

2019-20 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

The 2019-20 school year proved to be an unprecedented one in education. In our annual report, we share stories and information that highlight some of the many accomplishments of the Simcoe County District School Board's (SCDSB) students and staff, while also acknowledging the challenges we were able to overcome together. Examples of resilience, innovation and partnership are shared, along with stories about our collective achievements in music, technological education and community engagement.

We are proud of the progress we have made towards realizing our strategic priorities. We are now three 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 priorities – 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

- 88 elementary schools **note that two elementary schools are Grade 7-8 only (Elmvale District High School and Stayner Collegiate Institute)*
- 15 secondary schools
- 7 Learning Centres
- 37,891 elementary students
- 15,294 secondary students
- 5-year grad rate is 84.2%
- \$659 million balanced budget

Strategic Priorities – 2017-2022

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

Excellence in teaching and learning

SCDSB recognized with excellence award from the Ontario Music Education Association

High standards of achievement

In 2019-20 the SCDSB was recognized by the Ontario Music Education Association (OMEA) with an OMEA Administrators of Excellence award in recognition of the music in elementary schools program.

In recent years, the SCDSB has placed increased emphasis on the importance and value of music education, with significant investment from the Board of Trustees. The Board's investment in elementary music has been instrumental in allowing schools to provide equitable and effective music instruction. Staff have participated in ongoing professional development to support music education, and all elementary schools have instruments and resources to support students in learning to play instruments, experiencing movement through music, learning to sing, creating musical compositions and performing confidently.

Director Blake and the SCDSB were nominated by a music teacher at Orillia Secondary School, and a parent of SCDSB students, who stated that "the SCDSB has recognized the importance of music education, especially at the elementary level, and should be acknowledged for this program."

SCDSB educators adapt to provide distance learning support

Innovative and engaging teaching and learning practices

In spring 2020, when schools were closed for the remainder of the school year, SCDSB staff quickly adapted to develop a distance-based learning plan for the continuity of learning for all SCDSB students. Beginning in April, staff implemented the SCDSB Continuity of Learning Plan, focusing on student engagement. During the following months, the board engaged over 50,000 students in distance learning through both virtual learning environments and the delivery of paper packages, and over 1,000 educators participated in professional development training. An ongoing focus was placed on mental health and well-being in order to support student success.

SCDSB closing the gap on EQAO test results

Literacy and numeracy competencies embedded in all curriculum areas

Celebrating 100 years of technological education in the SCDSB

Skills needed to thrive in a technologically-driven global society

In November 2019, the SCDSB celebrated 100 years of technological education with an event that included current and former students, current and retired tech teachers and employers, journeypersons, tradespersons and apprentices.

Attendees acknowledged the evolution and growth we have experienced as a board that has led us to the robust technological programs we offer today. The investments made through our tech renewal initiative have resulted in innovative classrooms, engaging programs and modern teaching practices. Now, more than ever before, students have access to a broad range of courses and programs including the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, Specialist High Skills Major and dual credits that expose students to opportunities in the trades and prepare them for the workforce of the future.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

Working with our communities to support student learning, in-school and at home

Opportunity to reflect all voices and perspectives

In 2020, the SCDSB, along with school boards across Ontario and schools around the world, adapted to support public education while in the midst of a pandemic. Recognizing that new ways of working and learning would be necessary moving forward, the SCDSB initiated a community consultation with students and parents/guardians.

Using the Thoughtexchange® platform, students in Grades 4 to 12 were asked to share their thoughts and ideas related to the question 'Now that you have experienced distance learning, what is working well and what can we improve?'. Parents/guardians were asked to submit their feedback to the statement 'Please share what went well and what we can improve on when thinking about the most important factors or supports needed to respond to COVID-19 and planning for the future'. Participants were also asked to use a rating system to consider the thoughts and ideas of others.

A total of 1,654 students participated in the consultation, generating 1,427 thoughts and 23,499 ratings. Eighty per cent of the students were secondary students. A total of 7,858 parents/guardians contributed 10,906 thoughts and 193,743 ratings, with two-thirds being parents/guardians of children in elementary grades.

This consultation served as a basis for planning and development of the SCDSB's re-opening plans for the 2020-21 school year.

SCDSB students experience college and earn credits through dual credit program

Access to a broad range of programs and pathways

The SCDSB continued our partnership with Georgian College to offer dual credit opportunities to secondary students in 2019-20. Dual credits allow students to sample college and gain credit in both secondary school and college. Students take a college credit and must meet the requirements to pass. If successful, they are given an optional credit at secondary school and are issued a college transcript. Dual credits give students the opportunity to sample post-secondary education, work in college labs, experience a new environment and build their confidence.

In 2019-20, secondary students in the SCDSB earned 365 dual credits.

Creating safe and inclusive learning and work spaces through workshops and training

Leadership opportunities for all

The selection of the equity, diversity and inclusion goals within the SCDSB's operational plan stem from a fundamental principle that every student should have the opportunity to find success, personally and academically, regardless of their identity.

In an effort to increase staff awareness on the importance of ensuring schools are safe and inclusive places to work and learn, the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion department delivered a series of workshops and professional development sessions throughout the 2019-20 school year for the senior team, system leaders and student leaders. Topics covered include inclusive leadership, supporting gender diversity, choosing resources, bias awareness, anti-Black racism, inclusive design, cultural appropriation and bias aware interviewing and hiring.

