

2019-2020

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT



District School Board
Ontario North East



Message from the Chair of the Board

This past school year has been one for the history books.

As the Chair of the Board for DSB1, I am incredibly proud of our Strategic Plan and our priorities of culture, equity and innovation. A special congratulations to the staff for achieving two of the strategic plan goals: ensuring all students with a learning disability have a cognitive profile and increased student leadership opportunities.

As a Board of Trustees, we approved \$ 3M to continue to support our Strategic Plan implementation. Most notably, elementary schools were provided with outdoor learning spaces, and all schools received funds for new athletic uniforms.

As a district, we faced many challenges due to the current pandemic. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank our staff, students and families for bringing our vision of “Empowering all learners to achieve personal excellence” to life during these uncertain times.

While COVID-19 took a lot of time and energy, we are so excited to share some key stories of the work accomplished during the 2019-2020 school year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Brunel".

Chair of the Board



Message from the Director of Education

The 2019-2020 school year is absolutely one to be remembered! Our DSB1 staff excelled when faced with school closures and shifting to distance learning.

Over the year, our staff continued to support our students in so many ways, from extra-curricular activities to engaging classroom learning to opportunities in the community.

I am so incredibly proud, in particular, of their efforts during the school closure. Staff ensured our students had food, clothing and technology to continue to learn from April to June 2020.

During this time, I cherish the fond memories of all the things that staff and students did to support one another. It truly was an incredible time of caring and innovation in our board.

It is my honour to share these stories of culture, equity and innovation. Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. L. M. Dye". The script is fluid and cursive.

Director of Education

Note that the group photographs included in this report were captured before the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore do not follow physical distancing and other public health measures.



Outdoor Learning Spaces

Outdoor learning is an essential part of the Kindergarten Program. DSB1 is committed to providing students with the opportunity to learn in natural outdoor learning spaces each day.

Throughout the 2019-2020 school year, a team of educators and administrators worked alongside Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds to design new outdoor learning spaces. At the beginning of the year, schools completed surveys to determine what they believed were the essential elements needed for these new spaces. The final designs were based on this important feedback.

Professional learning related to outdoor learning in Kindergarten took place during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years. This will continue during the 2020-2021 school year with a specific focus on maximizing the potential for learning in the new spaces. Indigenous ways of learning as well as integrating Language and Math outdoors will continue to be a focus. Students and educators are excited to use these spaces to enhance student learning opportunities.



Mental Health and Well-Being

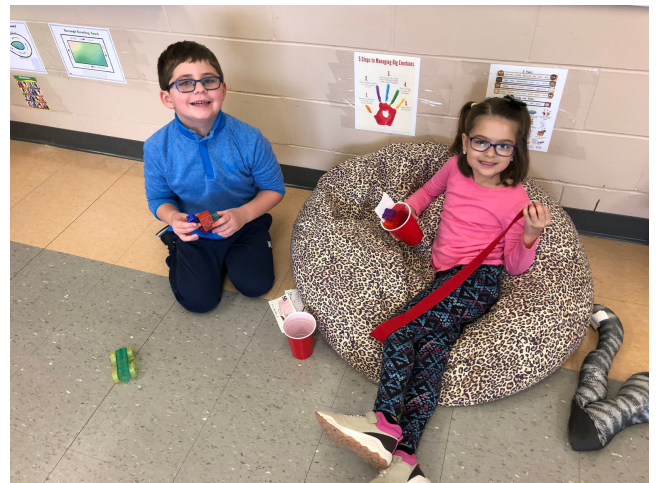
Mental health is essential to students' successful participation in school. Students who are mentally healthy, socially and emotionally competent are more likely to experience academic success.

The DSB1 Mental Health Team offers a wide range of supports and services to students. Students can receive one-on-one supports from Child and Youth Workers (CYWs) and Social Workers. Our students also engage in learning opportunities to further their resiliency and overall well-being as part of group programming. The examples below highlight some of the initiatives taking place in our schools.



The Shania Kids Can Program is in place at Schumacher Public School. The program includes support by a CYW through one-on-one work and group activities in the welcoming Shania Kids Can Clubhouse. DSB1 is grateful to receive the support of the Shania Kids Can Charity to offer this program.

Our elementary schools offer Chill Zones and Calm Clubs. These spaces are designed to create a comfortable place where students can spend time with peers when they need time to self-regulate. While spending time in these spaces, students learn about healthy coping strategies from CYWs and educators.



The COVID-19 pandemic presented an opportunity to strengthen the resilience in the school community and the services we offer. The Mental Health team developed resources and supports to provide to students remotely. Resources to promote mental health and well-being were shared on on various platforms, including board and school websites and educators' social media platforms.

