

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that we are on land and surrounded by water, originally inhabited by Indigenous Peoples who have travelled this area since time immemorial.

This territory is within the lands honoured by the Wampum Treaties; agreements between the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lenni Lenape and allied Nations to peacefully share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the Huron/Wendat Peoples and the Three Fires Confederacy Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi.

We are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture while remaining committed to moving forward respectfully with all First Nations, Inuit and Métis.



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The passage of time continues to amaze me, not only because I have now completed two full school years as Director of Education, but also because of the tremendous amount of work accomplished in what feels like such a short period. I am continually inspired by your commitment to teaching and learning, and by your perseverance during moments when success does not come as easily as we hope.

It is with deep appreciation and gratitude that I present the 2024–2025 Director's Report. There is something truly remarkable about witnessing the collective efforts of our team come together, showcasing the dedication behind the incredible achievements that take place each year at the Greater Essex County District School Board.

I want to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to Indigenous education, anti-racism, student achievement and student and staff well-being. Every student deserves an outstanding education, free from systemic barriers, and we will never waver from this promise.

Our strategic priorities—creating confident learners, engaging communities, and demonstrating ethical stewardship—are embedded in everything we do. Every decision is guided by these principles, ensuring that our choices lead to the success of our students.

As always, I am deeply grateful to our Board of Trustees, Senior Administration team, administrators, community partners, and every staff member who works tirelessly to help us build tomorrow, together. Most importantly, I am thankful to our students for their effort and spirit. It is a joy to watch them grow and succeed.

Sincerely,



Vicki Houston
Director of Education



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2024-2025



Gale Hatfield
Chair of the Board



Nancy Armstrong



Connie Buckler



Julia Burgess



Cathy Cooke



Kim McKinley



Malek Mekawi



Ron LeClair



Christie Nelson



Linda Qin

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION

2024-2025



Shelley Armstrong



Todd Awender



Joe Bell



Chris Boulay



Kari Bryant



Shelly Duben



Dr. Clara Howitt



Chris Mills



Raquel Roberts



THE GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD AT A GLANCE



53 Elementary Schools



15 Secondary Schools



4 Agency Schools



35,045 students



5000+ Employees



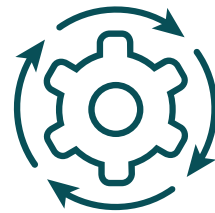
**Opened
Beacon Heights Public School
and Erie Migration District
School K-12**



