



Director's Annual Report 2023-24





Director's Message

The 2023-24 school year was one of incredible progress, marked by countless achievements that drive our mission forward. As we reflect on our accomplishments in learning, well-being and belonging, it's clear that we're building something extraordinary.

I am incredibly proud of all we have accomplished together as a system. Your passion and commitment to our students, families and the greater community bring these goals to life each and every day. The following report offers a glimpse into the many successes across the district, shedding light on the impact of our shared dedication.

I am deeply thankful to our Senior Leadership Team, Board of Trustees, Administrators, Educators and Support Staff. Thanks to you, Grand Erie has the power to nurture curiosity and opportunity, support the needs of each learner and create equitable, inclusive and responsive learning and working environments.

Dr. JoAnna Roberto, PhD

Director of Education and Secretary of the Board



Our Multi-Year Strategic Plan

In its third year, our Multi-Year Strategic Plan continues to pave the way for learning, leading and inspiring across the district. From board-level initiatives to student-led projects, our collective priorities guide our work, power innovation and support students and families, bringing purpose and optimism to everything we do. Looking ahead, we remain focused on realizing this vision to foster opportunities for growth and meaningful impact.





Board of Trustees

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



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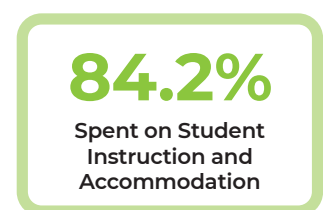
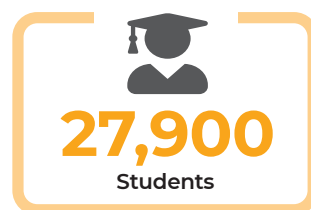
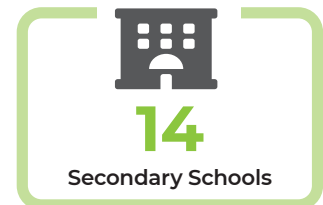


Maggie Baker
STUDENT TRUSTEE
SOUTH



Kiera Gayowsky
STUDENT TRUSTEE
NORTH

Grand Erie by the Numbers





Learning Elementary

Accomplishments

- 94% of students receiving Reading Resource Intervention support improved at least one Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) level
- Coaching supports were supported in 100% of Grade 3, 6 and 9 math classes
- A greater percentage of Grade 3, 6 and 9 students achieved the provincial EQAO standard in mathematics
- 129 Educators completed Math Additional Qualifications
- 100% of K-Grade 2/3 educators have participated in Early Literacy Assessment Tool (ELAT) professional development

Math Achievement Action Plan

Math achievement was a key focus in schools, with Math Coaches, Teachers, and Administrators working together to enhance student learning through through a multi-faceted approach. Coaches collaborated with teachers to co-plan and co-teach lessons that emphasized the implementation of the Ontario curriculum, high impact instructional practices and responsive instruction and assessment. Families were also engaged through division-specific math newsletters, fostering learning at home.



Scan the QR code to watch the video

Math Coaching

In this video, a math team demonstrated the dynamic strategies used to support improved math outcomes for students with a focus on the impact of instructional coaching, the role of the math coach and the implementation of the coaching cycle.



Learning Elementary

Cobblestone Hosts Amazing Race for a Family Math Adventure

In May, over 100 families competed in a math-themed event to engage students and caregivers in collaborative learning. Ten classrooms transformed into different countries, each offering math challenges tailored to various grade levels. Families solved puzzles, used manipulatives, and played games to collect stamps for their passports, aiming to win a family prize pack featuring local attractions. Participants appreciated the chance to bond as a family while exploring how teachers make math fun and meaningful.



Book it to the Library to Check Out New Titles Sure to Learn, Lead and Inspire

Grand Erie revitalized its elementary school libraries with a diverse, student-focused collection of literacy materials, thanks to the efforts of teaching consultants and library technicians. Guided by the Equity Action Plan and Culturally Responsive, Relevant, and Sustaining Pedagogy, the refresh includes dual-language books in Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic, Gujarati, and Vietnamese, as well as graphic novels and popular titles on themes like technology, geography, and climate change.



