



# Student Well-Being and Achievement Board Improvement Plan

2019-2020

**Rooted in Faith: Excellence | Equity | Engagement**



**DURHAM CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
*Learning and Living in Faith*



## **OUR MISSION**

**We are called to celebrate and nurture the God-given talents of each student as we serve with excellence in the light of Christ.**

## OUR VISION

Each student in our Catholic learning community embodies excellence and equity by embracing the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations – to be:

- A discerning believer;
- An effective communicator;
- A reflective, creative and holistic thinker;
- A self-directed, responsible lifelong learner;
- A collaborative contributor;
- A caring family member; and
- A responsible citizen.



## OUR VALUES

**As a Catholic Learning Community, we value:**

**Faith**—evangelizing ourselves and others through scripture, sacrament, prayer and action in service with home, school and parish.

**Hope**—giving witness to the belief that we can become who we are called to be.

**Love**—being present to others with care, compassion, solidarity, reconciliation and forgiveness.

**Peace**—creating opportunities for contemplation, spirituality, reconciliation and forgiveness.

**Wisdom**—listening and responding to the Holy Spirit.

**Inclusion**—ensuring a sense of belonging by promoting the dignity and worth of each human life.

**Excellence**—building on God’s grace to achieve our earthly and eternal vocations.

**Creativity**—celebrating diverse and innovative expressions of God’s gifts.

**Service**—seeking out and responding to local and global needs with prudence, fortitude, humility and charity.

**Stewardship**—shepherding God’s creation and resources for the common good.

**Responsibility**—demonstrating accountability and fidelity in thoughts, words and deeds.

**Justice**—acting and serving with integrity in communion with the Gospel and teachings of Jesus.

*By living these values with an open mind and a faithful heart we bear witness to these words: “You are the hope of the Church and of the world. You are my hope.” —ST. JOHN PAUL II*



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## OVERVIEW

The Student Well-Being and Achievement Board Improvement plan 2019-2020 has been developed to enable our system and school level staff to identify key priorities and establish common goals for the current academic year. These goals reflect our commitment to building on and maintaining the strength of our system.

This plan aligns with priorities and goals identified in the board's strategic plan, *Discovery 2023: Renewing the Vision*, which is centred on *Renewing the Promise: A Pastoral Letter for Catholic Education* and the current Ministry of Education's priorities.

**Rooted in Faith:**  
**Excellence | Equity | Engagement**



A close-up photograph of a simple wooden cross resting on a dark, textured surface. A red string is tied around the top of the cross. The background is dark and out of focus, showing a wooden handle and a red cord.

## OUR COMMITMENTS

**As a Catholic school system, we are rooted in faith with Jesus Christ as the teaching centre.**

In keeping with ***Renewing the Promise: A Pastoral Letter for Catholic Education*** (2018) the Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB) will ensure all students, staff, families and partners understand what it means to be:

- A community that accompanies;
- A community that builds relationships;
- A community that encourages engagement and instills hope; and
- A community that forms joyful disciples.

It is within this context, informed by our faith, that our strategic commitments have been established.

## OUR COMMITMENTS ARE ROOTED IN FAITH



### Excellence

*“Let us not tire of doing what is good, for at the right time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” —GALATIANS 6:9*

#### **We are committed to:**

- Learning about and using current, research-based best practices.
- Nurturing a culture of high expectations and individual accountability for continuous growth.
- Encouraging and celebrating collaboration, curiosity and creativity.
- Creating a culture that fosters inquiry and innovation.

### Equity

*“A new commandment I give you, love one another, as I have loved you...” —JOHN 13:34*

#### **We are committed to:**

- Cultivating a positive sense of self and belonging for each individual by respecting and responding to diverse identities and strengths.
- Providing access to a broad range of programs, pathways and vocations.
- Providing opportunities for all staff to engage in learning to support culturally responsive and relevant practice.
- Walking the path together with our Indigenous partners to increase understanding and commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.