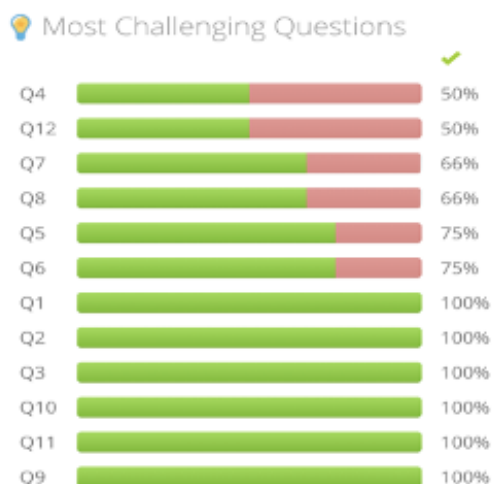


Figure 1 Quick chart showing teachers which questions gave students the most difficulty.

Identifying and Closing Gaps in Students' Mathematical Understanding with Knowledgehook

Before starting a Math unit, teachers often assess what students already know about that unit. This assessment is usually based on the previous grades' Math expectations.

During the 2019-2020 school year, DSB1's Math instructional coach supported teachers in streamlining this process with a digital tool called Knowledgehook. Knowledgehook helps teachers determine students' gaps in mathematical knowledge and skills. With Knowledgehook, teachers can then assign lessons and materials tailored to individual student needs.

During the 2019-2020 school year, 45 Grade 7 to 10 teachers actively used Knowledgehook to gather assessment data. During the COVID-19 school closure, DSB1 observed an increased use in Knowledgehook as teachers used the tool to verify student understanding for a variety of math concepts including "representing, comparing and adding integers" to "solving problems involving division of fractions."

Knowledgehook will continue to be an essential tool for educators to use during the next school year as it will help teachers identify and close gaps in students' mathematical knowledge.

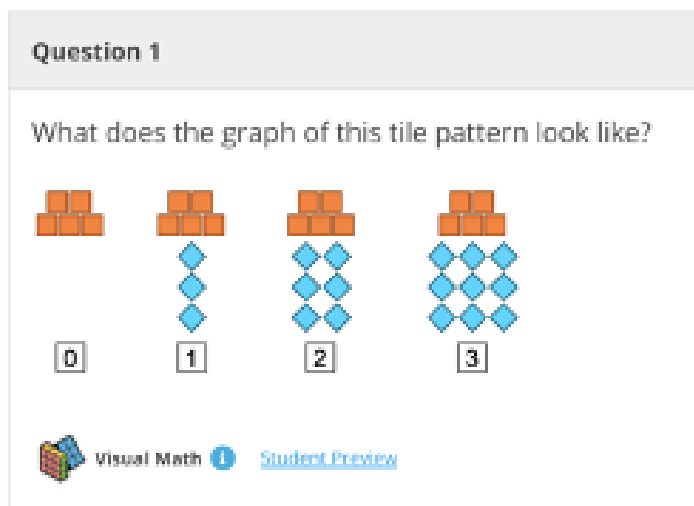


Figure 2 Sample question a teacher could ask students during a lesson to check for understanding.

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When talking about the mandatory Indigenous course starting in September, I am really proud knowing that I have had the opportunity to have been a part of something small that I hope will create a ripple effect in our education system - this is exactly the work we need to be doing if our end goal is reconciliation.

I know that I will not see reconciliation in my time, but I hope that a small part of the work I do and continue to do will help us move forward in the right direction.
Indigenous Student Trustee, 2019-2020

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Indigenous Studies Course for All DSB1 Graduates

DSB1 is proud to support opportunities for students and staff to learn more about Indigenous culture, history and ways of being. During the 2019-2020 school year, we developed a plan to ensure that each DSB1 student graduates with at least one Indigenous Studies course.

We sought input from students who identify as Indigenous, Student Senate, secondary principals and vice-principals, as well as Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Council (IPAC). The overwhelming response was to offer the Grade 11 English course: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices Grade 11, Workplace, College or University Preparation. This course is recognized as one of the four English credits for graduating students at all post-secondary institutions.

