

2018-19 Report to the Community

Mission

To inspire and empower learning for life.

Vision

A community of learners achieving full potential.

A message from Chair Lloyd and Director Blake

In our 2018-19 annual report, we share stories and data that highlight some of the accomplishments of the Simcoe County District School Board's students and staff. Stories of achievement, our music program, commitment to technological education and the skilled trades pathways, along with stories of community partnerships, unique Indigenous education tools, environmental initiatives and inclusive teaching and learning environments, can be found within.

We are proud of the progress we have made towards realizing our strategic priorities. We are now two years into our multi-year strategic plan, and continue to achieve our goals, thanks to the leadership of our Board of Trustees, senior team and dedicated staff. Examples of each of the four pillars – **Excellence in Teaching and Learning; Well-being; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion;** and, **Community** – can be found throughout our schools and other worksites.

Through the Director's Annual Report, we are able to showcase the accomplishments of our students, staff and trustees and demonstrate our commitment to inspire and empower learning for life.

By the numbers

- 87 elementary schools **note that one elementary school is Grade 7-8 only, located at Stayner Collegiate Institute*
- 15 secondary schools
- 7 Learning Centres
- 37,237 elementary students
- 15,162 secondary students
- 5-year grad rate is 82.1%
- \$646 million balanced budget

Strategic Priorities – 2017-2022

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

Excellence in teaching and learning

Nottawa ES teacher receives Prime Minister's award

High standards of achievement

In May 2019, Paireen Gill, a Grade 3 teacher at Nottawa Elementary School, was honoured with one of 35 Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence. Gill received a Certificate of Achievement for her efforts to bring out the personal best in each student, profiling character strengths and boosting areas for improvement by asking students to identify where they can continue to grow.

"We congratulate Ms. Gill for her dedication to student well-being," said Michael Giffen, SCDSB Superintendent of Education. "This award of excellence recognizes her commitment to creating a safe, supportive and inclusive classroom for her students. She promotes student and staff wellness in a variety of ways as a valued member of the Nottawa Elementary School team."

Celebrating music education and talent at the first SCDSB Idol

Innovative and engaging teaching and learning practices

Last spring the students and staff of the SCDSB shared their musical talents with the world in an effort to become the first SCDSB Idol. Contestants were asked to share audition videos highlighting their vocal and/or instrumental abilities. Members of the public participated in an online vote to select eight finalists to perform in the live finale, where a panel of judges named Emma and Leah Walker, a student group from W.C. Little Elementary School in Barrie, SCDSB Idols for their performance of Big Yellow Taxi by Joni Mitchell.

With over 80 audition videos submitted, and more than 11,200 votes, it is clear that our students, staff and community are passionate about music!

SCDSB closing the gap on EQAO test results

Literacy and numeracy competencies embedded in all curriculum areas

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) continues to close the gap between our results and the provincial average, and demonstrate strength in areas of investment.

"We are encouraged by the EQAO results," says Chris Samis, Superintendent of Program and Special Education. "Our staff have worked hard to support student achievement, and these results demonstrate the impact of our commitment to our board's math strategy."

In Grade 9 applied mathematics and on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), the SCDSB saw a 2% increase over last year's results. In junior mathematics, the SCDSB's results were consistent with last year, while the provincial standard continued to decline. Overall, the SCDSB has seen an increased level of improvement in areas where additional resources have been invested.

In 2018-19, the SCDSB continued to emphasize building teacher capacity to respond to identified student needs, with a focus on junior (Grades 4 - 6) and intermediate (Grades 7 - 10) mathematics. Moving forward, the SCDSB will continue to support these areas, with an added focus on primary literacy and mathematics development.

SCDSB students win best of show at provincial competition

Skills needed to thrive in a technologically-driven global society

The SCDSB sent 41 students from 10 schools to the 2019 Skills Ontario Competition in May 2019. SCDSB competitors won medals in nine categories: three gold, five silver and one bronze. In addition, the SCDSB won the School Board Award of Distinction, presented to the school board that places in the top ten in the most contests. For the first time, the SCDSB also had 18 elementary school students compete in five different contests in the elementary component of the competition.

“Our students’ achievements at Skills Ontario are representative of their time, hard work and dedication, as well as that of the staff who have supported them throughout this process,” says Steve Blake, Director of Education. “Our board has made a clear commitment to the promotion of skilled trades and apprenticeships, and that is evident in the success of our students.”

Equity, diversity and inclusion

Supporting Indigenous education with the Heroes: Indigenous Role Models resources

Opportunity to reflect all voices and perspectives

In November, the SCDSB hosted the world premiere of the Heroes: Indigenous Role Models video, comic book and poster series. The launch event included special screenings for SCDSB students and staff during the day, and a world premiere event in the evening.