### Engagement

*“The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.” —CORINTHIANS 12:12*

#### **We are committed to:**

- Enhancing relationships with our students, staff, families, parishes and community partners through ongoing communication.
- Facilitating meaningful consultation opportunities which allow for input from a broad range of voices, perspectives and cultural diversities.
- Ensuring transparent decision-making processes.
- Providing opportunities to increase authentic student voice and ownership in their learning.



## OUR PRIORITIES

Our Catholic learning community is based on a strong foundation that has flourished for over 50 years, providing quality Catholic education to generations of diverse learners. *Discovery 2023: Renewing the Vision* reflects our commitment to maintaining the strength of our system, rooted in faith, with Jesus Christ at the centre of everything we do.

Our commitment to **Excellence, Equity** and **Engagement** propels our strategic priorities. The pages that follow outline our priorities, goals and actions, which form a harmonized system in which everyone works together, bearing witness to our motto, *Learning and Living in Faith*.

### OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE:

1. Witnessing Faith
2. Celebrating Inclusion and Well-Being
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Expanding Pathways
5. Managing Resources



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:**  
**Witnessing  
Faith**

*“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses...”*

—POPE PAUL VI



All partners in Catholic education are called to model the Gospel values of Jesus Christ and to work together to support learning environments that are rooted in faith. Our Christ-centred Catholic schools should represent “places where children and young people encounter Jesus, and where they are encouraged to enter more deeply into a personal relationship with Him.” (*Renewing the Promise: A Pastoral Letter for Catholic Education*, Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, pg. 25)

**Essential Practices:**

Witnessing faith embodies a Catholic worldview informed by the Catholic Social Teachings in the lifelong pursuit of the Catholic Graduate Expectations.

**Our Catholic learning communities will:**

- demonstrate a relationship with Christ in both word and deed;
- engage and promote social justice and service to our broader communities; and
- support the rich delivery of our religious education curriculum and programs.

## Goals

To Increase opportunities to support a culture of teaching and learning which is rooted in the Gospel values and reflects and nurtures the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (CGEs) across the curriculum.

To increase opportunities to support faith formation for all members of the community that are inviting, engaging, and purposeful.

## Actions

(What actions/resources will support this priority?)

- Provide in-service for elementary teachers to support the delivery of the revised Health & Physical Education Curriculum through a faith lens and the Fully Alive program.
- Audit secondary religion assessment and evaluation practices and work collaboratively with secondary Religion chairs to ensure consistent pedagogical practices that support and nurture the faith development of students.
- Plan and deliver a Year of Hope Secondary Student Summit to support Catholic Social Teachings and social justice initiatives within our secondary schools.
- Increase awareness of the CGEs for all stakeholders through the provision of board CGE posters and supporting resources from the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) .
- Develop Together for All ~ Equity Action Plan goals for 2019-2020.
- Provide in-service for faith ambassadors and chaplaincy team leads to enhance their understanding of how our Catholic faith and Indigenous culture and beliefs work together.

- Provide support to participate in faith formation opportunities, (WE Day, Student Summit, When Faith Meets Pedagogy Youth Forum and staff attendance at conference, Sharing of Excellence sessions).
- Host a series of faith retreats to support the faith development journey, such as the Advent Twilight Retreat.

## Monitoring / Metrics

(How will we measure and know that it is working?)

- Seek feedback from staff on their professional development needs and growth in learning.
  - Seek feedback from students from a variety of measures, such as student exit surveys.
  - Monitor student summit plans for the Year of Hope and analyze student exit feedback to assess engagement in faith formation and social justice initiatives.
  - Gather feedback from a variety of sources (workshop attendees, School Improvement Plan monitoring visits) regarding effectiveness of poster campaign and Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) resources.
  - Feedback from a variety of sources (Equity Steering Committee sub-committees).
  - Review pre and post surveys to evaluate effectiveness of in-service and seek feedback from staff about their ongoing professional learning needs.
- 
- Survey feedback from participants on a variety of faith formation opportunities.
  - Staff engagement in faith formation opportunities.
  - Collect survey data on professional learning needs and growth in learning from both new and experienced staff and school level leaders, and aspiring leaders.

