

# 2017-18 Report to the Community

## Mission

To inspire and empower learning for life.

## Vision

A community of learners achieving full potential.

## A message from the Director

The 2017-18 school year was a time of tremendous growth and success at the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB).

I am proud of the members of the senior team, supported by the Board of Trustees, for their leadership in implementing system initiatives that align with our Strategic Priorities and take us one step closer to achieving our goals in the multi-year strategic plan.

Examples of Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Well-being, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Community, which form the four pillars of our Strategic Priorities, can be found throughout this report.

Our annual report is just one way we celebrate the hard work and accomplishments of our students, staff, trustees and school communities as we strive to inspire and empower learning for life.

## By the Numbers

- 86 elementary schools
- 16 secondary schools
- 6 Learning Centres
- 36,516 elementary students
- 14,816 secondary students
- \$637 million balanced budget

## Strategic Priorities – 2017-2022

Read more about the [SCDSB's Strategic Priorities](#).

## Highlights of EQAO results

- Grade 3 – 61 per cent met or exceeded the provincial standards
- Grade 6 – results up five per cent from previous year
- Grade 9 Academic – 81 per cent met or exceeded the provincial standards

Read all [EQAO results](#)

## **Excellence in Teaching and Learning**

### **SCDSB principal ranked among nation's best in 2018**

#### *High standards of achievement*

In January 2018, Greg Brucker, principal at Barrie North Collegiate Institute, was one of 40 educators to be recognized by The Learning Partnership as Canada's Outstanding Principals. He joined a number of previous SCDSB administrators as a member of the National Academy of Canada's Outstanding Principals™. In the Canada's Outstanding Principals program, principals are nominated by their peers, school staff and community members.

"Greg has worked tirelessly to support the mental health and well-being of students in his schools, and those efforts have contributed to increased credit accumulation and graduation rates," says Steve Blake, Director of Education. "We're incredibly proud of him and are pleased that he is being recognized for the countless contributions he has made in SCDSB schools."

### **Using technology to support student learning**

#### *Innovative and engaging teaching and learning practices*

In 2017-18, the SCDSB implemented a pilot project in 39 elementary learning centres, installing soundfield amplification systems to study their effect on communication barriers in the classroom. Participating classrooms committed to regular use of the systems, and training was provided on their use. At the completion of the project:

- 73 per cent of teachers felt it positively affected student learning
- 63 per cent of teachers felt that use of the system improved the classroom learning environment
- 81 percent of teachers reported that students were better able to hear them, especially when the classroom was noisy

"A fantastic tool that improved student engagement and learning. Students enjoyed using the microphone which made them motivated to speak in front of the class, as well as provided more opportunities for them to learn from each other. Students were able to hear instructions and lessons better from the teacher. Benefitted students with hearing loss or impairment, as well as engaging less-focused students." – teacher participant

### **SCDSB Grade 3, 6 and 9 academic EQAO math results increase in 2017-18**

#### *Literacy and numeracy competencies embedded in all curriculum areas*

In September 2018, Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) released 2017-18 EQAO assessment results. The SCDSB mathematics results showed an increase in Grades 3 and 6 mathematics and Grade 9 academic mathematics.

The SCDSB has prioritized mathematics and is committed to a five-year improvement strategy that includes teaching fundamental skills through conceptual understanding as well as supporting the development of transferable skills like problem solving. This strategy includes a significant investment in professional learning focused on content knowledge for teaching and leading instruction.

In support of our commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, and as an extension of this past year's area of focus, the SCDSB will continue to emphasize building teacher capacity to respond to identified student needs, with a focus on:

- Primary mathematics (Grade 1 -3)
- Junior mathematics (Grades 4 - 6)
- Grade 9 mathematics

## **SCDSB partners with Queen’s University to expand blended learning and eLearning**

*Skills needed to thrive in a technologically-driven global society*

In 2018, 47 SCDSB staff, including administrators, elementary and secondary educators completed an additional qualifications course in Teaching and Learning through eLearning. This professional development opportunity was offered in partnership with Queen’s University and instructed by SCDSB staff using the SCDSB Desire2Learn (D2L) platform. Educators participating in the course were offered a class set of Chromebooks to support the implementation of blended learning in their classrooms. The Rural Funding Grant (2017-18) was used to purchase 16 class sets of Chromebooks for educators taking the course.

