



Director's Annual Report 2021-22





JoAnna Roberto PhD, Director of Education, Grand Erie District School Board

The 2021-22 school year proved to be another impacted by the pandemic. Despite the disruptions, there was still impactful learning for students and staff. Amazing things still happened. Learning, leadership and inspiration was widely evident. Infused with new optimism as the current school year has unfolded without pandemic challenges, this Annual Report is focused on that learning, that leadership, that inspiration.

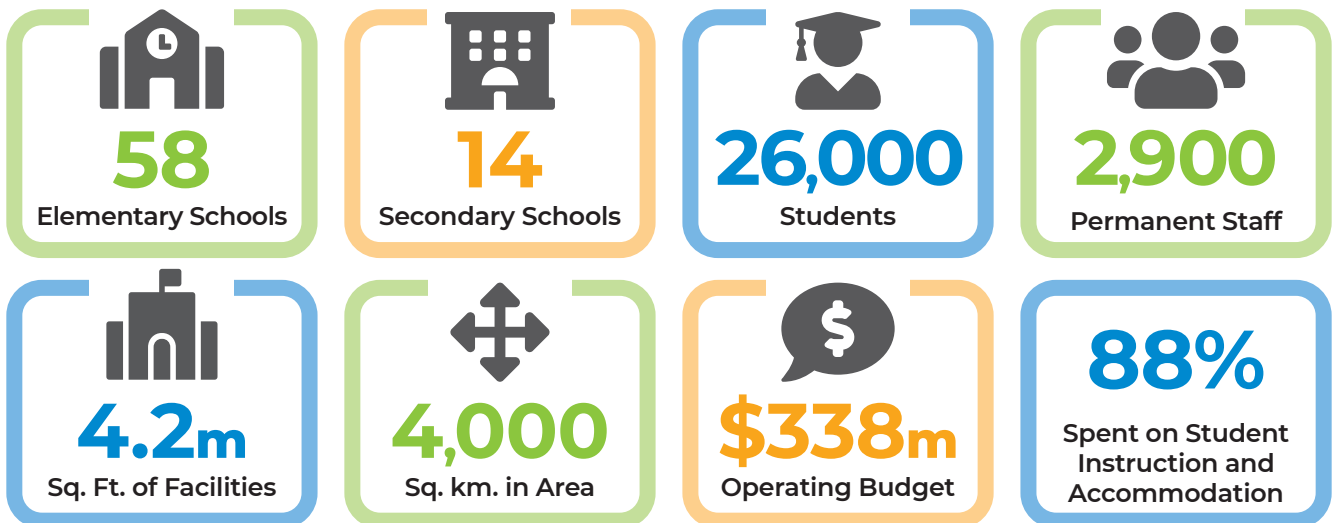
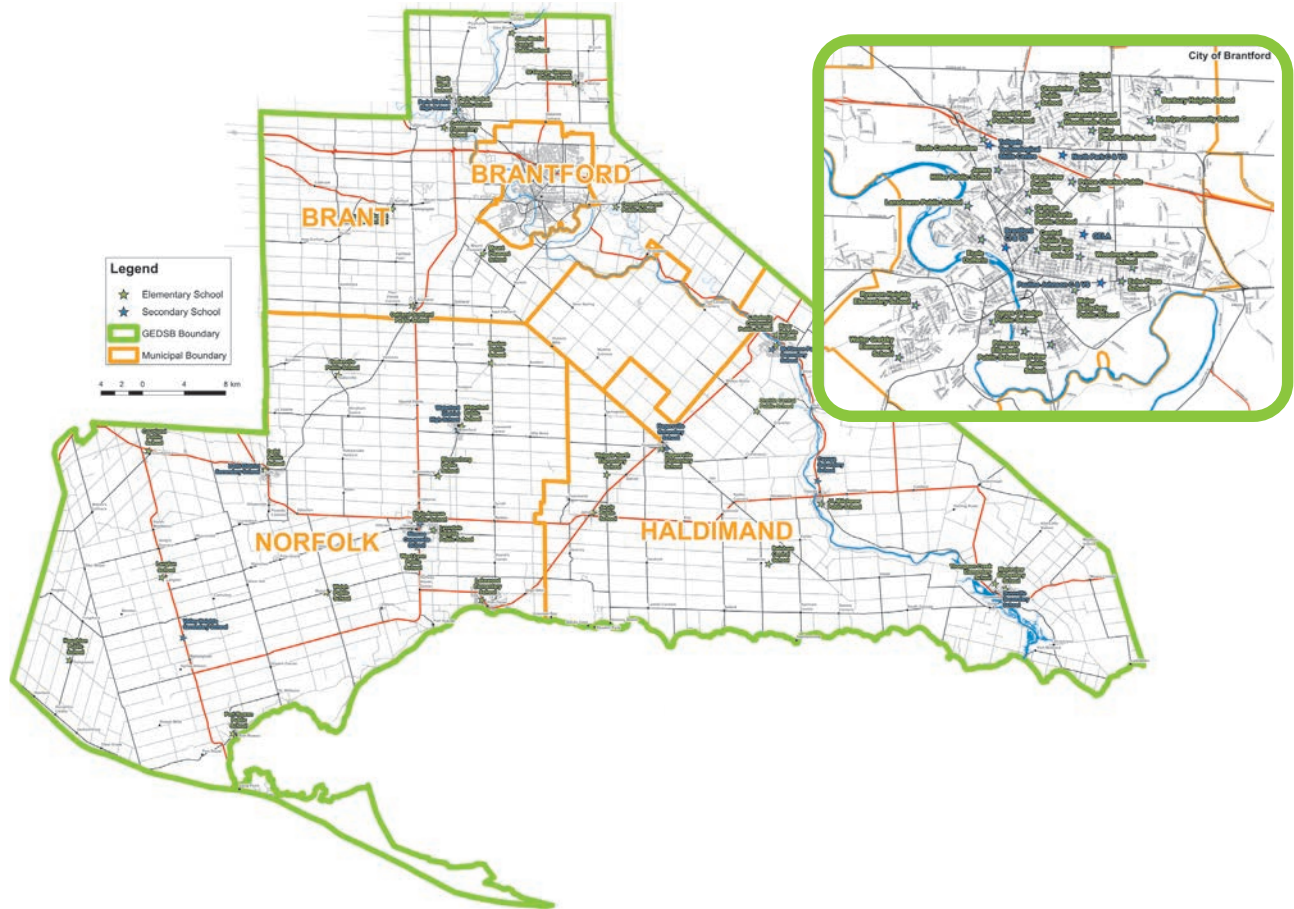
It is my pleasure to share a report that captures just some of the highlights from the 2021-22 school year and serves as evidence of a district working together to build a culture of learning, well-being and belonging to inspire every learner. From the significant academic achievements to the simple gratification of mastering new skills, every member of the Grand Erie team can take pride in their support of student success.