## Goals

**To foster the relationship between the home, school and parish through pastoral planning at both the school and system level.**

## Actions

(What actions/resources will support this priority?)

- Provide in-service supports for new teachers focused on their role as Catholic educators, living out *Renewing the Promise*, and creating a Catholic classroom environment.
- Develop a series of Catholic Leadership development sessions open to all staff that directly support faith formation.
- Contribute to the Teaching and Learning EDSBY group to populate faith formation learning for all.

- Ensure that every school develops an annual Pastoral Plan in partnership with their local parish with actions to support the spiritual dimension of the schools.
- Support the efforts of the Durham Catholic Parent Involvement Committee's (DCPIC) focus for 2019-2020 on Catholic partnerships.
- Meet quarterly with the System Level Pastoral Team to create a Faith Action Plan (Together in Faith), articulate goals, and create opportunities to support the Year of Hope.
- Continue to build awareness of the calls to action in *Renewing the Promise: A Pastoral Letter for Catholic Education* with all partners in Catholic education.

## Monitoring / Metrics

(How will we measure and know that it is working?)

- Digital tools and resources will be accessible to all staff.
- Monitor activity on the EDSBY site.
- Annual review and sign-off on school level Pastoral Plan by Family of Schools Superintendents, along with parish priests and Catholic Parent Involvement Committee members.
- Audit Catholic partner engagement with schools to assess effectiveness of DCPIC focus.
- Review feedback from the System Level Pastoral Planning Team.
- Audit school social media activity to assess engagement with this year's theme, the Year of Hope.
- Evidence of continued knowledge building of *Renewing the Promise* and integration of ICE resources in schools.



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:**  
**Celebrating  
Inclusion and  
Well-Being**

“Peace begins with a smile.”  
—ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA



A state of well-being encompasses a sense of hope and optimism, personal resilience, respect for ourselves and others in order to positively contribute to our communities. All staff members are an essential part of promoting well-being in a safe, welcoming and inclusive learning environment.

**Essential Practices:**

Well-being for all is built upon the foundation of the development of the whole person; social, emotional, academic, spiritual and physical.

**Our Catholic learning communities will:**

- cultivate the principles of Equity and Inclusion;
- implement progressive discipline based on a fundamental commitment to Restorative Practice; and
- ensure that all staff understand their role in providing universal supports for well-being.

## Goals

To create a positive school climate that supports students' feelings of belonging and safety.

## Actions

(What actions/resources will support this priority?)

- Provide school administrators with support to implement the Aligned and Integrated Model with all educators, specifically the universal strategies for mentally healthy schools and classrooms.
- Include material about universal supports in all professional learning opportunities.
- Support school administrators in the implementation of the Leading Mentally Healthy Schools Reflection Tool.

## Monitoring / Metrics

(How will we measure and know that it is working?)

- Analyze data from the Leading Mentally Healthy Schools Reflection Tool.
- Monitor goals in School Improvement Plans.

To build capacity in Mental Health, Equity and Inclusive Education, Safe and Accepting Schools and Healthy Schools for all members of the DCDSB community.

- Provide opportunities for staff members to participate in SAFETalk and Mental Health First Aid.
- Provide school administrators with materials to support mental health awareness with staff.
- Offer a variety of small group in-services across the region to provide mental health literacy to parents (e.g., SAFETalk, Stress and Anxiety, Youth Addictions).

- Gather feedback and data from individual sessions.
- Gather feedback and data from Administrators on the successfulness of professional learning opportunities.
- Gather parent/caregiver feedback to assess their understanding of student well-being.
- Monitor School Improvement Plan goals with all administrators.

## Goals

To ensure consistent use of evidence informed practices, strategies and programs.

## Actions

(What actions/resources will support this priority?)