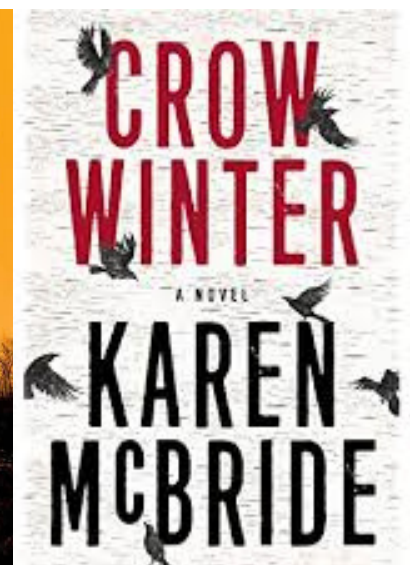
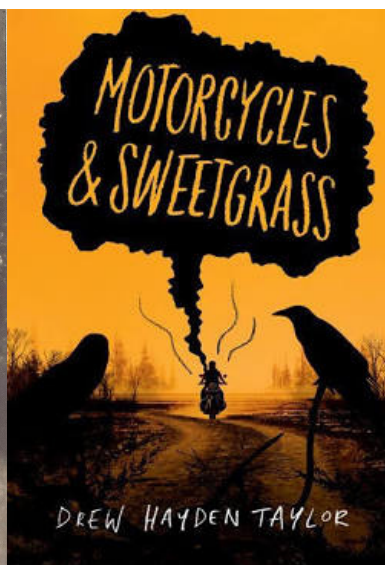
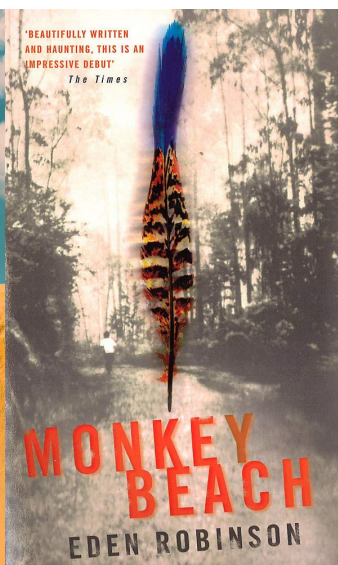
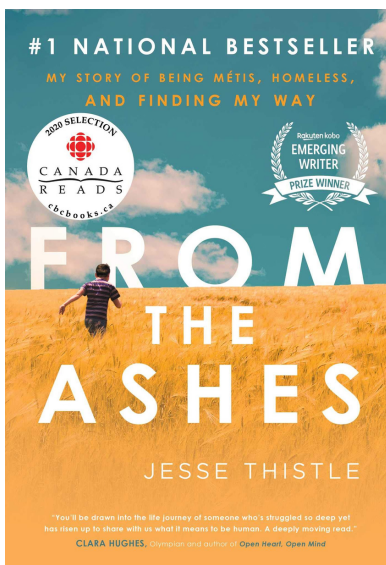
We are very proud to offer this course for all Grade 11 students for the 2020-2021 school year.

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The students connect to the various course texts so much more so than many of them had anticipated, finding new favourite authors and genres, films and poetry. Several students have commented that NBE supplements their learning of Indigenous issues and history from previous courses. The NBE courses fill a critical gap in Ontario's English curriculum, and I am honoured to teach them.

Kirkland Lake District Composite School Teacher

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Kevin's message about "extending belonging to those who do not have it in their lives" resonated with me. I had not thought about in that way. It helped me think about how we can do that for our students and staff.

DSB1 employee

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Presentation by Kevin Lamoureux

On April 27, DSB1 hosted a virtual professional learning session with Kevin Lamoureux. This was the third time all DSB1 staff had the opportunity to learn from Kevin. This session's focus was to have staff consider the Circle of Courage through the lens of a Global Pandemic.

Kevin reminded us of the importance of balance, intention, kindness and love. Below are some thoughts shared by staff after the learning.

The message was so well received and appreciated that some of our teachers immediately reach out to see if Kevin could provide similar messaging to our students. We were pleased that Kevin gladly agreed to work with our students.



Example of a medicine wheel by a student.

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"Kevin is so engaging, and his message is exactly what I envisioned from him. His message to students is a validation of who they are and provides them with examples/reminders of what is important EVERYDAY! He is so inspiring!"

Iroquois Falls Secondary School Teacher

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Student Senate

“It has been a great honour to serve the students of DSB1 as Student Trustee. I am so proud of the work we have accomplished on Student Senate and am excited for the work yet to come.

Student Trustee 2019-2021

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We are so excited about the work of the Student Senate, which includes two or three students from each DSB1 secondary school. Student Senate recently completed their second year of work in DSB1.

Our three Student Trustees excelled at hosting monthly meetings with all senators through face-to-face and virtual sessions.

This past year, Student Senate chose mental health and well-being of students as their focus. The senators recognized a significant need for their classmates and found ways to support them.

Three regional mental health symposiums were planned for each region of the board, although they were cancelled as a result of the school closures.

A sincere thanks to our three amazing Student trustees who brought the work on the senate to life during the year.

Continuity of Learning Plan

On Thursday, March 12, 2020, the Ministry of Education announced that Ontario schools were closed due to COVID-19. DSB1's Lead Team developed the Continuity of Learning Plan based on the Ministry of Education's guidance. Educator-led distance learning was certainly new and different for all staff! Educators demonstrated resilience, creativity, and innovation in a variety of ways during the school closure.