I am so grateful to the educators, administrators and support staff that have worked so hard, introduced so many innovations, adopted new learning and inspired us all throughout the school year. We continue to set ambitious goals for our district, and I'm excited to be a part of this team turning all our collective efforts to delivering on them.





Grand Erie by the Numbers





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Thank you to our Trustees for their leadership and support of learning.



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STUDENT TRUSTEE



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STUDENT TRUSTEE



Riley Mitchell
STUDENT TRUSTEE



In December, Grand Erie Trustees approved the 2021-22 revised budget for the board that focused investments on new resources and the hiring of additional educators and support staff to meet learning, renewal and well-being goals. Grand Erie is investing more than \$11 million into increased learning supports across the district, including the hiring of more than 81 additional staff members.



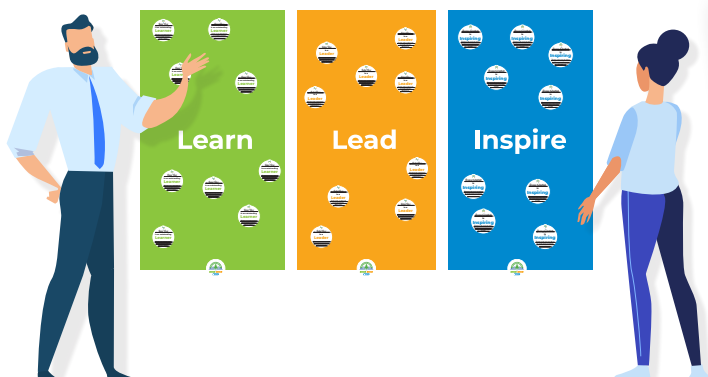
The Grand Erie Board of Trustees approved its 2022-23 operating and capital budgets on Monday, June 27, 2022. As a result of increased revenues, Grand Erie's operating budget is approximately \$355 million, up \$16.6 million from the 2021-22 operating budget. This allows for key investments such as increased classroom supports, additional instructional coaches, literacy positions, and significant increases to professional development for staff as well as attention to staff and student mental health and well-being.