- Increase staff awareness of evidence-based materials and programs available from PREVnet.
- Use materials available from PREVnet to strengthen the use of universal and targeted programs to prevent and respond to bullying.
- Review of the 2018 School Climate Survey and 2018 Compass Survey (Secondary Schools) results to determine individual school goals for Bullying Prevention.
- Initiate a committee to review research on recess success and develop goals to support best practices for recess.
- Implement an electronic version of the Learning Profile and provide all Program Support Teachers with strategies to in-service their educators on the implementation of the tool.
- Include information about the importance and value of knowing the learner at all professional learning opportunities.
- Continue to share evidence-based practices and strategies to support students with Learning Disabilities.

## Monitoring / Metrics

(How will we measure and know that it is working?)

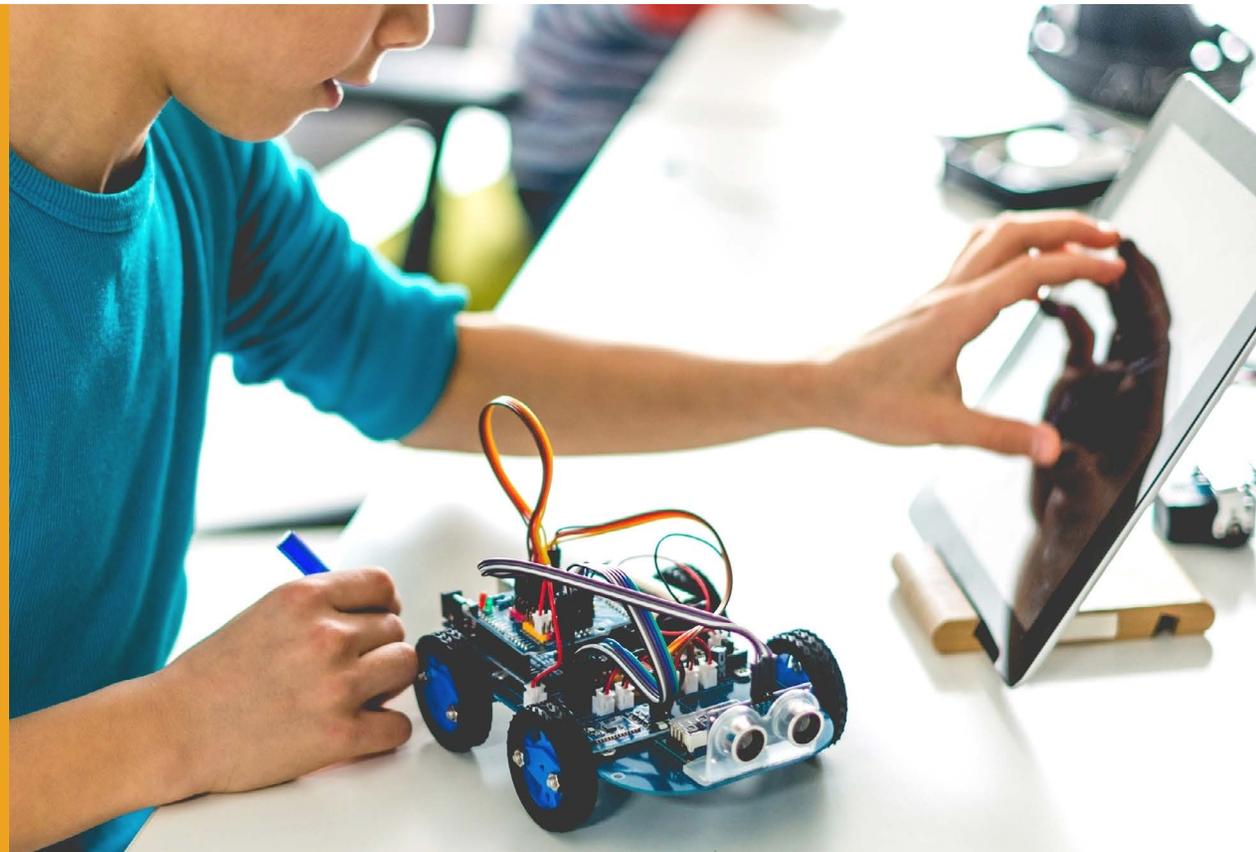
- Monitoring of School Improvement goals focused on the prevention and responses to all forms of bullying.
- Analyze data from the 2019 Compass Survey.
- Track implementation of Learning Profiles.
- Monitor implementation of Learning Profiles at Program Support Teacher meetings.
- Analyze data and feedback from Psych services staff members about the universal supports they are providing to schools in the area of Learning Disabilities.



### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: **Teaching and Learning**

*“Catholic schools, which always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valuable resource for the evangelization of culture.”*

—EVANGELII GAUDIUM, 134



Excellence in teaching and learning hinges upon understanding the instructional core, which is the interconnected relationship between student, educator and curriculum. All educators are called upon to use this knowledge to facilitate modernized learning environments and experiences that engage students in building global competencies and attaining the Catholic School Graduate Expectations.

#### **Essential Practices:**

Innovative and engaging experiences are built upon the foundation of Literacy, Numeracy and faith across the curriculum.

#### **Our Catholic learning communities will:**

- emphasize high expectations for Literacy and Numeracy that will be evident throughout each school;
- employ a variety of research-based strategies and assessments to address students' interests, learning styles and readiness in teaching practices; and
- plan and reflect upon the relevant and meaningful inclusion of our Catholic School Graduate Expectations and Social Teachings throughout all subject areas.

## Goals

To ensure meaningful and varied assessments are used to improve student learning, inform instruction and determine next steps.

## Actions

(What actions/resources will support this priority?)

- Work with curriculum chairs of all Religion Departments to develop common practices in assessment and evaluation across the system.
- Provide targeted training for teachers in Grades 3, 6 and 9 focused on common practices in Mathematics assessment, evaluation and instruction.
- Implement newly revised curriculums (Health & Physical Education and Careers).
- Implement new Kindergarten reporting platform (Edsby Report Card) building upon Communications of Learning through use of electronic evidence.

## Monitoring / Metrics

(How will we measure and know that it is working?)

- Religion chairs will co-create culminating tasks for all courses for Grades 9 to 12 representing 30% of a student's final grade.
- Grade 3, 6 and 9 teachers will deepen their understanding of the design of EQAO questions in Math through moderation of student work samples based on released questions from the EQAO Assessments (thinking and application question focus).
- Family of Schools Superintendents will engage in structured monitoring visits with their area schools.
- Principals will moderate School Improvement Plans within the Family of Schools learning network.
- Participant feedback from all learning sessions will be collected and analyzed.
- Completion of Kindergarten Report Card through Edsby in all instructional terms.

To build learning environments which engage students and honour Indigenous peoples and a variety of cultural perspectives.

- Build on the partnership with our Indigenous Education Advisory Circle to develop professional learning plans for Indigenous Education Lead Teachers from all schools of the board.
- Seek feedback of the Student Indigenous Education Advisory Circle to enhance student leadership opportunities at the system and school level.
- Create Teaching and Learning Edsby Group to share culturally responsive and appropriate resources and promote the ongoing implementation of the Social Studies/History and Geography (Grades 1 to 8) and Canadian and World Studies (Grades 9 to 12) curriculums.
- Develop a plan for proposed implementation of the NBE3U/3C course through input from the Curriculum Chairs of English & Modern Languages and Guidance.

- Feedback from the Indigenous Education Advisory Circle.
- Needs assessment of Indigenous education lead teachers and feedback on actions in the schools.
- Presentations from Circle members at system meetings for administrators.
- Collection of perceptual data to measure student and educator understanding of the purpose of the Land Acknowledgement.
- Participant feedback from all learning sessions and outdoor education experiences.

## Goals

**To ensure equitable access to authentic and significant experiential learning opportunities for all students.**

## Actions

(What actions/resources will support this priority?)

- Integrate experiential and outdoor learning frameworks to include Indigenous learning frameworks in support of student well-being and achievement.
- Build capacity of students and educators to connect the daily Land Acknowledgement to actions that support stewardship of creation.
- Provide training to various employees (e.g. NTIP, Faith Ambassadors, School Administrative Assistants and Custodians) to build cultural understanding of Indigenous perspectives.