## **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

### **Creating an environment where all students can thrive at Chris Hadfield PS**

*Opportunity to reflect all voices and perspectives*

At Chris Hadfield PS in Bradford, multiculturalism isn’t a concept; it’s a reality. Over half of the student population is learning English as second language, which presents some interesting challenges and unique learning opportunities for students and staff. The school has made adapting their practices to enable all students to thrive a priority, using dual language books, technology such as Google Translate and pairing new students with others that speak their native language.

See more on [CTV Barrie](#).

### **Enhancing music opportunities and outcomes in elementary schools**

*Access to a broad range of programs and pathways*

In December 2017, a comprehensive review of the SCDSB elementary music program was introduced. The report outlined a three-year plan to ensure that all SCDSB elementary schools have a comprehensive, high-quality music program, including the development of a consistent music course of study for Grade 1-8.

In Spring 2018, all elementary schools were given the option to be part of program implementation, and 30 schools were identified as phase one schools.

On May 10, the Inspiring Music for Life program was launched at a symposium featuring keynote speaker Jowi Taylor, author of Six String Nation. This event brought together teachers and students from each of the 30 phase one schools. Teacher and student participants spent the day in workshops and seminars, developing skills and techniques to use for the remainder of the year and to hit the ground singing and playing in September.

### **Supporting racialized students at the Race and Racism: Igniting Student Voice conference**

*Leadership opportunities for all*

In April 2018, the SCDSB invited 120 students who self-identify as racialized and/or Indigenous to the first Race and Racism: Igniting Student Voice conference, offered in

partnership with Harmony Movement. At the event, facilitators engaged students and educators in courageous conversations, working to identify biases and barriers affecting racialized and Indigenous students. The conference was intended as a first step in moving our school communities forward in an effort to reduce and eliminate biases and barriers.

## **Well-being**

### **SCDSB Staff Experience and Wellness Survey**

*Positive sense of self and belonging*

The SCDSB Staff Experience and Wellness Survey was conducted in June 2017 and June 2018. The survey included 17 specific questions and one open-ended question. The data collected from the most recent distribution, in 2018, was compared with the 2017 baseline data for any changes across employee satisfaction indicators. Additionally, further analysis determined the drivers for higher levels of employee satisfaction. The data will continue to inform planning by the board, led by the Principal of Well-being and the SCDSB's Health & Wellness Committee. Derived from the 2016-2017 survey results, four goals had been identified as focal points for improvement that aligned with the SCDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan. The recent results from June 2018 show marked improvements across key areas of employee satisfaction as a result of actions completed and a commitment to the four identified goals from last year.

### **Training leaders to support workplace mental health and well-being**

*Safe, healthy, respectful learning and working cultures*

The SCDSB has committed to understanding and promoting the importance of workplace mental health and well-being. To achieve this, all supervisors, managers and administrators complete the Queen's University Workplace Mental Health Leadership™ certificate program, delivered by Morneau Shepell. Consisting of a blended learning model of instruction with face-to-face and online components, the program has three modules that lead staff to better work with and support employees and colleagues who show signs of mental health issues.

Over 150 senior administrators, principals, vice-principals, managers, supervisors and union leaders have taken part in this program since 2017. Participants agree that the training is helping them in their roles, not just to understand mental health issues, but to support individuals people with mental health concerns, both in and outside of their workplace.

### **SCDSB schools earn 53 Ontario EcoSchool certifications**

*Appreciation for environmental practices and outdoor learning*

Schools across the SCDSB were awarded 53 Ontario EcoSchools certifications in 2017-18. Fifty-three elementary, secondary and alternative secondary schools achieved varying levels of recognition, up from 44 last year. This school year, the SCDSB achieved three platinum, twenty-four gold, twenty-four silver and two bronze certifications.