Our Multi-Year Strategic Plan

The 2021-22 school year represents the first year of our five-year Strategic Plan. Our vision to Learn, Lead and Inspire quickly became the aspiration of staff across the district, as we embraced the positivity and active nature of these words in supporting students and families in our communities.

Multiple campaigns throughout the school year helped bring the Plan to life in schools, including posters, pop-up banners, branded swag and an interactive recognition program. Everyone in the district has a role to play – everyone can be a Learner, a Leader and an Inspiration.

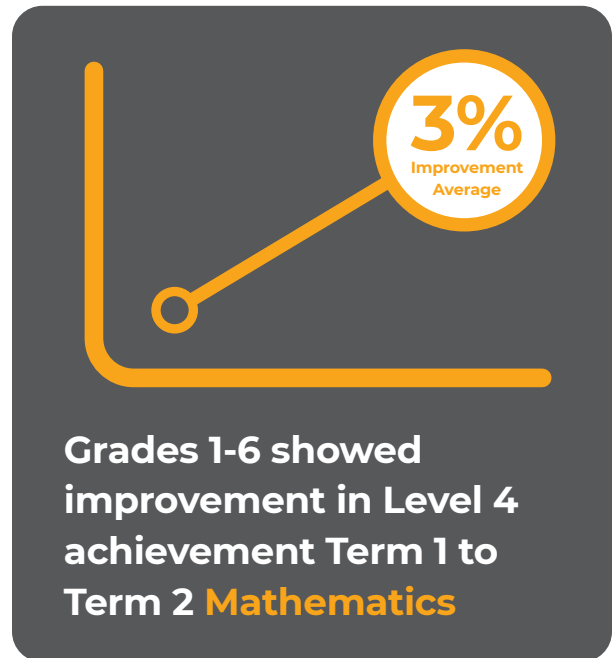
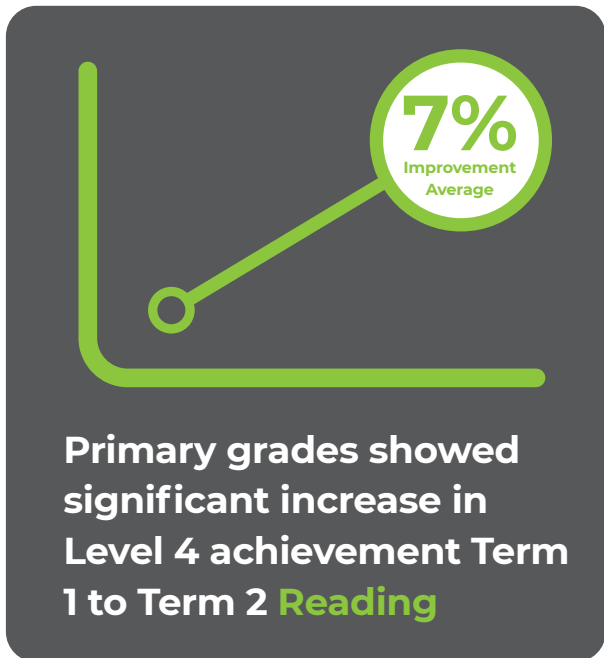




Learning Elementary

We build a culture of learning where curiosity and opportunities are nurtured for each learner. Our Learning goals are focused on three areas:

- Increase mathematics learning outcomes for all students
- Increase the overall reading proficiency of all students (with a focus on Grades 1-3)
- Prepare every student for their post-secondary destination (apprenticeship, community, college, university, workplace)



Cutting-Edge Technology at James Hillier

A partnership with McMaster University meant the Grade 8 class at James Hillier Public School were the first in Ontario to take part in a unique program to enhance STEM learning with an electron microscope, on loan for a couple of weeks from the Canadian Centre for Electron Microscopy. "Since the Grade 8 students had the chance to share their learning with the younger grades, it's helped consolidate their own understanding, instilled pride and ownership in their learning, and given them a leadership role in it," said Jessica Rypma, principal at James Hillier.



Learning Elementary

New School for Caledonia

The Ontario Ministry of Education announced a \$20.4 million capital investment for the construction of a new joint-use elementary school, along with a three-room child-care centre in Caledonia, Ontario. The project is intended to ease pressure on existing schools in the area and support the surge of residential development in the area.

Summer Learning at Camp SAIL

"Our daughters really enjoyed Camp SAIL. It helped with building confidence with literature and with math and it helped to facilitate social skills such as peer relationships, while having FUN!"

