

2019-23 London District Catholic School Board Multi-Year Strategic Plan Consultation Guide Walking Forward Together

Summary of Full Report

The following summary highlights some of the key points contained in the full report, which is available on ldcsb.ca.

Background

It is the responsibility of every school board to create a Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP). The purpose of the MYSP is to set out the long-term strategic priorities for the London District Catholic School Board. (LDCSB) We have come a long way from the reality we faced four years ago when we launched our previous MYSP.

Our board has entered into a phase of growth and moving forward we need to continually respond to the changing needs of our students and the many realities of our global society.

We are inviting our community to take part in a board wide conversation with us as we develop our 2019-23 Multiyear Strategic Plan. The input we receive from all our stakeholders and partners will provide direction to help us set the long-term strategic priorities for our board.

As with our previous plan we will be seeking input with relation to the following:

- Community and Catholicity
- Student Achievement and Well-Being
- Technology and Global Learning
- Stewardship of Resources

We invite all our parents/guardians, families, students, staff and members of our parishes and community to provide input. We each have a pivotal role to play in this process. Our new MYSP will guide decisions and actions that shape us as a school board to best support our 20,000+ students and 54 schools.

Community and Catholicity

The LDCSB serves approximately 20,000 students in the counties of Middlesex, Oxford and Elgin, including the cities of London, St. Thomas, Strathroy and Woodstock. This area of Southwestern Ontario is a canvas of multi ethnic cultures and rural and urban centers. Core to our collective work is our Board Vision: *Inspired by Christ. Learning together. Serving together.*

Population and Enrolment Trends

Overall the board's geographic area experienced slower growth from 2011-16 than the Province as a whole. The kindergarten population has remained constant since 2011. The population of 14-year-olds in the district has declined since 2011 and is expected to remain low for a few more years.

As a Catholic Board, elementary enrolment is limited to students who are baptized Catholic or have a parent who is Catholic. After years of declining enrollment, a bounce back began in 2014, attributed to the full implementation of Full Day Kindergarten. The 2018 enrolment is anticipated to hold this trend. Overall Elementary Enrolment has followed a similar trend with 2017-18 average daily enrolment reaching the ten-year high.

The combination of a reduction in the number of 14 year-olds in the district combined with fluctuations in the number of families choosing Catholic Education, has resulted in a continued decline in secondary enrolments from the ten year high in 2009-10. There was a slight increase in market share in 2016 and 2017.

English Language Learners

The board has welcomed English language learners from across the globe. In June 2018 there were 1,977 students registered in the board whose first language was not English.

Special Education Trends

The number of elementary and secondary students receiving special education services and supports has increased from 2,398 to 2,704 over the past five years. The number of students with complex special education needs continues to increase year over year, and outpace funding provided by the province. Significant financial deficits in this area pull resources from other classroom functions.

Renewing the Promise

Renewing the Promise, a pastoral letter from the Assembly of Catholic Bishops in Ontario released in 2018, offers guidance as we work in partnership to develop plans and take action and reminds us from where our inspiration comes. As a community and as individuals we strive to continually grow in the experience of our faith through prayer; the understanding of our faith through scripture and the expression of our faith through action.

The following themes from *Renewing the Promise* highlight ways in which we can together become communities of accompaniment and communities of witness: A Community That Accompanies; A Community That Builds Relationships; A Community That Encourages Engagement and Instils Hope; A Community That Forms Joyful Disciples; The Breaking of the Bread.

Student Achievement and Well-Being

EQAO Board Results

The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) develops, administers and scores province-wide assessments of student achievement in three subject areas at four key points of a student's school career. A detailed report outlining our Board's EQAO results is available [here](#).

Safe Schools School Climate Survey Results

A positive school climate that is safe, inclusive, and accepting is pivotal in promoting student achievement and well-being. The percentage of students who feel usually/always safe at school: Grade 4-6: 88%; Grade 7-8: 91%; Grade 9-12: 88%.

Core French Instruction

Core French Instruction is mandatory in Ontario from Grades 4 to 8 for all students in English-language elementary schools. The LDCSB currently offers Core French Instruction beginning in grade 1.

French Immersion

The popularity of French Immersion (FI) continues to place demand on resources for each new grade as well the need to find qualified, Catholic FI teachers. In addition, there continues to be physical capacity constraints in our FI elementary schools due the increasing demand for limited pupil spaces.