Skill Building

Skill-building is a model of support that brings resources and services to students with special education needs and their general education classroom teachers. It supports the move to more inclusive programming for students because it allows for direct instruction of targeted skills and authentic practice in the general education classroom.



Scan the QR code to watch the video

Learning Secondary

Accomplishments

- 265.5 total credits achieved by students enrolled in vocational programs
- Attendance improved by 11% across the board
- 82% of Grade 11 students are on track to graduate

Art Project Raises Awareness on Red Dress Day

Students at Paris District High School participated in a powerful art project for Red Dress Day, honouring survivors and raising awareness about violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ people. Led by Educator Sandi MacMillan, Grade 10 visual arts students created red dresses, primarily from paper, symbolizing absence and loss. The project gained broader impact when the Brant County OPP displayed the paper gowns, amplifying the message within the community.



World Water Day Event Provides Learners with Inspiration, Advocacy Around Water Rights

Students from Pauline Johnson Collegiate and Vocational School attended an event at the University of Waterloo for World Water Day, where they heard from Autumn Peltier, Chief Water Commissioner for the Anishinabek Nation. Peltier spoke about the importance of sustainable water management and youth activism. Students were inspired by her advocacy for clean water rights and gained a deeper understanding of the complexities of water issues. The event also highlighted Indigenous perspectives on water as a vital resource, encouraging students to take responsibility for its stewardship.



Learning Secondary

Honouring Innovation and Achievement at Bay Area Science and Engineering Fair

Four Grand Erie students earned awards at the Bay Area Science and Engineering Fair (BASEF) for projects demonstrating innovation and problem-solving. Kiera Mitchell from Delhi District Secondary School won a bronze merit award for her COVID-19 airborne pathogen research. Brodi Ouwendyk received the James A. Winger award for his space hazard deflection project. Lily Song earned an award and scholarship for creating a glove to aid communication for the deaf-blind, while Cordelia Simmons won silver for her AI hydroplaning detection project.



From Rust to Radiant: Students Revive 1956 Beetle in Classic Car Restoration

Transportation Technology teacher Richard Ernst and his students at Simcoe Composite School restored a 1956 Volkswagen Beetle found abandoned in a Waterloo field. After 40 years of neglect, the car has undergone a complete overhaul, with students learning skills like metal welding and brake line installation. The project provides hands-on experience in auto restoration, and the car was showcased at the Motorama Custom Car and Motorsports Expo in March 2024.



Well-Being

Accomplishments

- 93% of students say they feel safe in the classroom
- 146 families received wellness outreach visits through Summer Mental Health support programs
- 100% of schools completed Grade 7/8 Mental Health Literacy Curriculum training

Empowering Emotional Resilience

Grand Erie worked toward enhancing student mental health with kits tailored for elementary and secondary schools. The kits include tools like journals, calming strategy cards, breathing exercises, fidget tools and grade-specific resources like mindfulness books and sensory walk stickers. These initiatives support self-regulation, relaxation, and focus while fostering positive mental health strategies, empowering students with practical tools for long-term success.



Finding Focus and Fun in Mindful Movement

St. George-German Public School hosted a family yoga night, where young learners led families through mindfulness, breathing exercises, and yoga poses, fostering calm and self-awareness. Organized by staff and a parent yoga instructor, the event highlighted strategies to manage emotions and build a growth mindset, supporting classroom learning. This initiative aligns with the school's focus on kindness and well-being, helping students recognize their potential to positively impact their community while strengthening connections between home and school.



Well-Being

Experiential Learning

The Safe and Inclusive Schools program focused on education preservation through academic supports, but also through experiential learning which allowed students to develop the social skills, personal resources, and strategies that they will need to be successful, and to remain successful.



School Mental Health Strategy

Grand Erie's Mental Health Strategy (2022-25) aimed to enhance well-being by focusing on staff development, student support, and resource accessibility. The strategy included initiatives like increasing mental health literacy among educators, establishing wellness teams and integrating Indigenous perspectives into wellness programs. It emphasized the importance of equipping students with the skills to manage their mental health and creating a supportive, inclusive learning environment for all students.