Camp SAIL parent

"The most significant gains have been in math. The majority of my students have improved/moved forward on the continuum (of numeracy development) and have learned at least one new strategy."

Camp SAIL teacher



Supporting Multilingual Learners

Through a collaboration with the Technology for Innovation and Learning Department and the Multilingual Learner Resource Team, the MLL iPhone project began in 2022. With this project, newcomers arriving to Edith Monture Elementary were given cell phones with assistive technology and translation apps to support their emerging English skills and allow them to access the curriculum. For one newly arrived student, it allowed her to build confidence and develop friendships as communication was no longer a barrier for her. Her teacher shared that: *"She uses it 100% of the time. It is her voice in our classroom. She uses it to communicate with the kids and the kids love using it to communicate with her."*





Learning Elementary

Introducing... The Trades

In partnership with Organized Kaos, the Mobile Trades Unit was rolled out in May 2022 to Intermediate classes in Grand Erie. This program offered experiential learning and skilled trades promotion through hands-on learning opportunities, allowing students to be exposed to technology programs, including the variety of Specialist High Skills Major and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship programs that will be available to them in high school.



Kick-Start to Kindergarten

The transition to Kindergarten is a pivotal time for families. Kick-Start to Kindergarten was an event piloted at four schools in Grand Erie in 2022 to give families a chance to meet school staff and community partners as they start their Grand Erie journey. Grand Erie staff partnered with local community groups and Early Years professionals to provide an opportunity for children entering Kindergarten to participate in developmental screening. Kindergarten registration materials were translated into Hindi, Punjabi and Arabic, and distributed across the district to reach stakeholders.


A Great Book Launch at Walter Gretzky Elementary

On October 19, 2021, Walter Gretzky Elementary School provided the perfect location to launch *Great Too*, coauthored by Glen Gretzky and Lauri Holomis. The children's book is the follow-up to *Great*, and tells the tale of Coach Wally (legendary hockey dad Walter Gretzky) as he guides young hockey players Taylor and Wayne, building their confidence and helping them reach their full potential, both on and off the ice.





Learning Secondary



91 Students Re-Engaged from Grades 9-12+



28 Re-Engaged Students Graduated in 2022

Dayner's Story – Re-engagement

Dayner stopped attending PJCVS in the fall of 2021. Grand Erie staff reached out to him to discuss returning to school, and Dayner was introduced to a co-op placement in the School Within a College Program that would help him work towards credits to support his career goals. Dayner took the opportunity and didn't look back. He attended every class, was active and engaged and took on additional secondary credits. He graduated with an Ontario Secondary School Diploma in June of 2022.



Learning Secondary

Project SEARCH

Grand Erie embarked on a new partnership in 2021 called Project SEARCH, where students have a unique opportunity to learn skills in the workplace while being provided with the potential to increase their credit accumulation. Project SEARCH participant Darian learned new skills such as working safely, communicating with others, and following a work schedule. He was supported by the classroom teacher, skills trainer and the Champions in the workplace. Using this teamwork model, Darian had an authentic workplace experience where he felt part of a team, his voice was heard, and he was treated as an equal in the workplace.



Grand Erie Student's Short Story Takes Top Prize

Cavelle Sproule's short fiction piece *Eight, Ten, Twelve* was awarded the top honour in the Laurier Stedman competition, a contest open to secondary students across the region, recognizing outstanding creative writing. The Pauline Johnson student led the field that included students from North Park and Waterford District also winning awards.

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

DEL F is an internationally recognized certification of language proficiency offered to Grade 12 students in all French as a Second Language pathways. In 2021-22 a record 78 students (up from 50 previously) participated. Equal distribution among all three levels offered demonstrates Grand Erie's support of all pathways and individual student goals.

Technology in the Learning Commons

Virtual Reality headsets were used in the Learning Commons at Brantford Collegiate Institute as part of the Co-operative Education Fair. This technology was used to support career exploration opportunities for students attending the event. This technology has been used to support a variety of courses and grade levels in career exploration at other secondary schools as well.



Learning Secondary

Significant Scholarships Awarded Across Grand Erie Schools

There were multiple major scholarship awards handed out to graduating Grand Erie students in 2022, including an \$80,000 Schulich Leadership Scholarship for BCI's Nansi Hassoun, a \$50,000 National Indigenous Scholarship for McKinnon Park's Sierra Green, the James Hillier Foundation Scholarship of \$20,000 to Paris District's Lucas Balog, and multiple scholarships and engineering prize awards for North Park's Gurnimal Kaur.

