

May 2024

The virtue of **ACCEPTANCE** this month aligns with our Catholic social teachings at the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) to create school environments that are safe, caring, healthy and inclusive for our students, families, and staff.

The month of May is dedicated to our Blessed Virgin Mother Mary. We celebrate the gift of Mary's maternal tenderness and love, as children of God. *"Mary is not only the bridge joining us to God; she is much more. She is the road God traveled in order to reach us, and the road that we must travel in order to reach Him."* – Pope Francis

Catholic Education Week 2024 – Catholic Education Week will be held May 5 – 10. The theme is ***We are Called to Love***. It provides unique opportunities to highlight what Catholic Education means, as well as to celebrate the distinctive identity of our Catholic schools. Catholic Trustees are stewards and advocates of Catholic education and for the students entrusted to our care. In Ontario, we come together as 29 Catholic school boards and locally as 500 publicly funded Catholic schools across the Archdiocese of Toronto. All Catholic Education Week resources are available on the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) website.

May 1 - Memorial of St. Joseph the Worker – Many countries celebrate International Workers' Day to recognize the value of human work, defend the dignity of working people, encourage all to be responsible in their work, and celebrate the role that human work has in God's plan for creation. Our board observes May 1 as *DPCDSB Staff Appreciation Day*. We express gratitude to our staff for the important work they do in publicly funded Catholic education, in service to the children and youth entrusted to our care.

Mental Health Week 2024 – May 6-10 is Mental Health Week. During this week, we invite all students to participate in a selection of wellness activities and resources provided by the DPCDSB Well-Being Department, which can be embedded in everyday lessons. At the local school level, one day of this week can be designated as a wellness day, the focus of which is "Wellness for Success". It provides an opportunity for students to 'pause' and focus on catching up, reviewing, and resetting goals.

Student Transportation Update and Service Delivery

- **Driver Status** - Student Transportation of Peel Region (STOPR) continues to monitor all contracted bus operators through monthly reporting to ensure they have an adequate number of drivers and spare drivers to operate all routes. Currently, bus operators are reporting that they have enough drivers to service all routes.
- **Chipmunk Parent Application** - Testing of the Chipmunk parent application continues at selected pilot schools. Regular meetings between STOPR staff and the vendor continue through the testing process before assessing the readiness of proceeding with a full system launch.
- **School Bus Safety Training** - For the 2023-2024 school year, 64 DPCDSB schools were identified to receive school bus safety training. As of March 2024, school bus safety sessions have been presented at 58 DPCDSB schools. The remaining



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schools will receive safety sessions prior to the end of this school year. Schools that did not receive school bus safety training this year were offered standard school bus evacuation training. School bus evacuation training can be provided through an online video link or presented at each school in-person by our local school bus operators.

- **First Time Rider Program 2024** - STOPR has confirmed it will host the next First Time Rider Safety Program on Saturday August 24. A “save the date” memo and flyer was distributed to all elementary schools in January and a reminder will be included in STOPR’s upcoming Spring Newsletter.

Long-Term Facilities Master Plan (LTFMP) - DPCDSB currently operates regular day school programs at 151 schools (125 elementary and 26 secondary). Schools range in age from four years old to approximately 70 years old. Over 70% of the current school inventory (106 schools) was constructed since the 1980s, with the largest grouping of these schools (46) being constructed between 1996 and 2005.

DPCDSB continued to experience enrolment decline from the 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 school year. An enrolment decline of over 983 students (-1,100 elementary and +117 secondary students) over this 12-month period has been attributed to many factors, including admission and demission of students year over year, families emigrating from the jurisdiction of DPCDSB and the changing demographics in Peel Region. Over the next ten years, our board is expected to experience a net enrolment decline of approximately -4.82% (-3,442 total students), which is comprised of a projected decline in the elementary panel of approximately -5.45% (-2,257 elementary students) and a projected decline in the secondary panel of -3.95% (-1,185 secondary students). While overall, DPCDSB shows enrolment decline, it is important to note that there are still areas within the board that are experiencing enrolment growth. The LTFMP reflects the enrolment changes through various recommendations for consideration, such as adding new pupil places either through new schools or additions to schools, through business case requests submitted to the Ministry of Education for funding consideration, and balancing enrolment through the realignment of school boundaries, program changes and pupil accommodation reviews (PAR). The Ministry of Education continues its moratorium on PAR. More information is included in our Board of Trustees - Administration and Finance Committee’s April 9, 2024 Meeting Agenda located on the DPCDSB website.