**\$659,165.00
in Additional Funds for
School Additions**



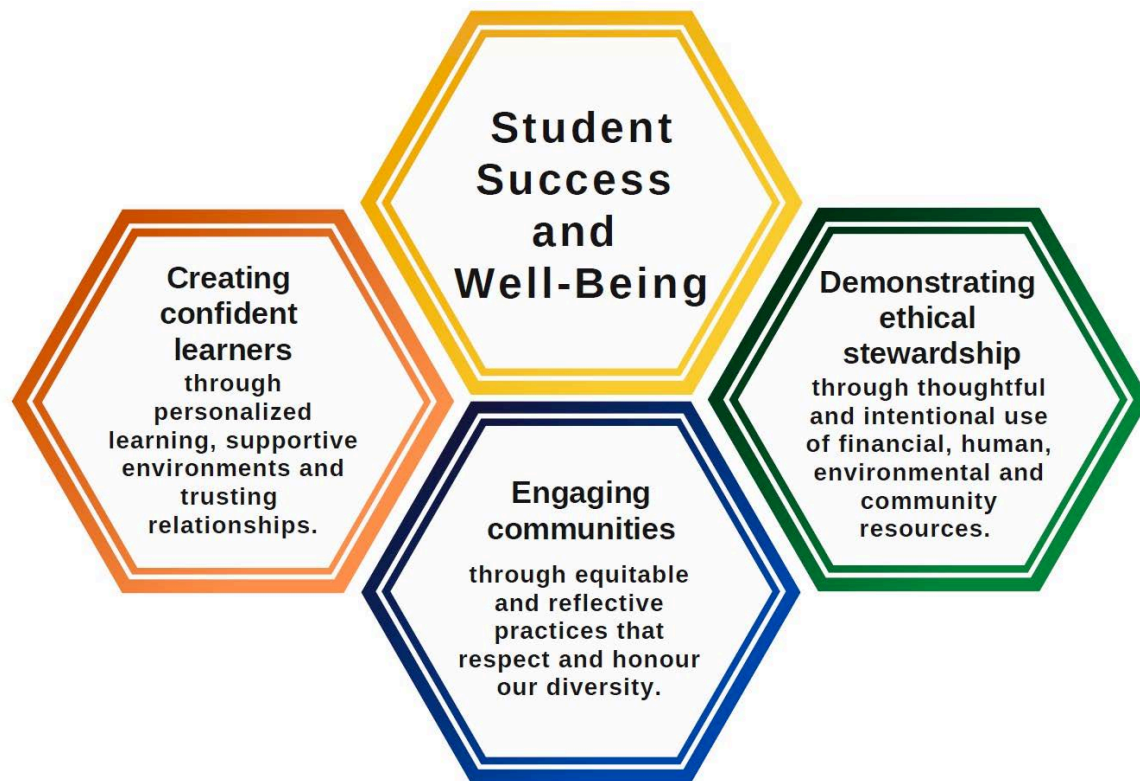
**Operating Budget
\$532,022,414**



**Capital Budget
\$56,531,217**



OUR MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN



Vision

Building tomorrow together

Mission

Leading excellence in public education by creating confident learners, engaging diverse communities and demonstrating ethical stewardship.



Supporting Indigenous Students



Creating Confident Learners

Engaging Communities

Demonstrating Ethical Stewardship

Our dedicated Open Minds team continued to do outstanding work that supported Indigenous students. This team includes a variety of roles such as academic support teachers, language teachers, cultural liaisons, graduation coaches, tutors, and consultants who focus on Indigenous education. Each member plays a part in helping students feel seen and supported, connected, and successful in their learning journey.

800

students across our board have formally identified as Indigenous

593

elementary students

208

secondary students

We continued to build strong, trusting relationships with families to encourage all Indigenous students to feel safe and confident in formally identifying.

To support Indigenous students, we offered a range of programs designed to meet their academic, cultural, and personal needs:

Land-Based Learning helps students connect with nature and traditional teachings.

The **Maawnji'diwin Student Gathering**, where students come together to celebrate their culture.

Our **Making Connections Tutoring Program** provides personalized academic support.

Camp Migizi offers a unique cultural and educational experience during the summer.

Sales of our Every Child Matters t-shirts and hoodies allow for money to be contributed to the **GECDSB Every Child Matters Scholarship** fund to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit graduates. Last year, six Indigenous students received this specific scholarship to support their post-secondary pathway.



Student Well-Being Support



Creating Confident Learners

Engaging Communities

Demonstrating Ethical Stewardship



45 schools took part in **Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week**! With the help of a \$400 grant per school, students and staff came together to celebrate kindness and inclusion through special assemblies, cultural events, and kindness campaigns.

Many schools also added new books with inclusive themes to their libraries to keep the message of belonging going all year long.

In partnership with Hiatus House and the Ministry of Education, our board introduced the **Coaching Boys into Men Program**. This initiative helps coaches create safe, supportive team environments and encourages athletes to talk openly about respect, consent, and mental health.

The PALS Project, offered with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, was another exciting highlight. In 10 pilot schools, over 100 intermediate students were trained to lead fun, inclusive games for their younger peers at recess, helping make playgrounds more welcoming, active, and positive spaces for everyone.

Through the **School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) and IThink Partnership Project**, two Grade 4 classes at West Gate Public School used creative design-thinking skills to explore real-life challenges around mental health and well-being. Teachers noticed how this approach helped students connect, collaborate, and take ownership of their learning.

Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) students participated in a two-day **leadership retreat at Camp Henry**. Workshops led by Jack.org, the Bulimia Anorexia Nervosa Association, the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, and the Canadian Mental Health Association focused on wellness, nutrition, and peer support, giving students new insights and confidence as they prepare for life beyond school.



Justice, Inclusion, Equity and Diversity



Creating Confident Learners

Engaging Communities

Demonstrating Ethical Stewardship

In June, all Greater Essex County District School Board schools, the Administration building, and other sites flew the **Inclusive Progressive Pride flag**. The Pride in Education resource continues to provide ideas for school initiatives and activities to celebrate the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.



In May, over 350 students attended the annual **Greater Essex County District School Board Gender and Sexuality Alliance conference**, supported by community and union partners. Thank you to the organizing committee for making this event a success.



The Greater Essex County District School Board proudly raised the Pan-African flag for the first time in celebration of Black History Month in February, honouring the history, resilience, and leadership of Black Canadians.



On April 15th, over 500 students from across the Greater Essex County District School Board gathered at St. Clair College for the **2nd Annual Black Joy Black Excellence Student Symposium**, an unforgettable day filled with connection, creativity, and community.

This event wouldn't have been possible without the passionate leadership of the Black Student Advisory Committee and the Create Your Future team.



Math Achievement Action Plan

The Greater Essex County District School Board's Math Achievement Action Plan was developed in response to the Ministry of Education's 2023 Math Strategy, which requires school boards to implement comprehensive plans to improve mathematics achievement.