Students Recognized for Outstanding Achievement

March and April 2022 saw a number of secondary students achieving significant recognition for success across a range of disciplines. At the qualifying competition for Skills Ontario, Pauline Johnson student Krystal Theoret earned silver in Culinary Arts. North Park's Gurnimal Kaur took home eight individual awards and more than \$4,000 in prize money at the Bay Area Science and Engineering Fair for her project that programmed and tested an intelligent chatbot to detect instances of emotional stress in online platform users. Brantford Collegiate Institute's Kara Sickle's photograph entitled Flying Unicorn, an image of an airborne motorcycle stunt rider, was awarded the Canadian Grand Prize in the Josten Photo Contest.





Well-Being

We build a culture of well-being to support the cognitive, social, emotional and physical needs of each learner. Our goal is to increase the knowledge and skills of staff to better support learners in developing the capacity to tend to their own well-being.

Secondary Programs Supporting Student Mental Health

Three high schools launched programs to increase awareness of mental health topics and resources and build a commitment to well-being throughout these school communities. The programs include drop-in sessions, lessons and a student-led resource centre. *“Initiatives like the ones taking place at these secondary schools go a long way in supporting the learning and social-emotional development of each student,”* said Piyali Bagchee, Grand Erie's Mental Health and Well-Being Manager.

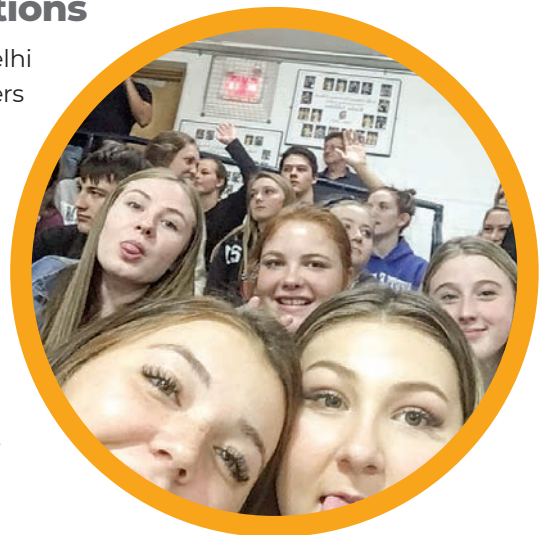
Five Ways to Well-Being

Mental Health Week in Grand Erie saw schools connecting the five ways to well-being to work going on in schools and classrooms across the district. At Grandview Public School, students started a Wellness Club to promote well-being in the school community, creating wellness bulletin boards, supporting delivery of lesson plans and delivering wellness messages and mindfulness warm-ups during morning announcements.



Supporting Well-Being During Transitions

School staff at Delhi District Secondary School (DDSS) and Delhi Public School (DPS) collaborated with Child and Youth Workers (CYWs) to support the transition of Grade 8 students to DDSS. The CYW worked with the Grade 8 teachers at DPS throughout the school year to teach self-regulation and stress management skills to Grade 8 students, and also developed mental health resources that were shared with students at both schools. In June, students from DPS were welcomed for a tour of DDSS, where the familiar face of the CYW was also present to welcome the students. The CYW also attended Grade 9 Day in August and made sure to connect with as many Grade 9 students coming from DPS as possible.

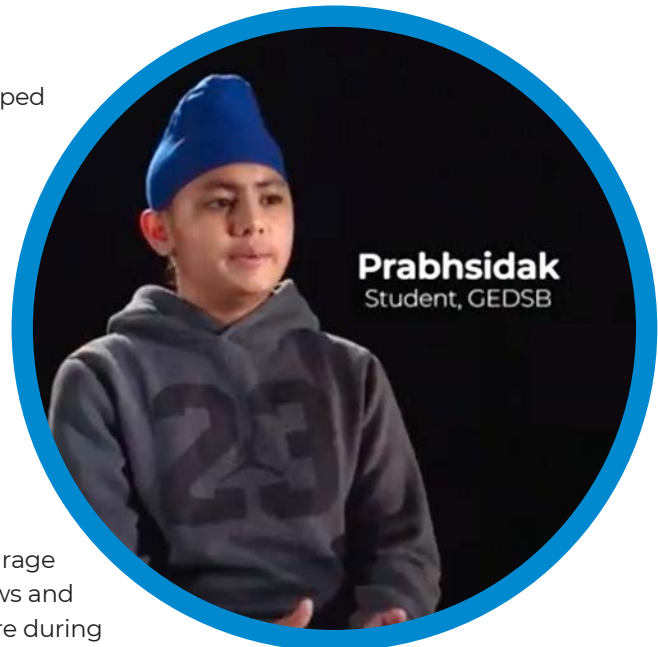


Belonging

We build a culture of belonging to support an equitable, inclusive and responsive environment for each learner. Our goal is to create multiple experiences where all learners feel a sense of belonging at school and are engaged in their learning.

