

2019-2020



Annual Director's Report



"Together We Educate Heart, Mind *and* Soul."

2019-2020

Message from the Director of Education

The 2019-2020 school year was marked by challenges and disruption due to COVID-19. It was a year unlike any other but it was also a year that showed us how strong we can be when we work together to solve problems. This year's Director's report highlights the priorities of our new [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) and provides an overview of the initiatives and projects that have taken place over the past school year, despite the emergence of a global pandemic. Our key stakeholders – students, staff, union partners, trustees and parent community rose to demands placed on them by this crisis and have only made our Board stronger and more cohesive.

Education should be about inquiry, curiosity, and the culture to think freely. The Superior North Catholic District School Board is a student centered place, where our main goal is to instill a desire in our students to make the world a better place by using current events as a springboard to critical thinking. Change only happens when our students are allowed to ask questions to solve today's issues such as climate change, economic disparity and inequity.

Our Catholic values are key to addressing these problems. By showing compassion and empathy in our approach to our neighbours or a stranger, we enact our Catholic values and beliefs.

As we continue to move forward through a global pandemic we will take what we've learned, new practices, creative use of technology, putting well-being at the forefront of what we do, and use the new knowledge to change and improve education for our students.

I would like to extend my personal thanks and recognize the many system and school staff, who have gone over and above this year by committing countless hours of their time to support our students and families. My gratitude to every one of them. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Maria Vasanelli
Director of Education



"Together We Educate Heart, Mind *and* Soul."

The Superior North Catholic District School Board is a separate school board that has 9 Catholic elementary schools in the communities of Longlac, Geraldton, Nakina, Red Rock, Nipigon, Schreiber, Terrace Bay, Marathon and Manitouwadge with a student population of 655 students - JK to Grade 8.

Superior North Catholic District School Board has 172 Permanent Employees and 124 Casual Employees who are dedicated to supporting each student in achieving excellence in academics, arts, athletics and well being.



"We will never be disillusioned or lose our way if we are guided by God." – Pope Francis

MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

The Superior North Catholic District School Board values the mental health and wellbeing of all of our school communities which has been an ongoing priority within the board. The one year mental health action plan continued to focus on promoting and fostering strong relationships, and using our connections with others to ensure personal success is achieved by all. In October 2019 the SNCD SB Mental Health Champion Team participated in SafeTALK training, a suicide awareness program, ensuring representation from each of our schools were trained.

Evidence based programming and resources continue to be visible throughout our system. Resources that are consistently used within the board are Zones of Regulation and The Second Step Program. A student and family centered approach is being utilized to support and enhance the mental health and wellbeing of our most vulnerable students by using a student success planning process (e.g., interviews with staff/students, observations within various environments, and elbow to elbow tailored support where required, etc.).

In March 2020, promoting and fostering mental health became more critical than ever. As we pivoted to a remote learning format the emphasis became on planning for the new realities we would be faced with. The Rural Education and Mental Health Collaborative - District of Thunder Bay was established as a result of the pandemic. The collaborative was started including, the Superior North Catholic District School Board, Superior Greenstone District School Board, Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales, North of Superior Counselling Programs, Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) Mental Health and Addiction Nursing (MHAN).

New opportunities were created to engage our educators, students and communities with social media platforms being leveraged to support connections with the Mental Health and Well-being team and our schools/communities. The team supported students and educators both directly (meeting with students virtually, Wellness Wednesday Activities) and indirectly (blogs and challenges).

The Superior North Catholic District School Board System Support Team created a schedule of events that were offered for staff and students throughout Mental Health and Catholic Education Week, providing everyone an opportunity and engaging in promoting positive mental health. Some activities offered were: pencil sketching, kids zumba, yoga, a scavenger hunt facilitated by the Mental Health and Well-being team, and a live cooking class to name a few.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Faith and justice continue to be integrated into all we do at SNCD SB. Curriculum, leadership, and strategies are based on Jesus' teachings and Catholic Social Teachings. Catholic Education Week was an opportunity to celebrate and highlight who we are as a Catholic school board.