The plan is guided by three core priorities:

- Ensuring fidelity in curriculum implementation through the intentional use of evidence-based strategies that support academic success;
- Engaging educators in ongoing professional learning to strengthen mathematics content knowledge for teaching;
- Understanding the needs of mathematics learners to provide tasks, interventions, and supports that are relevant and responsive.

In addition, the plan mandates that all students receive a minimum of 300 minutes of mathematics instruction within each five-day cycle. **Priority schools, 21 elementary and 3 secondary, collaborate with teachers, principals, and School Math Facilitators to design, implement, and monitor action plans aligned with the Ministry's framework.** School Math Facilitators also work directly with students and educators in identified Grades 3, 6, and 9 classrooms to deliver targeted instructional support and enhance student outcomes.

Elementary Highlights

Acadiance Math, a standardized assessment that measures the acquisition of foundational math skills, is utilized at the elementary level.

47%

of Grade 3 students showed an increase of 5 points from pre-post assessment

28%

of Grade 6 students showed an increase of 8 points from pre-post assessment.

Math Achievement Action Plan

86%

of teachers reported an increase in confidence in creating Math conversations after 2 cycles with a school Math Facilitator.

63%

of Grade 3 students responded yes, I agree when asked "I'm good at Math" (249 out of 394).

Secondary Highlights

An EQAO pre-screener was developed using skills and concepts from Grade 6 to early Grade 9. Eight % of students achieved a level 3 or 4 on the GECD SB EQAO pre-screener (13 out of 167).

30%

of Grade 9 students achieved a level 3 or 4 on EQAO (49 out of 163). This represents an **increase of 22%** when compared to the fall screener results created by the School Math Facilitator

100%

of teachers responded that they felt confident or very confident creating a positive learning environment where students develop into confident math learners following modeling opportunities with a math facilitator at the end of Semester 1 (6 out of 6)

100%

of teachers felt confident using exit tickets and were using consistently 2 times a week following professional development and in class learning support. (6 out of 6).



2024-2025 EQAO Achievement Results

Grade 3

Participation

Number of students who fully participated

2076

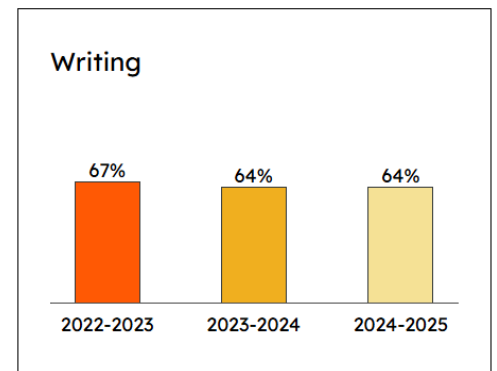
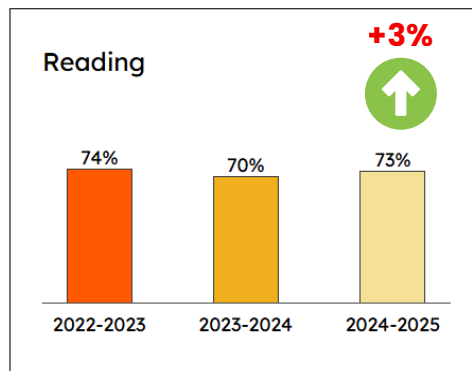
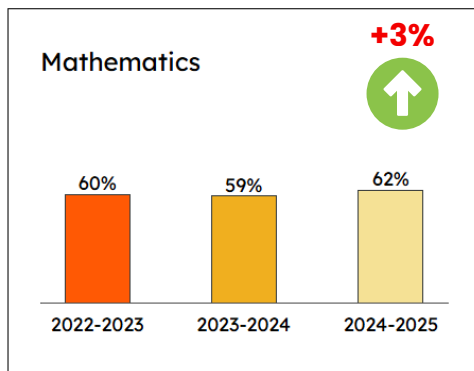
2081