- Build alignment and coherence of the Experiential Learning Policy Framework with lead educators.
- Create rich learning opportunities with students and educators that promote the experiential learning cycle (e.g. Outdoor Education, FSL, Youth Fusion and Skills Ontario).
- Host a Math Student Leadership Day to gather students from all secondary schools in order to plan, promote and participate in authentic learning in Mathematics.
- Offer three experiential learning / 'Travel for Credit' courses in July 2020 for interested students as follows:
  - English in England & Scotland (ENG 3U1 OR ENG 4U1)
  - Environmental Science in Costa Rica (SVN 3M1)
  - Civics and Careers in Ottawa, Montreal & New York (CHV 2O1 & GLC 2O1)
- Continue to expand experiential learning opportunities for early learners through the Summer Rays summer program with special emphasis on students living in priority neighbourhoods.

## Monitoring / Metrics

(How will we measure and know that it is working?)

- Analyze feedback in pre and post surveys, conferencing, and observations of educators, students and community partners.
- Collect data via observations, conversations and products that measure the increase in student engagement and achievement.
- Collect feedback from the Math Student Leadership Day to inform instructional practices of our Math departments with special emphasis on Grade 9 sections.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: **Expanding Pathways**

*“For I know the plans I have for you,”  
declares the Lord, “plans to prosper  
you. And not to harm you, plans to give  
you hope and a future.”*

—JEREMIAH 29:11



Education and career/life planning helps students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and beyond set and achieve their personal goals; and become competent, successful, contributing members of society. Staff must be responsive to the interests, needs, and strengths of all students to engage them in learning and prepare them to make informed decisions for their education, career and life outside of school.

### **Essential Practices:**

A pathways planning mindset ensures that all students from Kindergarten to adulthood develop the knowledge and skills they require to make informed education and career/life choices.

### **Our Catholic learning communities will:**

- focus on students’ strengths and personalized growth plan;
- ensure that all students have an honourable pathway; and
- promote student engagement and success by listening to and learning from students.

## Goals

To promote comprehensive education and career/life planning programs that meet the learning needs, interests and aspirations of all students.

To enhance opportunities for authentic learning experiences and experiential learning in all classrooms and programs.

To promote authentic, relevant and meaningful student inquiry for a deeper learning experience.

## Actions

(What actions/resources will support this priority?)

- Develop and implement programming that supports pathways exploration (myBlueprint).
- Develop and implement a plan that provides the smooth integration of Alternative Education and Continuing Education.

- Work collaboratively with the Experiential Learning Coordinator to develop a plan to expand the use of experiential learning for children, youth and adult learners.
- Increase awareness and programming opportunities for women and Indigenous students in the trades.

- Implement myBlueprint to support pathways and transitions inquiry.
- Intermediate guidance teachers to work collaboratively with students and staff to facilitate pathways and transitions planning.

## Monitoring / Metrics

(How will we measure and know that it is working?)

- Monitor experiential learning opportunities and footprints in Dual Credit, OYAP and SHSM programs.
- Gather feedback from students based on their experiences in Alternative Education and Continuing Education programs.

- Document new experiential learning partnerships.
- Track experiential learning opportunities developed in partnership with community and industry partners in all schools and grades, including the number of students involved.

- Track dates of professional development and usage by students and staff.
- Gather data on completion of Individualized Pathways Plans and transition plans.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: **Managing Resources**

*“In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God’s gifts!”*

—POPE FRANCIS



Stewardship of resources is essential to the efficient and effective management and operation of the board. Financial, human resource and asset management will promote a fiscally responsible Catholic school system which is integral to public trust, transparency and accountability. Management of resources oriented towards student achievement, well-being and faith formation priorities is the responsibility of each employee.

### **Essential Practices:**

Managing resources is essential for system alignment, financial stewardship, risk management, and effective use of board assets.