Throughout the year, our faith was celebrated during many occasions such as various Catholic Calendar events, students' sacraments, School Celebrations, monthly Masses and our annual Faith Day.

The importance of adult faith development remains key to building our students' understanding of their faith. We continue our efforts in this area by providing more resources and opportunities for educators and providing school and system support through our newly appointed *Catholicity and Special Projects Lead* position.



PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The committee met several times during the year to discuss parent engagement and students achievement and engagement. Information from student achievement, attendance and technology departments were shared through presentation to the committee members.

The committee decided to accommodate three schools with the Pro Grant funds that were received for 2019-2020 year. An application process was put in place and the following three schools, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Martin School and Holy Saviour School had applied and were approved for funding.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Our approach to Special Education programs and services is based on the principle of meeting students' needs within the most supportive environment. We actively promote the goal of inclusive education. Inclusion means that students with special needs fully participate in the life of the school community alongside their peers. Our educators work closely with one another and parents to provide the appropriate support for each child. We continued to develop our understanding of and ability to use the Learning for All document to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all of our students in an environment that is designed to make the curriculum accessible to all.

The Empower program was introduced to six of the Superior North Catholic District School Board schools during the 2019-2020 school year. Research indicates that students using Empower have had positive results in their reading performance, showing clear and sometimes remarkable improvement in their reading skills and abilities. We also feel that this will support an increase in our students' overall self-concept, well-being and confidence.

When schools were closed in March and students moved to a Distance Learning model, all Learning for All teachers engaged in a weekly one hour Professional Learning Group to share learning experiences and opportunities that were being used to engage their most vulnerable students and their families online. Students from our schools continued to engage in Special Education services, including virtual Empower lessons and small group or individual literacy/numeracy interventions. Learning for All teachers continued to engage our regional service providers to schedule remote therapy sessions and Transitions for students to Kindergarten or High School with Special Education needs continued to be offered virtually.



During the 2019 - 2020 school year, all nine of our SNCD SB schools had the opportunity to engage in authentic experiential learning opportunities. Students participated in the hands-on learning experiences through Makerspaces. Students learned to sew various items including reusable bags, neck warmers, traditional ribbon skirts and shirts. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many projects were delivered during the 'Learn at Home' phase. Schools created and delivered STEM kits and activities to invite students to learn with parents and guardians at home. Board-wide initiatives facilitated through technology provided students with virtual activities such as Hip Hop and Pow Wow dancing, yoga, art and cooking classes.

Ongoing experiential learning projects continue to be implemented under SNCD SB COVID-19 Reopening Guidelines. Over 25 projects are currently being delivered in eight schools across the system. Projects include Kindergarten and cultural outdoor learning spaces, Indigenous beading and rag moccasins making, STEM projects including coding and robotics. Additionally, there are projects to engage parents and guardians, such as Family & Faith boxes and Healthy Meals, and other projects where students' creations at school are brought home.

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

In collaboration with the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC), Superior North Catholic District School Board developed and implemented the 2019-2020 Indigenous Board Action Plan. This plan was based on the needs and suggestions of First Nation communities, Indigenous organizations, educators, parents and families. The focus was on supporting student success and teaching ALL students about Indigenous history, contributions and traditions.

Engaging communities, organizations and parents/families is very important to our student learning and experiences, which was highlighted by the many activities and programs that occurred throughout the school year. Our educators and community leaders worked on several projects throughout the year, including an art show and mini Pow Wow, wild rice processing, arctic/winter games, land based activities, deer hide tanning - with Great Lakes Culture Camp, Kairos Blanket Exercise, Pow Wow Dance lessons and so much more.

When our system moved to 'Learn at Home', activities were adapted and included making bannock online, Native language classes, scavenger hunts, HipHop or Pow Wow Dance lessons with Angela Gladue, virtual Inuit Games and other virtual learning activities and events. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, SNCD SB students were still able to participate in a youth gathering that was focused on youth leadership and learning about their local First Nation community, history and culture.



The Superior North Catholic District School Board values the presence of God in each person and provides an inclusive Catholic culture that instills compassion, hope, integrity, faithfulness, respect and self-worth.