Anti-Racism Videos

Grand Erie's Safe and Inclusive Schools team developed a series of powerful videos to support staff and community learning around issues of racism. A Grade 8 student's reaction: *"That gave me tears. That was me. I'm so embarrassed now, but when I was in Grade 3, I wouldn't speak my own language at home and I wouldn't bring my family food to school because people would say that it smells bad or looks gross."*



Black History Month at Banbury Heights

With a curated reading list focused on stories of courage and change, an app to record and share book reviews and a goal to empower students to learn, lead and inspire during Black History Month, the Grade 6/7 class at Banbury Heights School took a tech-forward approach to equity and inclusion. The classroom teacher provided feedback on the program: *"We had a wonderful month of learning and discovery, and a lot of important conversations resulted. My class is so proud of their work this month and we look forward to continuing to elevate everyone's voices as we look at important issues through an equity lens."*

Author Michael Jacques Shares his Story

Grand Erie's Special Education Advisory Committee welcomed author Michael Jacques on March 10, 2022. Michael is a young, talented and determined person who has autism and an intellectual disability. Michael's passion to tell his story led him to writing his first book, *Can't Read. Can't Write. Here's My Book*. Michael is an advocate and role model for others with autism and intellectual disabilities and shares his story around Ontario at speaking engagements.





Belonging

Pink Shirt Day Entrepreneur

For Pink Shirt Day, six-year-old Marisa, a student in Grade 1 at J.L. Mitchener Public School, decided to use her creative talents to help stamp out bullying. Marisa combined her emerging talents in screen printing and garment dyeing to create Kindness Club, an online business selling t-shirts that spread the word. Students and staff at the school were proud to wear her t-shirts, and all proceeds went to Dare to Care, a Canadian organization that develops bullying prevention resources and her school's own playground renovation project.



Former Student Trustees Receive Award for Menstrual Campaign

The first Learn Lead Inspire Award was given to three former Grand Erie students – Ava Burtis, Zachary Garbaty and la'teika:nerah Doxtader-Swamp – who, during their time as student trustees in 2020-21, championed an important cause, put the student voice at the center, and positively affected change. Thanks to their efforts, the Menstrual Equity campaign was implemented in all Grand Erie schools, providing menstrual products free of charge, and free of barriers, to help end period poverty, and promote belonging and well-being.



Accessibility Awareness

December 3, 2021 marked International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Grand Erie's partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation brought a unique opportunity to shine a light on the Belonging and Well-Being of people with disabilities in our classrooms, schools, and communities. Between November 29 and December 10, educator teams and their students took part in scheduled presentations and question-and-answer sessions with Rick Hansen Foundation ambassadors.

Indigenous Education

As part of Grand Erie's priority to build a culture of belonging, we also have a goal to deepen our system commitment to reconciliation and improve education achievement outcomes for all First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.

Kanien'kéha (Mohawk Language) Circle

Grand Erie began working with other school boards to develop a process for the Ontario College of Teachers to certify Mohawk (Kanien'kéha) Language speakers to teach in Ontario schools. Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action items # 10 and #14 ask that the revitalization of Languages become a priority in Canadian schools.



Treaties Recognition Week

November 1-7, 2021 marked a time to recognize the importance of Treaties and relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Grand Erie's Indigenous Education team provided support materials to schools to use, and educators had the opportunity to set aside time for curriculum-related activities to share with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, families and staff to support the ongoing efforts to build a deeper understanding, stronger relationships, and broader awareness.

Indigenous Floor Map

Grand Erie began sharing a new learning resource among our schools – a massive 11 x 8 metre map of Canada with a wealth of information on Indigenous history and culture, stories and voices shared through static and interactive ways.





Indigenous Education

Sharing Our Voices

Grand Erie, along with the Indigenous Partnership Committee, participated in an annual event called 'Sharing Our Voices'. This event is a celebration and compilation of student responses from across Grand Erie on the 2021-22 theme: We are the Water. The words are taken from a beautiful poem written by a Grade 6 class at Lynndale Public School.