2083

Reading

Writing

Math



2024-2025 EQAO Achievement Results

Grade 6

Participation

Number of students who fully participated

2176

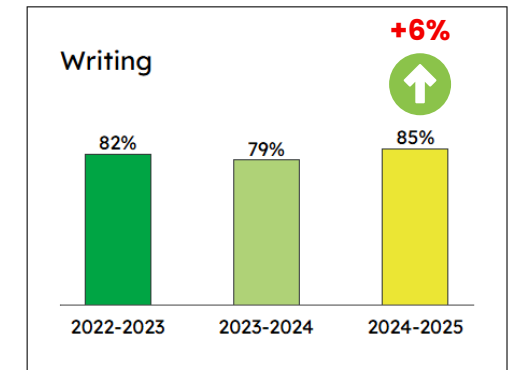
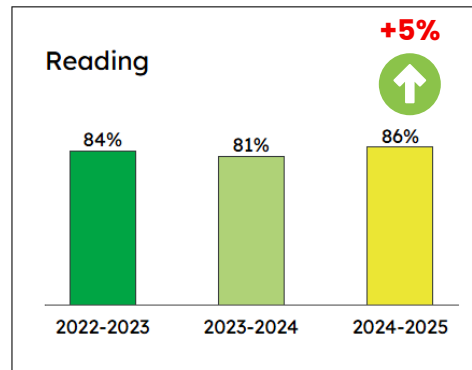
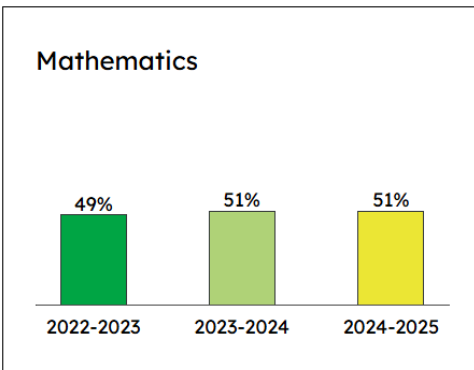
2179

2167

Reading

Writing

Math



2024–2025 EQAO Achievement Results in Math

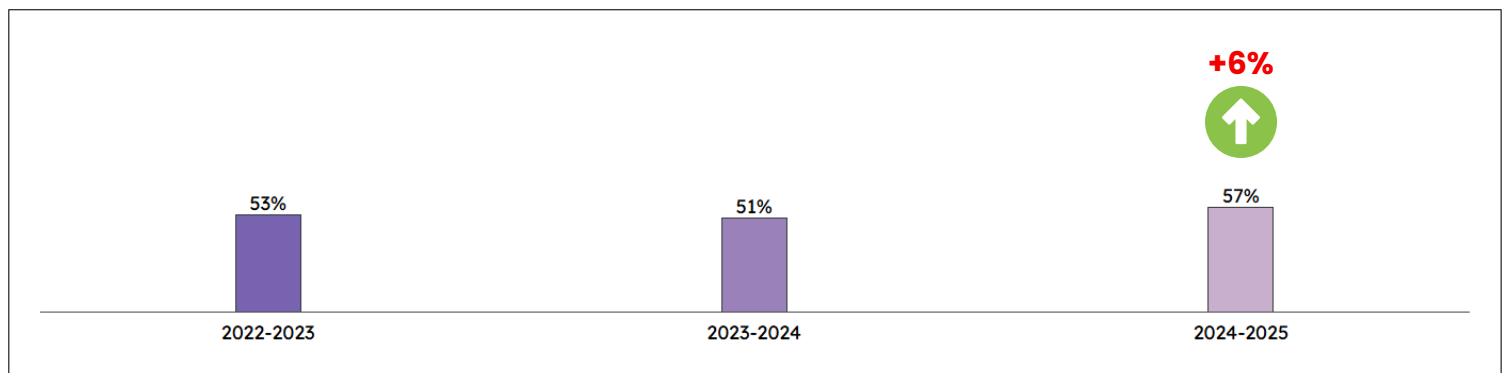
Grade 9

Participation

Number of students who fully participated

2234

Math



2024–2025 EQAO Achievement Results on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