Belonging

Accomplishments

- Increased the number of racialized staff by 30%
- The number of course selections made within nine Indigenous language classes increased to 181 from 149 last school year

Groundbreaking Event Kicks Off Construction of Caledonia Elementary School

In May, Grand Erie learners dug their shovels into the ground to mark the official start of construction on a joint-use building that will serve as the future home of a public and Catholic elementary school to meet the needs of the growing community in Caledonia. The school will accommodate 746 students and 49 child-care spaces, with construction expected to finish by September 2025.



Belonging

Breaking Ground in West Brant to Meet Needs of Growing Community

On June 24, a groundbreaking ceremony marked the start of a joint-use project between Grand Erie District School Board, the City of Brantford, and the Brantford Public Library. This new development will include an elementary school, recreation centre, library, sports fields, park, and more, serving the growing West Brant community. The project, funded partly by the Ministry of Education, will provide 650 student spaces and a child-care center, with completion expected in September 2026.



School Climate Survey

With an aim to gather insights into students' experiences, the School Climate Survey collects responses through multiple-choice questions and helps guide future planning and programs that promote a positive school environment for students.

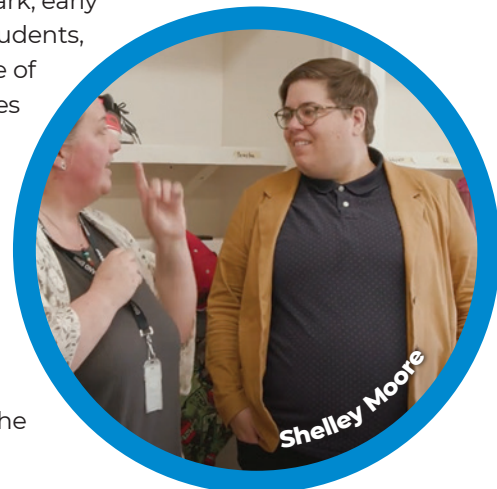


Attendance Strategy

In the spring of 2024, Grand Erie developed an Attendance Strategy to promote consistent school attendance, essential for academic success and well-being. It emphasizes the 90% attendance benchmark, early notification systems, and collaborative solutions involving students, parents, and schools. Key strategies include fostering a sense of belonging, removing attendance barriers, providing resources for students and families, and engaging school teams to support tailored interventions.

Inclusion by Design

What does belonging mean to you? Grand Erie continues on its journey to build more inclusive programs and environments for students after working alongside Shelley Moore an educator, researcher and speaker who promotes the importance of inclusive, equitable practices for all learners.





Belonging

Jeff Allison's Award-Winning Vision Transforms eLearning in Grand Erie

Jeff Allison, recognized for his work in eLearning, is now the Principal at Hagersville Secondary School while continuing to lead the development of Grand Erie's online education program. Using D2L Brightspace, the program offers personalized learning pathways, expanding from 26 to 80 course sections in just two years. It supports flexible learning environments, integrates with other Grand Erie programs, and gathers feedback from students and staff to refine offerings. This initiative aims to provide diverse, accessible learning options for students across the district.



Grand Erie Workforce Census

Every two years, Grand Erie conducts an anonymous and confidential workforce census to better understand and respond to staff needs. Aligned with our Equity Action Plan and Annual Learning and Operating Plan, the survey helped to identify strengths and barriers to equity and inclusion in employment and create plans and supports to address workplace equity.



Equity Action Plan

Grand Erie's 2023-24 Equity Action Plan focused on creating inclusive, equitable environments where all students and staff feel safe and valued. Key goals included promoting culturally responsive practices, addressing systemic barriers, embedding anti-racism and anti-oppression into policies, and fostering diverse student and community engagement. The plan outlined specific strategies such as professional development, equity walks, inclusive resource curation, and tracking hate-based incidents.