Ontario EcoSchools status is obtained by implementing environmental initiatives within schools, including recycling programs, waste-free lunches, energy conservation programs and school ground greening projects. Certification promotes hands-on actions that students can take to make their schools more environmentally friendly.

## Community

### Launch of new public website

*Trust, accountability and transparency*

In July 2018 the SCDSB launched a new website at [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca). The new site provides a user-focused layout, and is mobile-friendly for those who visit from their smartphone or tablet. It includes improved search functionality, allowing users to find the information they're looking for easily, and accessibility features, as well as the ability to subscribe to receive updates on news, events and Board and Committee meetings.

### SCDSB launches new traditional territory acknowledgement

*Purposeful partnerships*

In 2017-18, the SCDSB implemented a daily land acknowledgement, along with a more formal acknowledgement for Board meetings and significant school and board events.

This acknowledgement of traditional territory was developed in partnership with the SCDSB's First Nations Education Advisory Committee and local Indigenous partners. It is based on the acknowledgement created by the Georgian College Council of Elders and adapted for use in SCDSB schools. The acknowledgement was approved by the Board of Trustees in October.

"The acknowledgement of traditional territory in schools and at board events is an important act of reconciliation," stated Stuart Finlayson, Superintendent of Education Area 1/Indigenous Education/Parent Involvement. "It is a sign of respect for the First Nations people of Simcoe County, on whose land we stand."

### Working in partnership to support adult learners throughout our region

*Lifelong learning*

In 2017-18 the SCDSB led the establishment of the Central Regional Partnership for Adult Education (CRPAE), a partnership between nine school boards that is intended to promote a more collaborative approach to and a shared responsibility for adult learning. CRPAE is actioning the provincial mandate to improve:

- Regionally coordinated access to flexible delivery of adult and continuing education programs and/or services
- Access to coordinated information, intake, assessment and referrals at school boards
- Regionally coordinated access to consistent Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
- Regional guidance, career counselling and pathway planning for mature students

Initial outcomes of the partnership in the SCDSB have included broader promotion of adult and continuing education program options, and the opening of a new adult education program in Wasaga Beach, in partnership with the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, South Georgian Bay Community Health Centre and a community literacy provider.

## **Fifteen schools receive Ophea Healthy Schools certification**

### *Celebration of accomplishments*

Students and staff at SCDSB schools are celebrating after earning fifteen Healthy Schools certifications from Ophea. Schools focused on many areas - physical activity, healthy eating, safety and injury prevention, growth and development, mental health and addictions – to support the SCDSB’s strategic goal of well-being and achieve certification.

Ophea’s Healthy Schools Certification recognizes and celebrates school communities for promoting and enhancing the health and well-being of students, school staff and the broader community. Participating schools complete the Six-Step Healthy Schools Process, which aligns with the Ministry of Education’s Foundations for a Healthy School resource. Through a point-based system, schools planned their Healthy Schools process over the course of the school year. Schools outline the steps needed to achieve certification and apply to be certified as a gold, silver or bronze.

In 2017-18, SCDSB schools earned seven golds, three silvers, four bronzes and one participant level certification. There were 238 schools certified across Ontario.

## **Equity and Inclusive Education**

### **School and Classroom Practices**

In 2017-18, many opportunities and resources were provided to support our schools in moving towards the strategic goal of helping our students to see their own culture/background in what they are learning about and in the resources they are using. Each elementary and secondary school was provided with books depicting a variety of backgrounds and lived experiences (e.g. Indigenous heritage, ethno-cultural groups, faith backgrounds, LGBTQ+, gender identities, abilities).

Equity, diversity and inclusion staff worked directly in schools, supporting students and staff by modelling culturally responsive and relevant teaching and learning. The SCDSB also hosted two equity-based conferences for students and staff: Race and Racism: Igniting Student Voice and Creating Safe Spaces GSA Conference. Our schools will continue to move forward in the creation and enhancement of safe and welcoming learning and working environments based on the direction outlined in the SCDSB Strategic Priorities.