Participation

Number of students who fully participated

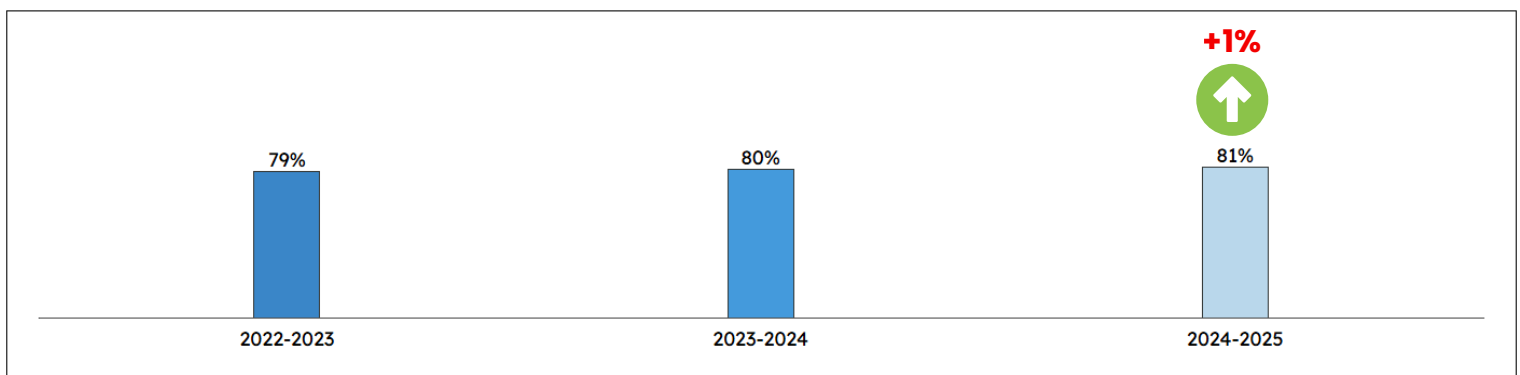
2352

573

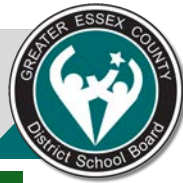
First time eligible (FTE)

Previously eligible

48% of
previously
eligible writers
were successful
(+3%)



Programs and Learning Opportunities



Creating Confident Learners

Engaging Communities

Demonstrating Ethical Stewardship



New Electrical Training Program Launched in Partnership with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

On May 29, 2025, the Greater Essex County District School Board officially launched its latest addition to the Enhanced Construction Program (ECP) — the Electrical School in partnership with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 773. The new program offers Grade 11 students an immersive educational experience based out of the IBEW Local 773 Training Centre in Windsor. The initiative reflects the Board's commitment to student success and the growing need for skilled trades professionals in the community.

Enhanced Construction and Aviation Students Embarked on a Transformative Pilot Project

The Greater Essex County District School Board has officially become an Operating Partner with The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Canada!

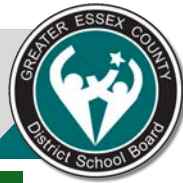
Through this dynamic partnership, students across our schools have the opportunity to participate in the Award, combining academic learning with meaningful, hands-on experiences. The pilot will spotlight students in Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs, with a focus on Aviation and Aerospace, Construction, Environment, and STEM.

With 20 award recipients this year, the Greater Essex County District School Board has achieved the highest completion rate for the Award in all of Canada, a truly remarkable accomplishment!

It is a joy to celebrate these students' successes and recognize how their achievements contribute to confidence, skill development, and motivation to pursue goals.



Programs and Learning Opportunities



Creating Confident Learners

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Ontario Education Gathering

His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh Prince Edward

Her Honour the Honourable Edith Dumont, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

Minister of Education Honourable Paul Calandra

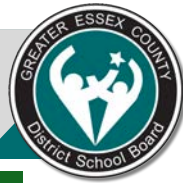
On July 2nd, I had the privilege of attending the Ontario Education Gathering with Mr. Justin St. Pierre (Teacher Consultant, Specialist High Skills Major Programs and Community Outreach), and Mr. Trent Durocher (Specialist High Skills Major/Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program). We had the honour of meeting with The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Edward, Her Honour the Honourable Edith Dumont, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and the Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education.

This important event provided an opportunity to share insights and explore ways to further integrate the co-curricular initiative that the Greater Essex County District School Board has joined with The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award - Canada. The event was a meaningful and inspiring experience for all who attended, reinforcing the value of this important partnership.

We are incredibly proud of the students who have worked toward and completed the Duke of Edinburgh Award this year and look forward to celebrating even more achievements in the years to come.



Programs and Learning Opportunities



Creating Confident Learners

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Demonstrating Ethical Stewardship



Project SEARCH®
Canada



ST. CLAIR
COLLEGE

COMMUNITY LIVING
Windsor
Inspiring Possibilities

The Greater Essex County District School Board, St. Clair College, and Community Living Windsor were thrilled to introduce the first cohort of interns participating in **Project SEARCH**, an internationally recognized transition-to-work program for young adults with developmental disabilities. The program aims to promote inclusion, foster employment opportunities, and support successful transitions into adulthood.

Eight students from the Greater Essex County District School Board were introduced to this collaborative initiative, which provides immersive workplace experience through internship rotations and targeted skills training.

Families, educators, support workers, and community partners gathered to celebrate the interns' personal achievements and the launch of this innovative program, the first of its kind in Windsor-Essex.

