



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

Memorandum

To: Board of Trustees
From: Tracy Barill, Director of Education
Date: April 22, 2024
Subject: **Director's Report**

Please find below my report for the April 22, 2024, Regular Board Meeting.

System Events

- On Tuesday, April 16 I had the pleasure of attending the Rivalry Hockey Tournament between All Saints and Father Leo J. Austin Catholic Secondary Schools at the Tribute Community Centre. It was an honour to drop the puck for the first game and participate in such a fun, community-building day involving our Whitby secondary students, staff, and family members.
- I also want to extend my sincere appreciation to all of our wonderful Durham Catholic staff. This is such a busy time of year, with many concerts, showcases, events, tournaments, and more. We are blessed by the commitment of all our dedicated employees.

Upcoming/Ongoing

2023-2024 Student Demographic Survey

- It is the mission of the Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB) to be an inclusive Catholic learning community that inspires every student to achieve their full potential through faith and education. In order to effectively support the achievement of every student, resources and supports need to be aligned with student needs. To assist in making evidence-based and informed decisions about supports and resource allocation, the Student Demographic Survey previously discussed is on track to be distributed to students (Grades 9-12) and parents/guardians (Kindergarten – Grade 8) in the coming week, from April 22-26, 2024. Collecting this demographic data will the board to better analyze the trends and patterns in student achievement and student success. Information about the Student Demographic Survey can be located on our webpage, where you can preview the survey questions and access answers to frequently asked questions. Please visit dcdsb.ca/StudentSurvey to learn more.

Exploring the Papal Visit with Niigaan Sinclair

- We are excited to invite staff, families and community members to attend an evening with Niigaan Sinclair. This session will be an opportunity to examine four key moments from the Papal Visit to Canada in 2022 and reflect on our work in Catholic Education as we journey toward Truth and Reconciliation. This event will take place on Tuesday, April 23 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Pope Francis Centre (652 Rossland Rd W, Oshawa). All are welcome. Please [register on our Board website](#) if you would like to attend.

Welcome to Kindergarten Resource Fair

- As we look ahead to the 2024-2025 school year, we are excited to welcome our youngest learners to Kindergarten as they embark on a faith-filled journey with DCDSB. To support the transition to Kindergarten, we are inviting pre-registered families to attend the [Welcome to Kindergarten Resource Fair](#) on Tuesday, April 23, 2024 at All Saints Catholic Secondary School. This special event is open to families and their children, and will provide general information about the DCDSB Kindergarten program. You will be able to speak to board subject-matter experts and community partners, ask questions about the program, and participate in hands-on activities.

Catholic Education Week and Mental Health Week

- During the first week of May, our Durham Catholic learning community celebrates Catholic Education Week, which recognizes the important contributions of Catholic education to our community, the province and to Canada. This week is also nationally designated as Mental Health Week, which aims to raise awareness and to promote and protect mental health.

This year's Catholic Education Week theme is, "We are called to love", which is based on the scripture passage: "If we love one another, God lives in us." 1 John 4:12. During the 2023-2024 school year, DCDSB has been embracing our own related spiritual theme, *Speaking With the Heart*, which serves as an invitation to reflect on what it means to communicate "according to God's style", welcoming others as "heart speaks to heart."

There are many connections between Catholic Education Week and the Mental Health Week theme, *Compassion Connects*, which was selected by the Canadian Mental Health Association. CMHA states "We all have the capacity to be compassionate, and we know that doing so can make an enormous difference. In a world plagued by suffering, we emphasize that kindness is equally intrinsic to our humanity."

Throughout the week, we have many events and learning opportunities, including:

Monday, May 6, 2024:

- System-Wide Mass and Distinguished Catholic Educator and Leader Award Ceremony. This year, recipients of the Distinguished Catholic Educator and Leader Awards will be honoured following the System-Wide Mass at St. Bernadette Parish (21 Bayly St., E., Ajax) beginning at 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 7, 2024:

- Suicide Prevention and Life Promotion Literacy for School Staff training is being offered to all educators. This is a 3-hour workshop developed by School Mental Health Ontario that is intended to develop an understanding of suicide prevention at school and the role that all school staff play in keeping students safe.

Wednesday, May 8, 2024:

- The Catholic Education Week Provincial Mass will be celebrated by the Most Rev. Gerard Bergie, Bishop of St. Catharines and President of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. Mass will be live-streamed from the Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria beginning at 11:00 a.m. Please use the following link to access the live-stream: <https://www.youtube.com/@stcatharinescathedral2914>.
- Parents, guardians and caregivers are invited to join us for Prepare, Prevent and Respond, a virtual workshop presented by DCDSB Student Services Staff. This workshop will explore some frequently asked questions that will help you prepare, prevent, and respond if your child or adolescent is experiencing thoughts of suicide.

Thursday, May 9, 2024:

- Student Mental Health Leadership Summit will be held for Grade 9-12 students from all DCDSB secondary schools.
- St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School will be hosting the school's 25th Anniversary Celebration at 6:30 p.m.

Friday, May 10, 2024:

- Students and staff are encouraged to wear green to raise awareness for Mental Health Week.

Visit dcdsb.ca/CatholicEducationWeek to view our Catholic Education Week and Mental Health Week webpage.

National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2-Spirit People

May 5 is the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls & 2-Spirit People. Students have been engaging in learning about how systemic barriers failed to prevent and address cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. We encourage our community to learn more at [Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#).

Diplôme d'études langue française (DELFF) Exam

Grade 12 students who registered for the Diplôme d'études langue française (DELFF) Exam, are writing their exams in May. We have 192 students writing the DELF exam, which is an internationally recognized assessment of French proficiency. We want to extend our best wishes to students who are writing the DELF exam, and thank the staff members who have been certified as examinateurs-correcteurs and are administering the exams.

TB/eb