Programming to Support Mental Health & Well-being

The LDCSB is a school board anchored in Catholic values where mental health is recognized as a key determinant of well-being and achievement. Every LDCSB school provides a mentally healthy learning environment that demonstrates caring and compassion, promotes security, a sense of belonging, and wellbeing; and are places where students realize their full potential as the person God intends them to be.

The LDCSB has developed and is implementing its second Mental Health & Well-Being Strategic Plan.

Current/ongoing system needs were identified as:

- Increased access to clinical consultation and social work support in all schools
- Ongoing mental health literacy training for educators
- Increased timely access to community services for student and families
- Increased parent engagement along with student engagement
- Coordination of employee mental health & well-being support initiatives with student initiatives

Special Education

The Board's Special Education delivery model is inclusive education. The LDCSB goal for our students with exceptionalities is to move towards independence, in whatever that means for each individual student. When our students graduate from our schools our hope is that we have prepared them for life after school, whether that means post-secondary education or workplace.

The LDCSB is rooted in the Catholic faith tradition and strengthening the relationship among home, parish, and school is a primary focus. Programs and services within the Board are School-Based; System-Based and Community-Based.

Technology and Global Learning

The LDCSB's beliefs surrounding student learning and the use of technology include:

- Every student can be successful in a classroom
- A consistent student experience is necessary to ensure maximum responsiveness to student needs
- Student engagement, learning and achievement can be enriched and improved through the use of effective technology
- Our focus is on the learner, not the technology. Technology is viewed as a tool used to support learning and to access the curriculum
- The curriculum expectations, task and student learning needs drive the choice of technology
- The benefits of technology are most fully experienced when it is wisely integrated with effective pedagogy
- When creating tasks or choosing digital resources, our focus should be on higher order thinking skills and creation versus lower order thinking skills and consumption
- Students must be prepared for the future through a focus on global (or 21st century) competencies.
- Fostering a culture of digital citizenship within our classrooms
- Providing for equitable access to technology
- Stewardship of resources (devices and personnel) is essential to maximize support for the system

As technology becomes embedded into classroom teaching and daily operations of the board; reliance and the cost of downtime increases. Replacement of hardware and the ongoing cost of subscription software continue to be a pressure on the board's financial position.

Effective stewardship requires that we are prudent in selecting and supporting a focused set of tools and resources. While there are many tools that may meet the needs of student learning, we have limited financial, personal, and physical resources. Therefore, we must work collaboratively to align with the Board's System Improvement Learning Cycle (SILC), which seeks to improve efficiency and quality of service delivery through a streamlined approach, whereby one tool is selected and supported, wherever possible, for a particular function.

Stewardship of Resources

Human Resources

In 2018/2019 the board had 3,172 employees (including occasional teachers or casual support staff and employees on leave) with a full-time equivalent (FTE) of 3,075.94. The LDCSB is among the top 100 employers in Canada, according to an annual ranking of 300 of Canada's Best Employers by Forbes Magazine in 2018.

Given anticipated student enrolment growth and its impact on staffing needs, current record-low levels of unemployment in the region and demographic data in respect of the age of the current employees, it is anticipated that current staffing shortages in a number of areas will continue for the foreseeable future.

Physical Resources

The board operates 9 secondary schools and 43 elementary schools with a combined building replacement cost of \$504 million. The facility Condition Index (FCI) is a compilation of anticipate repairs required up to 2021-22. The board's FCI reflects \$162.3 million of work required in the next 3 years. The board received funding for 2018-19 for school renewal of approximately \$7.4 million. Unless there is a change in the grant allocation, the level of deferred maintenance will continue to increase. The backlog of items on the deferred maintenance list creates pressure on the daily operations of the schools.

Environmental Stewardship

In 2013, the board set in place a five-year conservation and demand management plan that focuses on the environmental, societal and fiscal need to reduce energy consumption. The plan included a multifaceted approach to reducing consumption through the elimination of waste; improving efficiencies; and optimizing energy supply. In 2016-17 the board had achieved a significant reduction in energy consumption: electricity consumption declined 3.3%; natural gas consumption declines nearly 20% and Green House Gas Emissions from Energy declined nearly 32%.

Transportation

Home to school transportation is provided in partnership with the Thames Valley District School Board through the Student Transportation Services Consortium. In 2016-17 school buses travelled over 23 million kilometers and transported 47,000 students each day.

For the past few years, grants received from the Ministry of Education have been sufficient to cover the cost of transportation. However, beginning in 2018-19 the board will need to augment funding from other sources. Contract costs are expected to increase by greater than 10% and will negatively impact the budgets in future years.