Congratulations to the following students on this achievement:

Emma Collard	North Star High School	Neyat Khali	Vincent Massey Secondary School
Ali Ghosin	Vincent Massey Secondary School	Darius Kovacevich	Belle River District High School
Kyle Ireson	Westview Freedom Academy	Seth Wallace	North Star High School
Isiah Kersey	Westview Freedom Academy	Ella Yoker	Belle River District High School

Program Review of the Reaching Individual Success and Excellence Program (RISE)

The Reaching Individual Success and Excellence (RISE) program provided specialized support for students working two or more years below grade level in Math and Language. In the fall of 2023, a team of researchers was assembled from across three universities to review the program within the Greater Essex County District School Board. The following concerns were identified:

- Inconsistent Academic Results
- Equitable Access Issues
- Impact on Secondary School Pathways
- Family and Educator Collaboration Concerns
- Program Structure and Support Levels

Following the identification of these concerns, the following groups were consulted: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), parents/guardians, OSSTF – Elementary Support Staff and Supervisor of Behaviour Services, Superintendent of Student Well-Being, Supervisor of Social Work, ETFO – Local Executive, Elementary Learning Support Teachers (LSTs), Elementary Teachers, students, Education Coordinators and Service Navigators.

During all consultation sessions it became evident that the primary concerns of parents/guardians were the social-emotional health of their children being in homerooms all day and fearing negative impacts on their mental health and well-being. While most parents/guardians were disappointed and concerned, they generally trust that school staff would take care of their children. Some families were supportive of the changes, appreciating that their children would remain in their homeroom for the entire day.

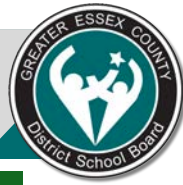
The decision was made to restructure the RISE program, beginning in September 2025. This change aimed to integrate students fully into their homeroom classrooms, providing opportunities for social interaction and fostering a sense of belonging among peers.

During the 2024–2025 school year, a new “Snapshot of Me” tool was introduced to help students share their strengths, goals, and learning needs with teachers and administrators. This helped to consider what programming would better meet the needs of students within the RISE program.

Several transition activities were executed during the 2024–25 year, including peer buddy programs, memory books, goal-setting exercises, and nutrition break visits to ease the move between classrooms. Additional transition plans and activities were shared with families prior to the end of the 2024–2025 school year.

As part of this process the school principals initiated an Identification, Placement, Review Committee (IPRC) meeting with all parents/guardians of students in RISE.

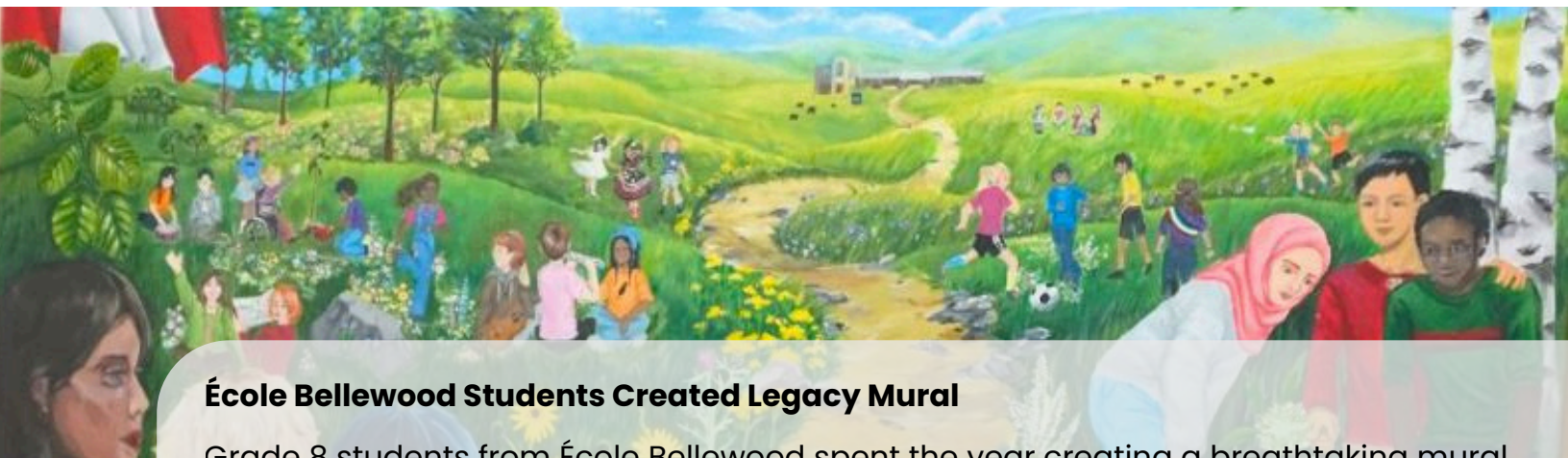
Programs and Learning Opportunities



Creating Confident Learners

Engaging Communities

Demonstrating Ethical Stewardship



École Bellewood Students Created Legacy Mural

Grade 8 students from École Bellewood spent the year creating a breathtaking mural as a legacy project from the graduating class of 2025. Four students were selected to represent each of the Grade 8 classes and, under the guidance of their Vice Principal, collaborated to design a lasting art piece for the school's Learning Commons.