A New Land Acknowledgement

Grand Erie is committed to lifelong learning, and when it comes to our collective responsibilities to reconciliation, that couldn't be more important. A formal land acknowledgement statement has been in place in Grand Erie for several years, as a way to recognize and express gratitude to those whose traditional territory we reside on to work and learn. In 2022, to better understand the ongoing processes of colonialism and its damaging, long-term effects, Grand Erie's land acknowledgement statement was updated.

ABOVE US.
BELOW US.
AROUND US.
WITHIN US.



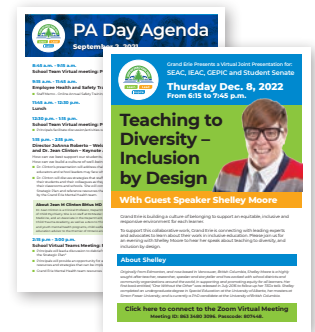


Professional Development

Grand Erie's vision to Learn, Lead and Inspire comes to life as we continue to invest in Professional Development for staff. Our goals for student Learning, Well-Being and Belonging can only be realized if, collectively, we all understand and implement the tools, principles and processes needed to achieve them.

Learning From Leaders

In support of Learning, Well-Being and Belonging, Grand Erie staff learned from leaders across a range of disciplines and topics, including Dr. Jean Clinton (Well-Being and Belonging), Shelley Moore (Inclusivity), Dr. Alex Lawson (Early Numeracy), Dr. Niigaan Sinclair (Indigenous Knowledge) and Dr. Peter Liljedahl (Thinking Classrooms).



Dr. Alex Lawson Workshops

70 primary educators from 10 schools built their understanding of early numeracy skill development and responsive instruction. *"The Lawson learning has helped me see the continuum of learning in a new way. The math games helped keep students engaged in their learning while developing their math strategies."*

Grade 3 teacher

Not a Day But a Way

April saw a Professional Development day for all staff focused on Indigenous learning. One participant shared: *"This has reinforced my understanding that we need to be responsive to the understandings our students bring to class, and to build my practice from them."*

LeadGEDSB

This new leadership program launched in 2021 to offer leaders and aspiring leaders opportunities to explore concepts of leadership and achieving professional and personal growth. Participant Emma Dailey (Lead Teacher of Experiential Learning) said: *"The program gave me confidence to push my leadership abilities, step out of my comfort zone, and make connections with others in a variety of roles in Grand Erie. I was able to reflect on my personal leadership strengths and areas of growth. It has allowed me the opportunity to grow as a professional and hope to inspire others to be a part of this program in the future. The facilitators and organizing team made the experience so meaningful and engaging and were a huge contributing factor to the success of this program. Thank you for providing us with this opportunity."*





Professional Development

Additional Qualifications

285 Additional Qualification (AQ) courses were successfully completed by both new and experienced educators and administrators. Course options ranged across the curriculum and aligned with Grand Erie's priorities of Learning, Belonging and Well-Being (e.g., Mathematics, Reading, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples, Special Education). Engagement in these courses provided professional learning relevant to assessment for learning strategies and responsive instruction.

After School Professional Learning

With a focus on the key elementary learning goal of improving math outcomes for students, Grand Erie offered a range of after school professional development sessions including: Coding, Math Long Range Plans, Mathematical Thinking Continuum for Gr. 1-6 teachers not involved in the Lawson learning, Making the Leap from Additive to Multiplicative Thinking, Reporting, Benchmark Assessment System, Using Data from Your Benchmark Assessment to Plan, Kindergarten Planning in the Four Frames, Self-Regulation and Math Routines in a Play-Based Kindergarten Class.

Capacity Building – Multilingual Learners

The Multilingual Learner Resource Team worked to build capacity with the educators in our schools by offering a variety of responsive PD opportunities throughout the school year including 'Lunch and Learns,' staff meetings and one-on-one conferences with teachers.

Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP)

Cayuga Secondary staff participated in a multi-day, cross-disciplinary inquiry project to learn more about understanding and valuing students' identities and lived experience. Professional learning focused on relevant aspects of Multi-Year Strategic Plan for Grand Erie, followed by a book study to introduce CRRP and Historically Responsive Literacy as an equity framework to disrupt current teacher practice. Teachers observed that students who were typically disengaged and not participating began to share their thoughts and opinions and engage in the work as they saw themselves reflected in their learning environment, feeling valued and a sense of belonging.