The series highlights the stories, successes and life experiences of a variety of individuals with First Nation, Métis or Inuit heritage. It is intended to foster awareness that all of our students, including Indigenous students, need to see themselves reflected in our schools, have positive role models and be inspired. The idea for the series was born through discussions with community elders and knowledge keepers. It focuses on strong, resilient and positive Indigenous role models from different First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities, their lives, cultures and languages. To honour 2019 as the United Nations Year of Indigenous languages, each comic book was printed in English and the corresponding Indigenous language.

Trustees receive training and support as they carry out their roles

Access to a broad range of programs and pathways

In 2018, Simcoe County ratepayers elected the Board of Trustees, who serve a four-year term and represent the various municipalities of Simcoe County and the county's First Nation communities. To support trustees in their role, the SCDSB provided orientation and training on a variety of topics. The training included:

- an overview of Board and committee meetings
- information about various departments, including business and facilities, communications, human resources, program, special education and student success
- what to expect as a trustee
- information about supervised alternative learning, expulsions, suspensions and grievances
- parliamentary training

Providing leadership development opportunities for all staff

Leadership opportunities for all

Leadership is critical to the practice of advocating excellence for student success, fostering positive learning and working cultures and supporting the capacity building of current and emergent leaders. In 2018-19, over 400 SCDSB employees participated in leadership sessions offered through the Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS). Sessions included topics such as leadership for all, becoming a manager, equity, inclusion, balance and wellness in leadership and exploring your personal leadership resources.

Well-being

Celebrating the contributions of staff in the SCDSB

Positive sense of self and belonging

In 2018-19, staff recognition took centre stage with two new initiatives. Both campaigns were developed as a result of strategic planning discussions at a Director's Advisory Committee meeting to address specific results from the previous year's Staff Experience and Wellness Survey.

In February and March, SCDSB staff were invited to participate in SCDSB Share the Love by recognizing individuals in their workplace for their efforts in the areas of excellence in teaching and learning, well-being, community or equity, diversity and inclusion.

Hearts, representing each of the pillars of the Strategic Priorities, were made available for all staff to order, free of charge. The hearts were then personalized with a message and distributed to those they have identified for recognition. Recipients were encouraged to display the hearts in a prominent location in their workplace and share pictures of the hearts they received, tagging @SCDSB_Schools and #SCDSBShareTheLove. Over 7,000 hearts were distributed by and to staff in all SCDSB worksites!

During Education Week in May, SCDSB Celebrates recognized that each of the more than 6,000 individuals who support our students and schools makes a difference, and that together, we all make a difference. With support from partners in unions and staff groups, a different group was highlighted on social media each day during the week. The groups included Administrative Professionals, Educators, Leadership and Central Services, Operations and Maintenance and Social Services Professionals. Members of our school communities were also invited to recognize the SCDSB staff who have made a difference in their lives throughout the week, using #SCDSBcelebrates and #youmakeadifference.

SCDSB partners with RVH to offer mental health day program

Safe, healthy, respectful learning and working cultures

In September 2018, in partnership with the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre, the SCDSB opened the Simcoe Muskoka Regional Child and Youth Mental Health day program. The program provides academic and mental health services to students in Grade 9 to 12 who are unable to attend regular classes due to diagnosed anxiety or depression. The goals of the program are to reintegrate students into school and to develop effective strategies to address educational gaps and barriers interfering with a student's educational success as a result of their impairment due to anxiety and/or depression symptoms.

In 2018-19, 17 students accessed this new program.

Organics collection takes off in SCDSB schools throughout Simcoe County

Appreciation for environmental practices and outdoor learning

SCDSB elementary schools in the County of Simcoe have participated in classroom organics collection since 2011. Over time, secondary schools joined them, and by 2014 all Orillia schools joined in on organics diversion programs. These programs were supported by the County of Simcoe and the City of Orillia. In 2017, the SCDSB launched a pilot program for organics collection at four schools in the City of Barrie. The pilot was so successful that four additional schools were added to the program in 2018-19. The schools participating in the pilot program were able to divert almost 40 metric tonnes of organic material from landfills, which is equivalent to 285 kg of methane gas.

In total, in 2018-19 the SCDSB diverted 913 kg of methane from landfill by participating in organics collection. That's the equivalent of five cars taken off the road, or 3-million cellphones being charged!

Community

Launch of volunteer portal and online registration

Trust, accountability and transparency

SCDSB Community Apps is a new online portal that allows parents/guardians and community members to begin the process for registering and/or volunteering at a SCDSB school. These tools streamline these processes and provide increased accessibility to individuals connecting with our schools. In 2018-19, over 4,800 student registrations and over 6,300 volunteers registered through the Community Apps tool.

Big Brothers Big Sisters and the SCDSB collaborate to support student mentorship

Purposeful partnerships

The SCDSB and the five Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) agencies serving Simcoe County have committed to work together to better serve students who would benefit from an additional positive adult in their lives. On Aug. 26, the SCDSB and the Barrie and District, Georgian Triangle, North Simcoe, Orillia and District and York BBBS agencies signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), committing to streamline and expand BBBS mentoring in-school programs in the SCDSB.