SNCD SB follows the Institute for Catholic Education guidelines and recommendations. The Board remains committed to identifying and addressing systemic inequities and barriers affecting indigenous, racial, and ethnocultural communities in the planning and delivery of programs and services.



EARLY YEARS

Our Kindergarten classrooms are where our youngest learners begin their exciting educational journey. These classrooms offer caring and engaging learning environments that allow students to observe, investigate and question through guided exploration and play. Students in our Full-Day Kindergarten classrooms continue to be engaged as learners, immersed in the latest technology, and cared for by dedicated, caring, compassionate and loving professionals.

Our Kindergarten programs all view Outdoor Education as a learning experience that helps to develop an understanding and appreciation of nature and the kinship between the child and the outdoors. This year students and educators worked together to further enhance the Kindergarten program by exploring the wonderful open air in our very own backyards.

All Kindergarten educators continued to participate in learning sessions during the 2019-2020 school year to learn about the Pedagogical Approaches to learning in Kindergarten and together they have further explored and developed their understanding of the four frames of the Kindergarten Program. Using classroom videos we practiced noticing and naming student learning based on the overall expectations in the Kindergarten document in the Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours frame. This was done in partnership with the Ministry of Education and their regional Student Achievement Officer.

When schools were closed in March and students moved to a Distance Learning model, all Kindergarten educators engaged in a weekly one hour Professional Learning Group to share learning experiences and opportunities that were being used to engage their students and their families online, both synchronously and asynchronously. This collaborative group planned and facilitated virtual Welcome to Kindergarten sessions for new students and families and all schools celebrated the Graduation from the Kindergarten program with all students and families, which included picture lawn signs, virtual ceremonies and celebration baskets delivered to individual homes by the teacher and principal.

TECHNOLOGY ENABLED LEARNING AND DIGITAL LITERACY

During May 2020, during 'Learn at Home, SNCDSB provided students in Grade 3-8 a Student Virtual Summit titled "In a time of uncertainty, we learn best together." Building on a partnership that has spanned over five years, starting with the first-ever Student Summit, EdTechTeam Canada partnered again with Superior North Catholic DSB to deliver a virtual learning summit. The student summit was created to develop a lineup of learning that fostered collaboration, critical thinking and communication while developing digital literacy skills through Google Apps for Education. This virtual experience provided teachers and students an exciting opportunity to learn together in a fun and creative way.

To support educators in strengthening their own digital literacy skills during 'Learn at Home' phase, SNCDSB hosted eight weeks of Google Apps for Education Professional Learning facilitated by EdTech Team Canada. During this training, our educators were invited to engage in the weekly workshop to deepen their knowledge of Google's collaborative tools to best promote student learning and achievement. This training supported our educators in their transition to fully online learning.



STUDENT LEARNING

Student Achievement and Success is at the core of all professional development and decisions. This year, all Professional Development targeted all the adults that work closely with students in order to continue to bring the learning to the students' desk.

MATH

Many math initiatives occurred during the 2019-2020 school year as mathematics continues to be a focus for our Board.

The Math team developed and delivered a Board wide training session on the components of balanced math and how teachers could adapt this model to improve student achievement. Teachers requested more opportunities to learn about Balanced Mathematics through co-planning and peer modelling. In response to this, the team collaborated with two teachers to be "Balanced Math Learning Classrooms". Moving forward, these classrooms are to be utilized as demonstration classrooms for teachers across the district.

Our Lead and Facilitator also worked on training teachers on board-wide PRIME assessments in order to collect real-time data. This data was used to create a 3-year BIPSA plan and goal. The math lead and facilitator worked on and will continue to work on meeting the BIPSA goal and the 3-year math plan implementation. They also worked with staff on delivering the Learning Cycle in order to better meet our students' needs.