Each element was created with thoughtful intention. The students ensured diverse representation in the characters, showcasing various races, ethnicities, and cultures. Indigenous plant life from the Ontario region is featured, along with symbols that represent important days of significance and inclusion.

Grade Seven Students Visited Tecumseh Vista Academy

Grade 7 students from elementary schools across the system attended sessions at the new "Innovation Centre" at Tecumseh Vista, where they got a glimpse into the exciting world of skilled trades! They participated in mini-sessions on automotive, electrical, cosmetology, and plumbing, gaining valuable hands-on experience and insights into these essential careers.

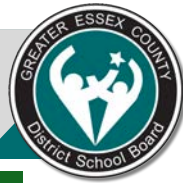
These programs continue to grow year after year. The number of Specialist High Skills Major programs is currently 77, and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program expanded to 531 students in 2024-25.



Diplôme d'études en langue française (DEL F) Exam

Secondary students enrolled in Grade 12 French as a Second Language courses had the option of taking the Diplôme d'études en langue française (DEL F) exam. This exam is an assessment of proficiency in French. It is offered through the Ministry of National Education in France. In 2025, 270 French Immersion students from the Greater Essex County District School Board wrote the DEL F exam in levels A2, B1, and B2 with a 91% success rate.

Programs and Learning Opportunities



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Memory Boxes

Keeping with a longstanding tradition, Erie Migration District School secondary students built memory boxes that were donated to Windsor Regional Hospital. In collaboration with the Canadian Mental Health Association, the boxes are provided to families who experience newborn and infant loss and have mementos or keepsakes to bring home with them. On Tuesday, June 17th, students presented the boxes to Rosemary Hogan-Kobrynovich from Windsor Regional Hospital and Sonia McMahon-Comartin from the Canadian Mental Health Association – Windsor.



New Bike

On Friday, December 13th, a truly remarkable event unfolded at Anderdon Public School in Amherstburg. Irelynn, a student with developmental and physical disabilities, achieved an incredible milestone by riding a specially designed bike powered by Brain-Computer Interface (BCI) technology. This heartwarming moment was made even more special as her family—her mom, dad, sister Kenzington and brother Landen cheered her on and even joined in the ride.



Kennedy Collegiate's SNAC-K Video

On June 10, 2025, the Student Nutrition Advocacy Committee – Kennedy (SNAC-K) proudly premiered their student-produced documentary, Food for Thought, at the Windsor Armouries. The film explores the critical role of sustainable school nutrition programs and underscores the importance of student voice in shaping a national conversation on food equity. Following the screening, students, staff, and community leaders gathered for a panel discussion and reception.



Astronaut Sunita Williams Engaged Erie Migration Students from the International Space Station

In November, 20 students from Erie Migration District School had the incredible opportunity to ask astronaut Sunita Williams their burning questions—directly from the International Space Station! From life in space to the future of living on other planets, their curiosity sparked an unforgettable conversation.



New Standing Wheelchair for Jaylynn

Every morning at Mount Carmel-Blytheswood begins with O Canada. In April 2025, Jaylynn, a determined Grade 5 student with Cerebral Palsy, stood for the first time using her new standing wheelchair—independently and proudly. After six years, she rose with her classmates, filling the room with tears and cheers. This moment celebrated independence, strength, and a caring community. All of Windsor-Essex county celebrated this moment along with Jaylynn, as she was featured on AM800 and in CTV News to share her inspiring story.



Trisha Halder Wins Big at the Canada-Wide Science Fair

Congratulations to Trisha Halder, a Grade 8 student from École Bellewood, on her incredible achievements at the Canada-Wide Science Fair in Fredericton, New Brunswick!

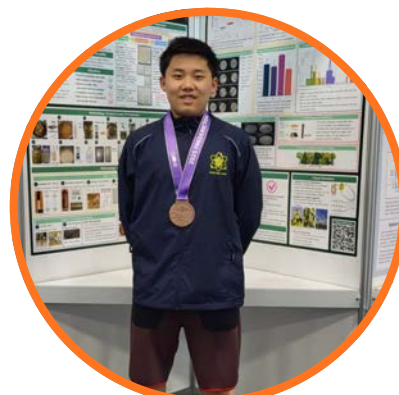
Trisha was one of just five students selected to represent Windsor-Essex at the national level—and she did not disappoint. Her project, a visual drug checker designed to help medical professionals assess how different drugs interact, earned her a gold medal, the Challenge Award in Health and Wellness, the Youth Can Innovate Award, and the prestigious Platinum Award, recognizing her as “Best-in-Show” for her age category. This places Trisha’s work among the top six in the country.