DSB1 staff connected with students for many reasons and in a myriad of creative and innovative ways. For example, Educational Assistants organized and facilitated weekly fun, interactive Math games for students in a high support program through Zoom. DSB1's Indigenous Student Advisors created and shared a weekly newsletter on social media. Many Child and Youth Workers created videos to share wellness strategies, including breathing techniques.

DSB1's [May 2020 Strategic Plan Vignette](#) highlights how schools continued to engage students and families through the school closure.

DSB1 is very proud of the innovation demonstrated by staff during the school closure due to COVID-19.

Information Services

The Information Services (IS) Department worked diligently on a series of planned projects during the 2019-2020 school year. The department was faced with several new challenges as our schools transitioned to distance learning. We are proud of each IS staff's work and efforts in supporting DSB1 employees, students, and families with connectivity and devices.

Below are highlights from key projects undertaken during the 2019-2020 school year.

Broadband Modernization Program

The Broadband Modernization Program is an initiative launched by the Government of Ontario to provide Internet connectivity directly to each school. This is a significant change in the network design from the traditional hub and spoke architecture previously in place. By moving the Internet to the school, speed and scalability have been vastly improved. This important project was completed in March 2020.

Aspen

DSB1 transitioned to Aspen, a new student information system, in March 2020. DSB1 became the fourth of 38 confirmed school boards in Ontario to transition to this platform. Aspen has a modern user interface that is web-based and easily accessible on most mobile devices, laptops, and desktops. The transition from the previous system to Aspen involved many hours preparing our data for migration and providing training to school staff.

We look forward to fully utilize the features available with this modern system in the years to come.

Microsoft Office 365

Information Services began migrating school staff and students to Microsoft Office 365 in January 2020. Microsoft Office 365 is a secure cloud-based service that also allows for real-time collaboration on files. The pandemic accelerated this project as staff and students transitioned to working and learning at a distance. This migration ensured all staff and students had access to their files remotely. The project was completed in April 2020.

Technology Deployment During COVID-19

As a result of the school closure, Information Services worked closely with Principals to mobilize student technology and provide more support and assistance to staff. Grades 9 to 12 students brought their assigned technology home each day. In most cases, students in grades 5 to 8 did not take iPads home daily. These iPads and chargers were provided to the students for home use. Some schools also elected to provide iPads to primary grade students. Special Education Amount (SEA) equipment was also distributed to students.

Many devices, including Turbo Hubs, were delivered to DSB1 students and staff by Information Services.



Programs in Alternative and Continuing Education (P.A.C.E) Centre

The revisioning of the Programs in Alternative and Continuing Education (P.A.C.E.) Centre included the move to a new location and reframing program offerings. The new and inviting learning environment is designed to provide students with a comfortable workspace with flexible seating. The space was designed to help students feel comfortable and allows teachers to directly support and facilitate learning.

Some of the innovative best practices include the use of Brightspace (Virtual Learning Environment) for digital learning course materials, eLearning and blended learning, and work submission. The eLearning opportunities include the use of asynchronous courses experience with audio and video resources as well as an option for live synchronous learning through blended learning. The new blended learning hub creates an opportunity for students to participate in a blended learning experience that involves live teaching using virtual conferencing and the virtual learning environment for course management.

The P.A.C.E. Centre has expanded course offerings to include Cooperative Education, where students are able to gain valuable work experience while earning credits to their Ontario Secondary Graduation Diploma. In addition, dual credits are now being offered for adult learners who are interested in earning a college credit while working towards their secondary diploma.

The P.A.C.E. Centre had 27 graduates in 2019-2020, the most ever in one year! This is a wonderful tribute to our caring staff and our hard-working students! We are so thrilled

2019-2020 Revenue & Expenses

Revenue

Government of Ontario	\$99,800,883
Local Taxation	\$16,637,672
Federal Grants and Fees	\$1,585,573
Other Revenues - School Boards	\$4,983,549
Other Fees and Revenues	\$1,487,452
School Generated Funds	\$2,123,505

TOTAL	\$126,618,634
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Expenditure

Operating Expenditures	\$123,139,794
Other	\$700,718
Capital Loan Repayment	\$290,720
School Generated Funds	\$2,102,943

TOTAL	\$126,234,175
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Operating Expenditures by Major Function

Instruction	\$81,676,819
Administration	\$4,824,776
Transportation	\$13,181,379
School Operations and Maintenance	\$21,540,493
Pupil Accommodation	\$1,916,327
Other	\$3,094,381

TOTAL	\$126,234,175
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Operating Expenditures by Major Object

Salaries and Wages	\$74,960,655
Employee Benefits	\$12,210,992
Staff Development	\$538,797
Supplies and Services	\$11,460,194
Interest on Long-Term Debt	\$1,916,327
Rentals	\$160,700
Fees and Contractual Services	\$15,637,571
Other	\$442,753
Amortization	\$8,906,186

TOTAL	\$126,234,175
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