Further to the system-wide responsibilities, after the school closures due to the Covid pandemic, the math team supported the virtual environment in the following ways;

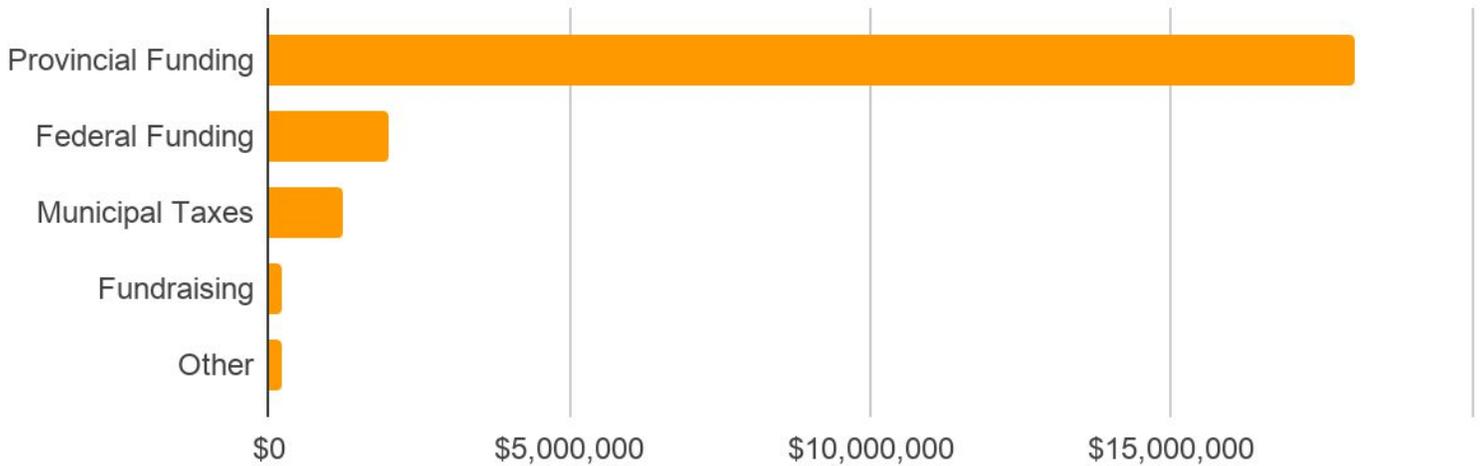
The Math Team supported teachers with the implementation of Google classrooms and account setup to ensure access to math resources including Nelson and Pearson platforms. They supported teachers with the implementation of digital tools to allow for creative math instruction (i.e. Jamboard, Kami). The Math Team delivered a board-wide presentation adapting math instruction to the virtual learning environment such as the use of manipulatives, planning supports and parent supports. The team developed video lessons and activities for teachers to use to deliver the mathematics curriculum online.

Both the Math Lead and Facilitator ran a weekly Professional Learning Group for grade 3-6 teachers that addressed any needs that arose from implementing a remote learning environment. The Math Team also supported other committees to address needs in the virtual environment. (i.e. Remote Learner Access Committee, Attendance Committee, EdTech Committee)