Two Massey students also represented Windsor at the Canada-Wide Science Fair.

Over the course of the week, they presented their innovative science projects, explored New Brunswick, and engaged with STEM career opportunities. And they didn’t leave empty-handed!

- Mohamed Saleh – Bronze Medal, Senior Division
- Caesar Chan – Bronze Medal, Senior Division

Several other outstanding students from Windsor also earned prestigious awards, proving that our city is a powerhouse of talent and creativity on the national level.



Celebrating Shantelle Browning-Morgan

A Trailblazer in Education and Advocate for Black Canadian History

Shantelle Browning-Morgan, an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher at Kennedy Collegiate Institute was celebrated and officially inducted into the **100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women** on Saturday, September 28, 2024. This prestigious recognition highlights her dedication to education and the preservation of Black Canadian history. Her induction is a testament to her remarkable contributions in showcasing the rich cultural heritage and historical narratives of Black Canadians.

[Read more about Shantelle.](#)



Congratulations to Angeline Humber

International Dyslexia Association of Ontario's Literacy Leaders of the Year

Angeline Humber, Teacher Consultant with the GECDSD, was named one of the International Dyslexia Association of Ontario's Literacy Leaders of the Year.

A passionate advocate for structured literacy in French Immersion, Angeline co-developed Son-au-graphe, an open-source phonics program based on UFLI Foundations, and helped create "Building Competent and Engaged Readers" in French Immersion. Her leadership has empowered educators through coaching, professional learning, and research-based resources.

Angeline is known for her kindness, equity-focused approach, and tireless commitment to student success. We proudly celebrate Angeline's extraordinary contributions to literacy and her dedication to helping every student learn to read.



New Schools, Additions and Openings



Creating Confident Learners

Engaging Communities

Demonstrating Ethical Stewardship

Minister of Education Visited Erie Migration District School Open House

Erie Migration District School proudly welcomed the Honourable Jill Dunlop, Ontario's Minister of Education and members of the community to the Erie Migration Open House to celebrate the vibrant new learning environment. Since opening its doors on September 3, 2024, the school has become a hub of growth and connection for nearly 1,700 students and 165 staff members.

We are grateful to our special guests for joining us: Minister of Education Jill Dunlop, Anthony Leardi, MPP for Essex, Chairperson Gale Hatfield and the Mayor of Kingsville, Dennis Rogers.



Beacon Heights Public School Open House

The Beacon Heights community came together for an unforgettable Open House! The new school was filled with pride, laughter, and excitement as we celebrated the bright future ahead for our students. Families toured the beautiful school, enjoyed delightful performances by the student choir, and had the pleasure of meeting so many wonderful parents.

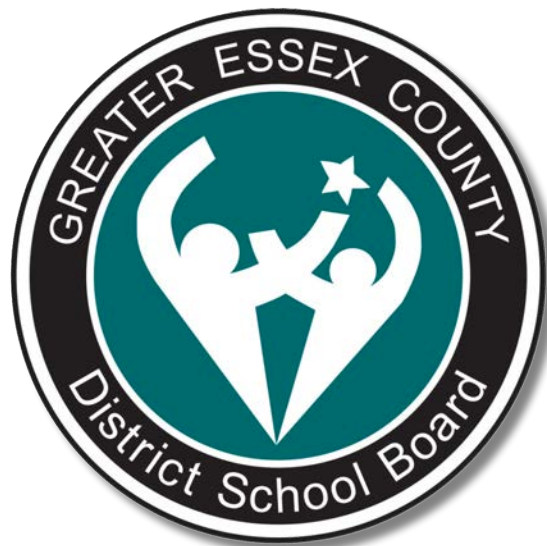
We are grateful to our special guests for joining us: Andrew Dowie, MPP for Windsor-Tecumseh, Chairperson Gale Hatfield, Trustee Connie Buckler and Deputy Mayor of Tecumseh, Joe Bachetti.



Additional Funding Granted for Glenwood and Roseland Additions

The Ontario Government approved additional funding for the Greater Essex County District School Board's school addition projects at Glenwood Public School and Roseland Public School. Glenwood Public School received an additional \$218,520, bringing the total investment to \$3,926,513. Roseland Public School received an additional \$440,645 in funding, bringing its total investment to \$4,354,376. This investment will support the completion of these important improvements and help ensure our students have the best possible spaces to learn.





The Greater Essex County District School Board

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