In addition, after-school leadership development sessions focused on becoming an equity champion were offered to all members of the system.

Well-being

Providing after-school program opportunities for students with ASD

Positive sense of self and belonging

In partnership with community organizations, the SCDSB offered social and recreational programs for elementary-aged students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These multi-week sessions were held in the fall and winter at schools in Barrie and south Simcoe County. Students participated in Children's Friendship Training, the Music Social Skills Program and the Play Ball Kidz Recreation Program. Parents/guardians and schools were also engaged in the programs and received resources and support to help the children develop and practice new skills at home and at school.

SCDSB staff collaborate to create culture of belonging

Safe, healthy, respectful learning and working cultures

In October 2019, all SCDSB school staff participated in professional development focused on belonging, and what that looks like in our schools. Facilitated by a partnership between the Indigenous education, well-being and equity, diversity and inclusion departments, this full-day session examined the alignment between the concept of belonging and the SCDSB's Strategic Priorities. Staff were challenged to examine how they could have a positive impact on our students' well-being, mental health and success by continuing to support each student in finding a place where they belong in our schools.

Brechin Public School receives award from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

Appreciation for environmental practices and outdoor learning

In November 2019, Brechin Public School was recognized with the Healthy Community Award by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA). The school's Eco Team was recognized for educating students about various environmental initiatives, and for planning and leading environmental initiatives in their school and community. Each year, the LSRCA celebrates Lake Simcoe's watershed heroes with members of the community, elected officials and environmental leaders.

Some of the schools initiatives included a tree planting campaign and a school and community textile drive. In collaboration with the school's Social Changemakers Group, they also organized a water walk, sharing information about water protection with their local community and donating to an organization that provides clean water to local Indigenous communities.

Community

Enhancing communication with parents/guardians through the Parent Involvement Committee

Trust, accountability and transparency

In order to further engage with our parent/guardian audience, in 2019-20 the SCDSB increased our outreach through the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC). To support the

PIC in building parent engagement, board staff introduced three new communication tactics. They included:

- sharing meeting notifications and agendas on social media;
- sharing meeting highlights on social media; and,
- developing a newsletter including PIC meeting highlights, news from across the SCDSB and stories connected to the SCDSB Strategic Priorities, and sharing it with PIC members and school council chairs.

Working with community partners to recognize Black History Month

Purposeful partnerships

The SCDSB has strong working relationships with our Indigenous communities and partnerships with numerous community groups including unlearn, the National Council of Canadian Muslims, the Gilbert Centre, the Black Youth Helpline, Anima Leadership, Friends of Simon Weisenthal Centre and the Afro-Caribbean Cultural Association.

In partnership with Our Mosaic Lives, students from Chris Hadfield Public School participated in a Making Change Art Engagement Project. Students expressed important ideas through their artwork, focusing on concepts of inclusion and equity for Black History Month. Finished products were on display in the school and in the Rotunda at Barrie City Hall throughout Black History Month to honour the legacy of Black Canadians, past and present.

The SCDSB Equity, Diversity and Inclusion department collaborates with students, educators, support staff, administrators and community partners to identify and remove barriers to student achievement and well-being. The department facilitates learning and provides resources to foster schools that are equitable, inclusive and responsive to the diversity of our students, families, staff and communities. This work includes the delivery of staff training/professional development, student forums and conferences, resource development and community partnership development.

SCDSB educators facilitate additional qualification courses through Queen's University

Lifelong learning

In 2020 the SCDSB partnered with Queen's University to offer additional qualification (AQ) courses. The courses were facilitated by SCDSB instructors, and in the spring, pivoted from a blended learning format to being offered online only. The courses focus on topics including Indigenous traditions and histories, mathematics and safe and accepting schools.

Celebrating SCDSB graduates and their accomplishments during the COVID-19 shutdown

Celebration of accomplishments

In 2019-20, with the cancellation of large gatherings due to COVID-19, SCDSB staff had to get creative in order to celebrate the many accomplishments of our graduating students.

Virtual graduation ceremonies were held for every elementary and secondary school in the SCDSB, and many schools added their own personal touch such as lawn signs, school swag and special drive-through diploma pickups. Each secondary school celebration also included a direct message from their SCDSB trustee.

Our celebrations of these milestones didn't look the same as they traditionally have, but through the commitment and dedication of our staff, we were able to shine a positive light on

the accomplishments of our students before they moved on to the next phase of their education journey.

2019-20 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

Rick DeFoe

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

Board of Trustees (2018-22)

Donna Armstrong - Innisfil

Peter Beacock - Oro-Medonte and Springwater

Sarah Beitz - New Tecumseth

Tyler Boswell - Midland, Penetanguishene, Tay and Tiny

Debbie Connors – Bradford West Gwillimbury

Jodi Lloyd (Chairperson) – Orillia, Ramara and Severn

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](#).

2019-20 Student Trustees

Maya Aldis - Nottawasaga Pines Secondary School

Mylan Nguyen - Bear Creek Secondary School

Fouz Ul-Mubeen - Orillia Secondary School