The goal of the partnership is to establish BBBS partnership agreements with all SCDSB schools, and to work together to increase the number of qualified mentors wishing to volunteer. This partnership will also support the growth of BBBS across Simcoe County, as well as better support students moving from elementary to secondary school.

"Having been involved with the BBBS in-school mentoring programs since 2004 as a school principal, I can speak to the high quality of these programs and the positive impact they have on students," states Cathy Lethbridge, SCDSB Principal of Well-being. "It is inspiring to see the commitment to expanding the program across the county, and I look forward to the opportunities this partnership will open up for our students."

Supporting adult learning in Wasaga Beach with new learning centre location

Lifelong learning

In December 2018 the SCDSB, in partnership with Adult Learning Centre, the South Georgian Bay Community Health Centre and the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, opened the Wasaga Beach Learning Centre. This centre was opened in response to community need, with a goal of supporting adults in achieving their learning goals. The centre provides literacy and basic skills programming, in addition to support for adult high school credit programming (eLearning and correspondence). In less than eight months, the Wasaga Beach Learning Centre supported 16 students and had two graduates.

One of the graduates, Samantha Eliot, shared: “When I found out that a learning centre opened up in my town, and only five minutes from my place of work, I suddenly knew that graduating was an actual possibility for me ... I can FINALLY say - I am a high school graduate. I am now able to look towards my future and make plans to further my education with any clouds of doubt or regret.”

Students, staff, volunteers and co-op employers recognized at annual character recognition event

Celebration of accomplishments

Each May, the SCDSB recognizes students, staff, volunteers and co-op employers at the annual Character Recognition Evening. Honourees are nominated by their peers and colleagues for their demonstration of one or more of the board’s character attributes: integrity, responsibility, cooperation, caring, respect, optimism, honesty, equality, courage and inclusiveness. More than 100 character recognition awards were presented at the 2019 event.

What our staff are saying

“I love my job! Facility services is my calling. I love helping people in general and the maintenance aspect of the job always keep me learning new things.”

“I love working for the SCDSB - it makes me proud to be a teacher in this board.”

“I enjoy who I work with, and my administrators are so supportive”.

Board Improvement Plan

In the 2018-19 school year, the SCDSB implemented a variety of programs and strategies to support student learning with a focus on fundamental math skills.

Pathways, planning and supports

The SCDSB continues to support students with pathway decision making, from apprenticeship or college to community living, university or the workplace. Learn more about the [actions we’re taking to support our students](#).

Schools and classrooms that support all students

The SCDSB is committed to ensuring that all our students and members of our school communities feel welcome, included and safe in our schools. We work to accomplish this in a variety of ways. This includes [building equitable school and classroom environments](#), identifying and working to achieve [equity and inclusive education goals in our multi-year strategic plan](#) and [supporting the achievement and well-being of First Nation, Metis and Inuit learners](#).

Highlights of EQAO results

- Grade 6 writing – results up four per cent from previous year
- Grade 9 applied math – results up two per cent from previous year
- OSSLT - results up two per cent from previous year

Read all [EQAO results](#)

2018-19 Senior Administrative Team

Steve Blake, Director

John Dance, Associate Director

Superintendents of Education

Stuart Finlayson

Michael Giffen

Daryl Halliday

Dean Maltby

Hanne Nielsen

Douglas Paul

Chris Samis

Dawn Stephens

Superintendent of Business & Facility Services

Brian Jeffs

Superintendent of Human Resource Services

John Dance

Chief Information Officer

Christine Evitt (until March 2019)

Rick DeFoe (beginning April 2019)

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

Board of Trustees (2018-22)

Donna Armstrong - Innisfil

Peter Beacock - Oro-Medonte and Springwater

Sarah Beitz - New Tecumseth

Debbie Connors – Bradford West Gwillimbury

Jodi Lloyd (Chairperson) – Orillia, Ramara and Severn

Michele Locke - Midland, Penetanguishene, Tay and Tiny

Tyler Boswell (*began October 2019*) - Midland, Penetanguishene, Tay and Tiny

Beth Mouratidis - Barrie, Wards 4, 5, 6

Robert North (Vice-chairperson) - Adjala-Tosorontio, Clearview, CFB Borden and Essa

David O'Brien - Barrie, Wards 1, 2, 3

Paula Jade (P.J.) Sandy - Representing First Nation Communities

Tanya Snell - Collingwood and Wasaga Beach

Lisa-Marie Wilson - Barrie, Wards 7, 8, 9, 10

Learn more about [our trustees](#).

2018-19 Student Trustees

Julia Felgner – Twin Lakes Secondary School

Evan Marriott – Stayner Collegiate Institute

Victoria McMahon – Bear Creek Secondary School