grade 10 Careers course to increase substance use awareness and literacy.
- Conducted onsite parent and student surveys during the Fall 2025 Elementary Open House, Winter 2026 KinderStart, and Winter 2026 Secondary Grade 8 Open House to increase parent and student engagement.
- Collaborated on the "Mindful Messages" project with Dan Cicchelli and Melissa Tosh (Focus: Come Together – Building Connections).
- Planning is underway for the May 2026 Youth Summit across three locations (North, Central/Wallaceburg, and South), featuring co-facilitation opportunities for secondary students.

Supporting Specific Populations

- Attendance counselors and school teams have implemented tiered intervention strategies, including school-wide awareness campaigns and formal re-engagement plans for students facing chronic absenteeism.
- Provided education on the Egnowenmaad (Indigenous Social Worker) role to highlight the collaborative partnership with Indigenous Education Services.
- SSWT staff, in partnership with Pelumi Akinyemi (Graduation Coach for Black Students), facilitated a mental health workshop for Black, African, and Caribbean students at Ursuline College.
- Proposed a transition pathway for Grade 8 students moving to Grade 9 who require continued mental health support.

Recommendations

That the Board receives this report for information.