



ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
Lighting the Way ~ Rejoicing in Our Journey

MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, June 18, 2019

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DESPITE FUNDING CHALLENGES ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC TRUSTEES APPROVE BALANCED BUDGET FOR 2019-2020

Trustees for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board tonight approved a \$113,357,564 budget, which includes an operating surplus of \$1,229,818.

“I want to thank Associate Director Amy Janssens and her team for outstanding work in a very difficult budget year,” says John Van Heck, Chair of the Board.

“The changes in Ministry funding and a slight decline in elementary enrolment have challenged the Board to make difficult decisions,” says Deb Crawford, Director of Education. “But I believe we have arrived at a budget that best meets the needs of our students with the funding available in this new economic environment.”

The Board’s elementary enrolment is projected to decline slightly by 64.5 full-time equivalent students (FTE) to 6,071 (a 1.1% decline). In the secondary panel, a very slight increase of 5.8 students FTE (or about .2%) is projected, raising the total from the current enrolment to 2,501.93.

Although the variations in enrolment are modest, changes in education sector funding have resulted in some staff reductions. Redundancy notices have been issued to four teachers in the elementary panel and 3.33 teachers in secondary. Additional layoff notices have been issued to staff in a further 12.5 positions, including early childhood educators, secretaries, child and youth workers, library and computer technicians and Board staff at the Catholic Education Centre.

It is the seventh straight year the Board has delivered an operating surplus, which is required under the Ministry’s public sector budgeting rules. The funds are directed by the Ministry to be set aside for future post retirement payments.

The approved budget will now be forwarded to the Ministry of Education.



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PRINCIPALS, VICE PRINCIPALS AND VP LEADERSHIP CANDIDATES COMPLETE SPECIAL EDUCATION AQ COURSE

St. Clair Catholic principals, vice principals and vice principal candidates are the first in Ontario to complete, as an entire leadership group, the Special Education for Administrators Additional Qualifications course (SEA AQ). The course, which was offered through the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO) was led by Superintendent of Education Lisa Demers, Sacred Heart Catholic School (Port Lambton) Principal Jen Morrow and St. Joseph Catholic School (Corunna) Principal Colleen Coghe.

Administrators from several schools attended tonight's Regular Board Meeting to accept their Certificates of Achievement, which were presented by Chair of the Board John Van Heck and Director of Education, Deb Crawford.

"We are proud of our entire leadership team for this significant achievement, which will benefit students across the system – especially our most vulnerable students – those students who have special needs," says Mr. Van Heck.

"This is an important course for our administrators because it celebrates our distinct Catholic identity," says Mrs. Crawford. "It is learning that causes us to rethink perceptions and attitudes towards persons with disabilities, because it reflects a society in which we work toward understanding and accepting responsibility for others."

The CPCO Special Education for Administrators Additional Qualifications course consists of 125 hours of course work, including face-to-face instruction, online learning and a job-embedded professional inquiry practicum. The learning was embedded in the Board's Catholic Leadership meetings, to ensure that all administrators and leadership candidates received the SEA AQ accreditation.

A key component of the course is its practical application in school improvement plans and helping to determine the most pressing student learning needs. Administrators are looking through the lens of the learner, as school-wide numeracy and literacy goals are developed.



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FIVE ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS JOIN C-K COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN JOINT PHYSICAL LITERACY INITIATIVE

St. Clair Catholic has partnered with the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, the Lambton Kent District School Board, Sport for Life and the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario as recipients of a \$519,400 Ontario Trillium Grow Grant to support a wide-ranging physical literacy initiative in Chatham-Kent.

“St. Clair Catholic is pleased to be a partner in this important initiative to help create a community where parents, teachers and coaches are trained and supported as they help to deliver quality physical literacy skills and practices to children and youth,” says Deb Crawford, Director of Education.

Participating St. Clair Catholic schools include Our Lady of Fatima and St. Vincent, Chatham; St. Anne, Blenheim; St. Joseph, Tilbury; and Holy Family, Wallaceburg and will be involve the Board’s Mental Health & Wellbeing Lead, Health & Physical Education staff, Catholic Curriculum Services and Special Education Services, in addition to community partners.

A Canadian Health Measures Survey has shown that only five percent of children and youth ages 5 to 17 and 15 percent of adults are active. In Chatham-Kent, more than 60 percent of adults and 40 percent of children are overweight or obese, with rates of chronic disease or related deaths higher than the provincial average.

“The purpose of this multi-sectoral approach is to work together to create quality physical literacy experiences that transcend all ages and sectors of our community,” says Lisa Demers, Superintendent of Education and Lead for the Physical Literacy initiative. “The goal is to build physical literacy in young people now to prevent illness later in life.”

School action plans include Wellness Nights, Walking Wednesdays, Recess Reboots, Active Hallways, running clubs and tennis, golf and lacrosse instruction.

“We are grateful to the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario, which is the lead agency for this tremendous initiative,” says Mrs. Crawford. “We believe that by working together with our partners, we have the opportunity to change the health profile of our community!”

The physical literacy initiative is funded for three years.



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BOARD EXPRESSES APPRECIATION TO STUDENT TRUSTEES

Student Trustees Arianna Kennedy and Zach McGlynn received the thanks of the Board of Trustees and senior administration, as they attended their last Board meeting of the 2018-2019 school year.

“Arianna and Zach have been outstanding student trustees and each month have brought to the board table engaging and informative reports that have kept trustees up-to-date on the happenings in the life of their schools,” says John Van Heck, Chair of the Board.

“I want to thank Zach and Arianna for their tremendous dedication to the role of Student Trustee and for the support they provided to trustees and to senior administration,” says Deb Crawford, Director of Education. “Their reports are very often the highlight of our meetings!”

Arianna, who represented St. Patrick’s Catholic High School and Zach, who represented Ursuline College, were each presented with a token of appreciation by the Board.

Each spring, two students – one from each Catholic high school – are selected to represent their schools at the board table. Ethan Gilhula from Ursuline College and Kyra Mevis from St. Patrick’s have been named as Student Trustees for 2019-2020. They will attend their first Board meeting in August.