Indigenous Education

Accomplishments

- 59 educators completed the First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Part 1, 2, and Specialist AQ courses

UISC Year-End Event Celebrates the Spirit of Powwow

The United Indigenous Student Council (UISC) hosted a vibrant celebration at Hagersville Secondary School, featuring drumming, dancing, hands-on activities, and community engagement. This event, led by Indigenous students and supported by staff, aimed to honour Indigenous culture and provide a platform for students to showcase their leadership and voices. The powwow, with performances from guest artists and local vendors, embodied the spirit of unity and resilience, reinforcing the importance of Indigenous traditions while fostering a sense of belonging and community.



Re-Engagement

Indigenous Community Liaison workers supported re-engagement and attendance within students from Six Nations. A key asset was to develop relationships and identify what students are looking for in education, and using this to ensure students are attending school and are in programs that suit their strengths.



Support Services

Accomplishments

- Average completed facility work orders from submission to completion improved from 7 days in September to 3 days in February.
- 414 educators completed Additional Qualifications (AQ) courses (Special Education, Reading, Math, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples, Kindergarten and French), including 85 new teachers
- 950 hired employees (permanent and occasional)
- More than 50% reduction in printing over the past five years

CareerLink: Providing Comprehensive Support for Job Seekers

Together with Grand Erie, CareerLink offered a variety of employment services, including résumé assistance, job searches, training, mock interviews, and more, helping individuals at various stages of their career journey. With a focus on respect and support, CareerLink helps clients fulfilling work through personalized services and serves as a welcoming resource for those seeking employment or career transitions.



New Devices Empower Digital Learning, Collaboration and Skill-Building in Grand Erie

Caledonia Centennial Public School, Cayuga Secondary School, and Lakewood Elementary School received 283 new HP ProBook laptops, enhancing learning opportunities and streamlining operations. These devices support online assessments, innovative lessons in subjects like math, science, and art, and foster one-on-one and collaborative learning. Principal Melanie Logan of Lakewood Elementary School highlighted their impact, enabling students to code, create music, and develop presentations. The laptops align with Grand Erie's Multi-Year Strategic Plan, equipping students with essential digital skills for the future.





Support Services

Long-Term Accommodation Plan 2023-28

Grand Erie's Long-Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP) guides decisions on new school sites, capital requests, boundary reviews, and program development. It assesses enrolment forecasts, growth patterns, and infrastructure needs to determine when to acquire school properties, build or expand schools, or consolidate programs. The plan is informed by local demographic data, municipal housing developments, and Grand Erie's strategic goals for education.



Job Fairs

Hello from the University of Windsor! In March, Grand Erie staff were at the Education Career Fair, meeting future educators.



School Modernization Projects

Modernization projects were completed across the district, from upgraded lighting and flooring to the beautification of shared learning spaces.



"The Facilities team came promptly, and the teacher in the room was beyond appreciative. She raved about how kind they were and how they "get things done." Very much appreciated!"

SCHOOL TESTIMONIAL



Community Connections

Learn Lead Inspire Awards

The Learn Lead Inspire award celebrates students, staff members and volunteers who have made outstanding contributions and shown steadfast commitment to their school communities, aligning with the Board's mission to build a culture of learning, well-being and belonging to inspire each learner.

The 2023-24 recipients included Harper Hyslop, Emmerson Craig, Adriana Potichnyj, David Gervais, Pamela O'Halloran, Macey Barber, Scott Parsons, Gimaa Stacey LaForme, Chief Mark Hill, and Geza Revai and the hospitality class from Pauline Johnson Collegiate and Vocational School.



The Grand Erie Parent Involvement Committee (GEPIC)

GEPIC held its first in-person event since 2019. It also held a speaker series which included talks from Dr. Andrew Campbell, Samantha Doxtator, and Jeff Martin.



Police Resource Outreach Supporting Education (PROSE) Review

Grand Erie is pleased to continue its partnership with police services within its boundaries to provide programming to students and classes through school visits, presentations, programs and more. The Police Resource Outreach Supporting Education (PROSE) modules were developed in line with Ontario curriculum expectations, in collaboration with staff, the Brantford Police Service and the Ontario Provincial Police in Brant, Norfolk and Haldimand counties.



Police Resource Outreach Supporting Education



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