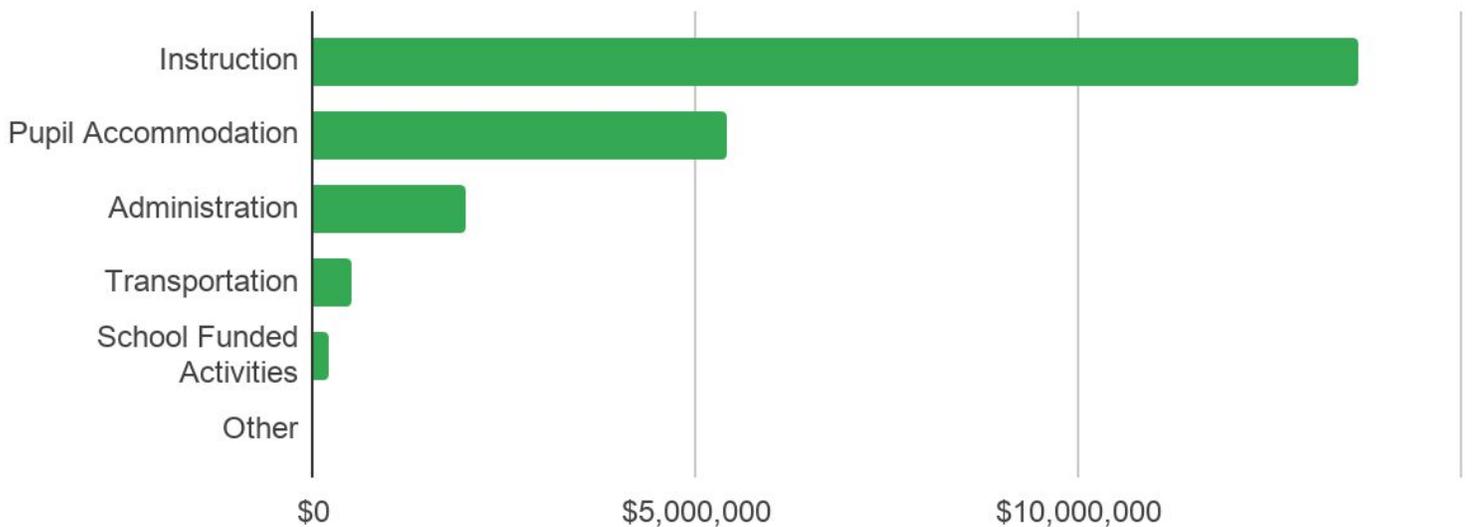


FINANCIALS

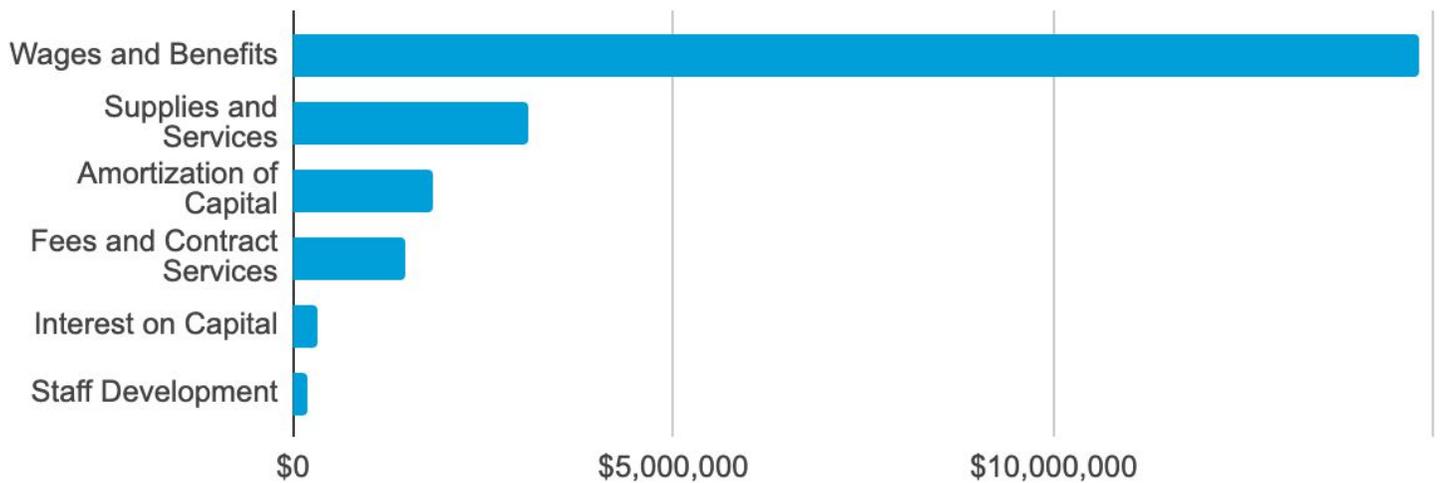
Funding Sources 2019-2020



Expenses by Area 2019-2020



Expenses by Type 2019-2020



Investing in our Schools

Over the last three school years, Superior North Catholic District School Board has invested \$15.5 million in Provincial funding into making our schools, our school grounds and classroom furniture more modern and efficient while creating a learning environment that is more welcoming, safe, accessible and comfortable for students at all of our schools.