Support Services

All Grand Erie departments and support service groups have goals and strategies that align their functions with the mission to build a culture of Learning, Well-Being and Belonging. From facility upgrades to inclusive hiring practices to deploying new technology tools, teams across the district brought their best everyday in support of schools and students.



1,556

HEPA Units
Deployed



\$8m

Invested In HVAC
System Upgrades



43

Learning Commons
Projects Completed



Embedding
Diversity and
Inclusion into
Hiring Practices



\$15m

In Upgrades, Including Roofing, Paving,
Classroom Modernization and More



616

Educators And Education Support Staff
Were Hired To Support Student Learning

EcoSchools –A Focus On Environmental Learning and Climate Action

15 Grand Erie schools are currently certified EcoSchools, and more than 65 per cent of all Grand Erie schools have been EcoSchool certified for at least five years. In 2021-22, this resulted in:



1,564

Hours of Outdoor
Learning



397

Waste-Free
Lunches



102

Efficiency-Optimized
Classrooms



16

Trees Planted



Support Services

New Childcare at Hagersville Secondary

A partnership between the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Health and Social Services Haldimand Norfolk, and Grand Erie saw the Fall 2021 opening of the Maawdoo Maajaamin Child Care at Hagersville Secondary School. The centre provides care space for 10 infants, 15 toddlers and 24 preschoolers, and also an opportunity for interested Hagersville Secondary students to connect with a possible career pathway.



Information Technology



100%

Of Schools Using the Safe Arrival App



2,800

New Laptops Deployed (a Three-Year Refresh)



354

Devices Purchased for Educational Assistants



100%

All Access Points Replaced At Secondary Schools



10,500

User Licenses Purchased for Firewall Software

Compass for Success

Compass for Success, a collaboration of school teams working together to build capacity to use data to improve student achievement, was integrated with Grand Erie information systems and a core team trained in software implementation. A training plan was established to roll this out to all schools.



Working With Our Communities

Grand Erie's mission is to build a culture of Learning, Well-Being and Belonging **together**. We value partnership opportunities with parents, caregivers and community groups that can amplify the work we are doing, collectively, to build this culture and learn, lead and inspire.

Partnering With Communities

The Grand Erie Parent Involvement Committee (GEPIC) delivered multiple opportunities for community members to engage and learn. Events included an evening of interactive learning for parents and caregivers focused on building confidence in children and teens, with Dr. Karyn Gordon, and understanding Sikhism with Dr. Onkar Singh.

GEPIC also hosted Dr. Jean Clinton from McMaster's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences as part of a School Council orientation session. GEPIC also brought in cyber safety expert Paul Davis for a workshop on cyberbullying, texting and cyber safety to help parents and caregivers help their children navigate the online space.



Honouring Volunteers

Volunteers bring a wealth of varied and diverse experiences to enhance student learning, well-being and belonging in our school communities. To celebrate Volunteer Week, we featured a daily profile of one of the many volunteers making a difference in Grand Erie. The week culminated in the presentation of a Learn Lead Inspire Award presented to Jayme Wilson, the behind-the-scenes coordinator of the food program that gets hot, healthy meals into 11 Brantford schools to ensure students' physical needs are met, enabling a successful day of learning.



Working With Our Communities

One-Stop Grad Shop

King George School partnered with the Brantford Police Service to provide Grade 8 students across the district, from any school board, an opportunity to find their special graduation outfit without the price tag. Detective Kelsie Annaert, along with fellow officers and Grand Erie teacher Shannon McLeod, started the One-Stop Grad Shop six years ago, and the program has helped many graduates find what they needed to celebrate in style. The program came back after a two-year COVID-enforced hiatus to offer a variety of gently used, donated formal wear, shoes and accessories free of cost.



Community Support Enhances Jarvis School Learning Commons

In November 2021, the transformation of Jarvis Public School's library into a learning commons was completed, a project enhanced by community support, thanks to an impressive \$5000 fundraising effort. The timelines of this project just happened to coincide with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Principal at Jarvis Public School noted that: *"Despite the challenges, the School Council has worked tirelessly, tapping into the power of this incredible community to support what will become an asset for generations to come."*



Equity Advisory Group

Grand Erie formed an Equity Advisory Group (EAG) from community members in human rights and equity deserving organizations, alliances and networks. The EAG has supported and advised the board in the development of an Equity Action Plan, designed to serve as the foundation for building a culture of belonging in our schools. A parent on the EAG described how much she enjoys the EAG meetings, *"as we have such a diverse and interesting group."*





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