### **Leadership, Governance and Human Resource Practices**

All SCDSB senior administrators and managers, and many school administrators participated Deep Diversity: Leadership Skills for Inclusive Schools and Workplaces training in 2017-18. These sessions helped system leaders reflect on personal biases and intentionally consider the perspectives of others, supporting a more bias-aware approach to decision making. This learning opportunity was one of many offered throughout the year to staff in various roles, including:

- Indigenous and cultural awareness training for school and central office staff
- A full Professional Activity Day focused on well-being and equity and inclusion
- The SCDSB Board of Trustees participated in an Indigenous blanket activity to heighten awareness around the realities of the residential school system

Further equity training is planned for our newly elected board in the 2018-19 school year.

## **Data Collection, Integration and Reporting**

Our school climate survey and kindergarten registration survey provide clear evidence of the ongoing focus on equity and inclusion in the SCDSB. These tools help guide our practice, and the resulting data serves as a benchmark, helping us to move towards achieving the goals in our strategic plan.

The 2017-18 school climate survey, saw significant increases in the participation rates for students, staff and parents/guardians over the previous survey (19%, 62% and 3%, respectively). Some highlights include:

- 85 per cent of students reported that they feel accepted by adults at the school
- 93 per cent of parents noted that their child gets along with other students
- 86 per cent of staff shared that administration promotes a clear vision for an inclusive school

The kindergarten registration survey was implemented to get feedback from parents who are new to the school system. An inclusive and supportive environment is important in welcoming these parents, and in an increasing number of cases, those who are new to our board and/or country. Highlights include:

- 88 per cent of respondents rated their overall registration experience as either positive or very positive
- 95 per cent of parents reported that they felt welcome

The SCDSB acknowledges the need for continued growth, but also recognizes that our intentional focus on equity and inclusion is making a difference for our students and their families.

## **2017-18 Senior Administrative Team**

Steve Blake, Director

John Dance, Associate Director

### **Superintendents of Education**

Stuart Finlayson

Daryl Halliday

Jackie Kavanagh

Paula Murphy

Hanne Nielsen

Douglas Paul

Chris Samis

### **Superintendent of Business & Facility Services**

Brian Jeffs

### **Superintendent of Human Resource Services**

John Dance

## **Chief Information Officer**

Christine Evitt

Learn more about our [senior administration](#).

## **Board of Trustees (2014-2018)**

Kathleen Aikins - Barrie, Wards 1, 2, 3

Donna Armstrong - Innisfil

Peter Beacock (Chairperson) - Oro-Medonte and Springwater

Jennifer Cameron - Barrie, Wards 7, 8, 9, 10

Wayne Clements (resigned March 31, 2018) - Adjala-Tosorontio, Essa and CFB Borden

Donna DaSilva - News Tecumseth and Bradford West Gwillimbury

Suzanne Ley - Collingwood and Clearview

Jodi Lloyd (Vice-Chairperson) - Orillia and Ramara

Michele Locke - Midland, Tay, Severn

Krista Mayne - Barrie, Wards 4, 5, 6

Robert North - Wasaga Beach, Penetanguishene, Tiny

Brandy Rafeek (appointed May 22, 2018) - Adjala-Tosorontio, Essa and CFB Borden

Daniel Shilling - Representing First Nation Communities

Learn more about [our trustees](#).

## **2017-18 Student Trustees**

Gillian Hunnisett - Orillia Secondary School

Ramneet Kaloti - Innisdale Secondary School

Gabi Millsap - Collingwood Collegiate Institute

## **What our staff are saying**

“I’ve enjoyed my career with the board. I think we have made great strides to ensure that everyone feels valued and respected.”

“I am honoured to work for the Simcoe County District School Board.”

“The Simcoe County District School Board is a positive and supportive employer that supports both personal and professional growth.”