Energy Management Plan - Energy management is an integrated part of DPCDSB’s LTFMP to support ongoing instructional services and facility operations. Energy conservation not only contributes to long-term sustainability, it also plays an important role in containing the total cost of utilities to DPCDSB. The performance review for the past five years from 2018 to 2023 revealed a significant cumulative energy reduction and containment of costs by DPCDSB as a result of a concerted system-wide effort to manage energy demand. The pandemic in early 2020 significantly changed how schools operated and impacted their energy consumption. While consumption of utilities initially fell in 2020 during a time when schools were closed, consumption levels increased once schools re-opened due to a list of substantial operational changes, including:

- increased ventilation (intake of fresh air)
- increased filtration requirements (*MERV-13 filter)
- expanded operating hours of HVAC equipment (2 hours before and after regular school hours)
- deployment of 3,000 **HEPA air scrubbers, and
- additional air conditioning being installed in 15 schools in 2022

**MERV: Minimum Efficiency Particulate Air [filter]Reporting Values | **HEPA: High*

Fortunately, after this temporary rise in energy consumption, DPCDSB is now again back on track to conserve energy, as demonstrated by a 6% reduction in 2023.

Facilities Renewal Plan 2024 – DPCDSB has finalized our 2024 Facilities Renewal Plan. As a result of rising labour and materials costs, along with ongoing supply chain sourcing issues, a narrow timeline for conducting major renewal and maintenance work and expectations from the Ministry of Education for the timely completion of renewal projects, DPCDSB is taking a more targeted approach in 2024 to focus on priority renewal needs. While the majority of the work is scheduled to take place over the upcoming summer months, some work will occur in the evenings/weekends in the fall due to the number of projects being undertaken. As supply chain issues continue to affect the construction industry, it is possible that some projects may be deferred until 2025.

Update to Permit Rates – Over the last several years, DPCDSB staff has been working to ensure that the use of Board facilities by community groups and organizations is based on a minimum of actual cost recovery. The last increase to permit rates was in the 2019-2020 school year. At that time, the increase in rates reflected actual operating costs. However, for the last five years and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, rates have remained unchanged despite significant operational cost increases. As a result, DPCDSB is not currently recovering all of the costs associated with providing space to permit user groups. Staff from DPCDSB and the Peel District School Board (PDSB) have been working collaboratively to establish new permit rates for community user groups, effective September 1, 2024. Our board will gradually move towards a full cost recovery model to ensure alignment and consistency between the two school boards. Both the DPCDSB and PDSB are committed to an ongoing review and adjustment of permit rates annually or as required.

Emergency Instructors – DPCDSB makes every effort to ensure that when educators are absent, they are replaced with a certified teacher in the classroom. However, when we are unable to do so, in accordance with the Education Act, the board does utilize emergency instructors to ensure student safety.

National Family and Life Week 2024 – DPCDSB affirms the sacred character of human life and we are called to serve and to love one another. Respect for life means that all human beings have value and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect from the eldest to the youngest; from those who are strong and healthy to those who are vulnerable because of illness or disabilities; and from those who can speak for themselves to those who cannot. As a Catholic community of faith, we will celebrate this call as we work together to nurture and empower our students and one another to stand up for those who are most vulnerable.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) extends an invitation to families, parishes, dioceses, and faith communities to celebrate together the Annual ‘National Family and Life Week’, from May 13 – 19. During this week, the DPCDSB will invite staff and students to celebrate the sacred character of human life as lived out in family life through the various resources provided by the CCCB’s Office for Family and Life. Resources will be made available prior to that week enabling schools to prepare.



*Happy
Mother's
Day!*

Mothers' Day - Wishing a Happy Mother's Day to all mothers, guardians, and female mentors, as you glorify God in your vocation. May God continue to uphold you in the special role you serve and may you be richly blessed with the love of children. Holy Mary, Mother of God pray for us.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have. I invite you to follow the DPCDSB's social media platforms for

important school board updates and additional information.

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