



## **Board of Trustees Approves Budget of Nearly \$131 Million**

The Board of Trustees has passed a \$130,998,620 budget for the 2023-2024 school year.

"This budget was developed in alignment with the Board's Strategic Plan and 2023-2024 Board Improvement Plan," says Scott Johnson, Director of Education. "We are committed to balancing supports for all students."

The 2023-2024 budget includes a deficit for compliance of \$664,636, primarily due to a funding shortfall in transportation. Although transportation funding has not been reduced, the Ministry has introduced a new funding formula which does not completely align to the costs of providing transportation services for this region. CLASS Transportation Services, a consortium operated jointly with the Lambton Kent District School Board, will continue to collaborate with both school boards to analyze the extent of the difference and develop strategies to achieve a balanced transportation budget in future years.

"Other fluctuating budget items that are monitored rigorously include staff replacement costs and costs impacted by inflation, such as maintenance of facilities, due rising utility and commodity prices," says Amy Janssens, Associate Director – Corporate Services & Treasurer.

Priorities of the 2023-2024 budget include:

- Continue into year three of a three-year mental health and addictions strategy and annual action plan for mental health, informed by School Climate Survey results and School Mental Health Ontario;
- Continue a focus on engagement of all students through the Board's Equity Action Plan, Indigenous Education Action Plan, Special Education Plan, and supports for multi-lingual learners;
- Focus on curriculum – a continued implementation of revised curriculum; Reading Success for All; and implementation of new resources in the *Growing in Faith – Growing in Christ* curriculum; secondary de-streaming implementation; supporting literacy and numeracy for Grades 7 to 12;
- Support at-risk students for graduation;
- Engage secondary students in experiential learning and pathways planning;
- Board-owned devices and strong connections to the broadband network for every student and classroom educator;
- Board owned devices for all secondary students engaged in e-learning.

Budget estimates for 2023-2024 are in compliance with all Ministry of Education accountability and reporting requirements. The approved budget will now be forwarded to the Ministry.

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## **Board Chaplain Named Pastor of Windsor-Lake Erie Catholic Family of Parishes**

Father Chris Gillespie has been named by Bishop Ronald Fabbro to the position of Pastor of the Windsor-Lake St. Clair Catholic Family of Parishes.

As a result, he will step down from his role as Board Chaplain at St. Clair Catholic, following the June 20, 2023 Regular Board Meeting, which is the final meeting of the 2022-2023 school year.

Father Chris was appointed Board Chaplain by the Board of Trustees on May 31, 2022. Although his time in the role has been relatively short, his close association with St. Clair Catholic stretches back to his arrival as Pastor of the Kent Lambton Roman Catholic Family of Parishes in 2014. As a neighbour and friend, he frequently celebrated Mass for Board staff, both at Our Lady Help of Christians Church and at the Catholic Education Centre.

"As Board Chaplain, Father Chris' opening prayers and reflections at the beginning of each Board meeting brought Trustees, senior administration and guests into God's presence, in ways which beautifully connected our Catholic faith with the Mission of Catholic Education," says Scott Johnson, Director of Education.

"Although the Board accepts his resignation with reluctance and some sadness, we are thankful for the many blessings of his friendship and we pray for God's continued favour on him, as he moves on to this new role," says Mr. Johnson.

Father's appointment is effective July 3, 2023.

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## **Final Board Meeting for Student Trustees Samantha Lozon and Annabelle Rayson**

St. Clair Catholic's student trustees gave their final reports at the Regular Board Meeting of June 20, 2023 – the last meeting of the 2022-2023 school year.

"Annabelle and Sam, you have been outstanding student trustees," says Scott Johnson, Director of Education. "Your well-written and informative reports always kept trustees and senior administration fully updated on the events and accomplishments of our secondary schools. Well done!"

"We are proud of both of you and your many achievements, throughout your secondary school careers," says David Argenti, Vice Chair of the Board. "And as you leave us, we wish you God's blessings for a bright future."

Annabelle Rayson will begin post-secondary studies at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Samantha Lozon has accepted a scholarship to McGill University in Montreal, Quebec.

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## **Accessibility Plan for 2023-2024 Presented to Board of Trustees**

St. Clair Catholic's Annual Accessibility Plan for 2023-2024 was presented to the Board of Trustees at the Regular Board Meeting of Tuesday, June 20, 2023. The plan outlines the process by which the Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. It is a review of initiatives undertaken in 2022-2023 and outlines areas that the Board will review in 2023-2024.

Through the plan, the Board will meet its commitments and responsibilities under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

"Our Board continues to recognize the need for continual improvement for access to school board facilities, policies, programs and practices, and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and member of the community with disabilities," says Lisa Demers, Superintendent of Education. "This comprehensive report is a record of past achievements and a blueprint for the future."

Highlights for 2022-2023 include:

### **Attitudinal**

- A number of professional development and training opportunities for system leaders from experts such as Dr. Noumann Ashraf, Dr. Kim Schonert-Reichl, Michael Way Skinner, Dr. Josephine Lombardi, Anne Jamieson, and Melissa Mikel, in the areas of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion have been provided for staff.
- *Stronger Together* workforce census completion in April to provide information to better support our diverse staff.
- Hiring of Graduation Coach for Black Students in secondary schools.
- Parent Engagement Facilitator to reach out to families.
- Hiring of English Language Learners teacher.

### **Architectural**

- Facilities Services worked in consultation with the Special Education Department and school communities to plan and provide accessible facilities ensuring that all renovations and additions meet building code requirements.
- Facilities Services addressed accessibility inside, outside and around buildings.

### **Technological**

- Review software images and incorporate changes identified to improve boot-up times, efficiency and to modernize options for learners and staff.

- Worked collaboratively with the Special Education team to leverage software ensuring accessibility for learners.

## **Information and Communication**

- The Information Services Team deployed additional WIFI access points as requested to facilitate increased usage of the Board’s WIFI networks. This network also supports the use of personal electronic devices via our BYOD program. SD WAN project to ensure 1MB/S per student at all locations.
- Prioritized deployment of new hardware based on feedback from school-based staff.
- Obtained feedback from end-users via thought exchange data collection approach to assess effectiveness of current systems in order to inform and direct planning priorities for future implementations. Information and feedback sessions with users in planning stages.

## **Policy**

Policies are reviewed on a cyclical basis and will include consideration of Equity and Inclusion and Accessibility legislation. This year, a large number of policies were reviewed through the lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The full Annual Accessibility Plan 2023-2024 can be found [here](#).

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