### **Our Catholic learning communities will:**

- establish sustainable priorities and raise stakeholder confidence;
- utilize emerging technology to support innovation, communications, learning and efficacy; and
- build partnerships and connections to enhance Catholic education.

## Goals

To ensure allocation of resources that reflects the principles of equity and financial stewardship.

## Actions

(What actions/resources will support this priority?)

- Refresh the board's Long-Term Accommodation Plan to identify system needs, program opportunities and incorporate Ministry policy directives.
- Review current resource management and environmental stewardship processes to identify potential opportunities in accordance with best practice that is reflective of Catholic social teachings.
- Work with all departments to expand partnerships in the broader community and to explore opportunities to better utilize board facilities and create program, networking and financial opportunities.
- Complete a review of the board's job evaluation and pay equity plans and implement a revised compensation program for unionized and non-unionized staff.

## Monitoring / Metrics

(How will we measure and know that it is working?)

- Previously approved new schools and childcare projects will be completed and open in the respective communities.
- Changes in secondary class size and e-learning requirements will be incorporated.
- Program opportunities identified in the French Immersion study will be implemented.
- Track and celebrate as all schools continue to be recognized with Eco-certification.
- The capital budget includes projects that support the board's waste management and energy efficiency plan.
- Utilization of board facilities is reviewed to identify potential spaces.
- The current roster of partnerships is reviewed by school and department to identify gaps and future opportunities.
- Job descriptions have been reviewed and updated to reflect current roles and duties.
- Job evaluation terms of reference are finalized and new committee members trained.

To modernize processes for increased engagement, improved efficiency and enhanced effectiveness.

- Engage with all employee groups to foster positive relations and work environments.
- Leverage the board's various communication tools including the website and other online platforms to enhance community engagement, consultation and dialogue.
- Monitor, review and adapt operating procedures and infrastructure to ensure effective cyber-security and data protection in accordance with best practices.

- Opportunities for employee groups and all stakeholders are scheduled to provide ongoing dialogue on various topical issues.
- Feedback from community engagement is assessed to determine the effectiveness of current tools and communication strategies.
- Current practices are assessed with recommendations addressed accordingly.

## Goals

To develop staff at all levels of the organization to improve outcomes, cultivate future leadership and plan for succession.

## Actions

(What actions/resources will support this priority?)

- Develop an implementation road map for expanded use of the new electronic performance appraisal platform Perform.
- Refine processes to ensure timely and effective completion of teacher and principal performance appraisals.
- Provide training and in-service for principals, vice-principals and managers on effective strategies for performance appraisal.
- Review and refine the professional learning and performance appraisal process associated with middle management and non-union groups.
- Engage with CUPE affiliates to review performance appraisal practices for custodial/maintenance, educational assistants and secretarial/clerical staff.
- Conduct the Workforce Census.
- Receive and analyze the results of the Workforce Census to determine areas of strength and areas that need to be addressed.
- Develop a plan of action in response to the data collected through the Workforce Census.
- Work with the Principal and Vice-Principals' Association to support leadership development with a special focus on aspiring leaders and school administrators new to their role.
- Support new teachers through the New Teacher Induction Program.
- Review and update the onboarding process for new employees.

## Monitoring / Metrics

(How will we measure and know that it is working?)

- Perform platform will include:
  - Occasional Teachers;
  - Designated Early Childhood Educators;
  - Educational Assistants.
- Human Resources staff will utilize Perform to track the completion of teacher and principal performance appraisal documents and ensure they are properly filed prior to the end of the school year.
- Participation of principals and vice-principals in training.
- Random quality checks and moderation of performance appraisal documents.
- A renewed vision is established for professional learning and performance appraisal of managers, non-union, custodial/maintenance and secretarial/clerical staff.
- Establishment and implementation of professional learning opportunities that reflect the priorities emerging from the workforce census.
- Regular communication focus group (each term) with new administrators to assess level of confidence and areas of need.
- Exit tickets and feedback from teachers participating in the New Teacher Induction Program.
- A clearly established onboarding process that is reflective of current practice.



*“For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.” —PROVERBS 2:6*



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