



**Waterloo Catholic  
District School Board**  
Quality, Inclusive, Faith Based Education

# Director's Annual Report 2024–2025



# Message from the Director

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The 2024–2025 school year was marked by growth, gratitude, and a deepening of our shared faith. Throughout the year, we celebrated student achievement, embraced new opportunities for innovation and connection, and continued to strengthen our Catholic community - thanks to the unwavering support of families, staff, parishes, and community partners.

This year also marked the culmination of our three-year Multi-Year Strategic Plan and Pastoral Plan. These foundational documents guided our work in fostering excellence, belonging, and faith formation across the system. As they come to a close, they leave a lasting legacy, and offer a powerful springboard into the future.

As we look ahead to the next chapter, we do so with optimism and purpose. Informed by the voices of our community and rooted in our Gospel mission, we remain steadfast in our commitment to nurturing graduates who are faith-filled, curious, compassionate, and ready to lead in an ever-changing world.

With gratitude and commitment to Catholic education,

*Tyrone Dowling*  
Director of Education  
Waterloo Catholic District School Board



# Our Year at a Glance

## Education & Growth

- 28,000+ Students Strong
- 4 New Schools Underway
- 2 New Schools in 2025-26
- 2,059 Summer Learners

## Faith & Community

- 100+ Faith Celebrations
- \$25K Fundraised by schools

## Diversity & Inclusion

- 160+ Birth Countries
- 115 Languages Spoken
- 500+ Newcomer Students
- 2,218 Students in 18 Language Programs

## Innovation & Development

- 1,000+ Staff Trained in Generative AI
- 2,800 Podcast Listens

## Student Support & Wellbeing

- 1,915 Hours of Extra Student Support
- 11,500+ Mental Health Course Visits
- 77 “Sources of Strength” Sessions
- 300 Families in “Growing Together” Program

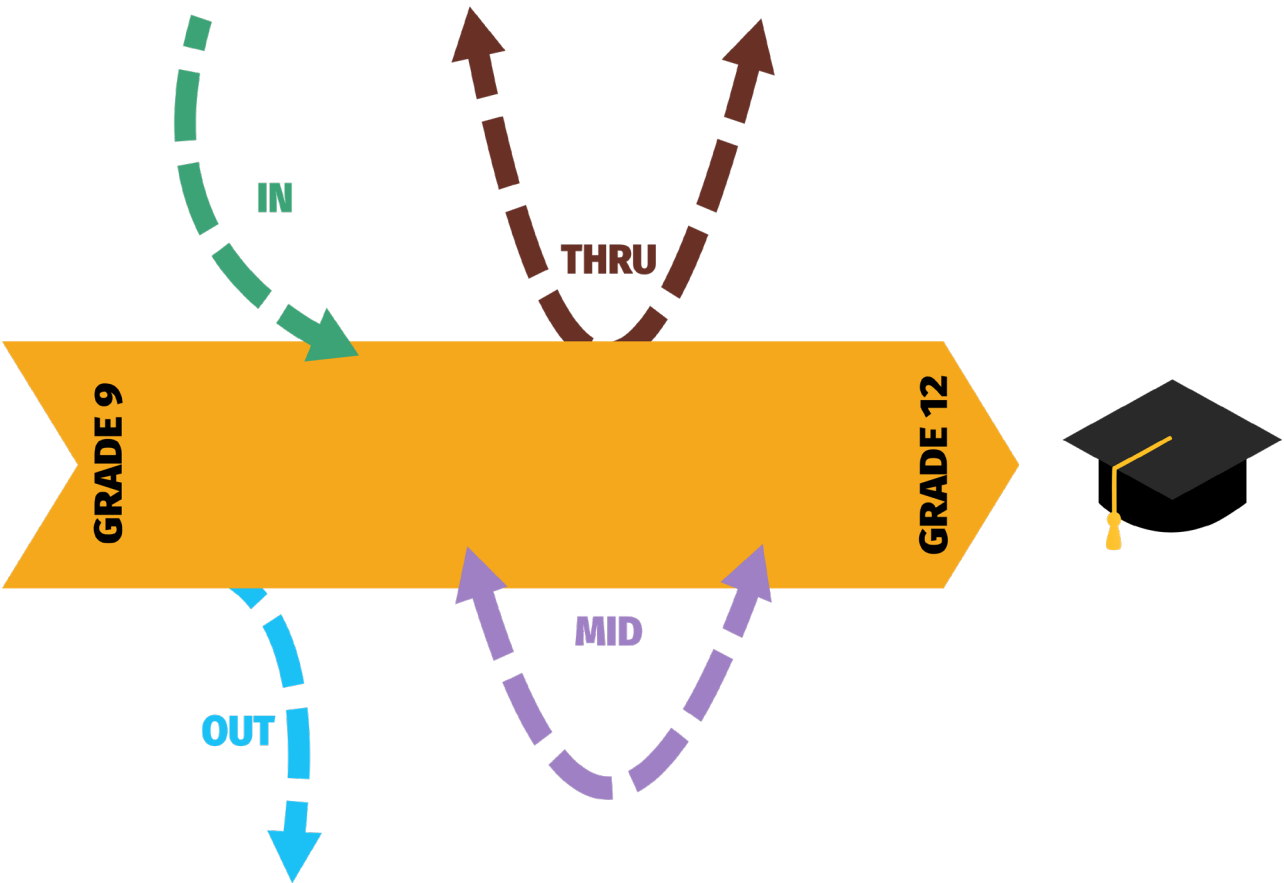
## Adult Learning (St. Louis)

- 462 Adult Graduates (OSSD)
- 25 Homework Clubs Supporting 1,638 Students
- 2,923 Adults in ESL & LINC
- 4,170 Adults in Credit Programs

# Graduation Rates

Graduation rates remain one of the most important indicators of student success, and at WCDSB they continue to reflect our strong commitment to achievement and support for every learner. Using our Internal Graduation Rate Metric - which accounts for summer learning and alternative pathways - we see consistent evidence of students reaching their goals. Ministry of Education data for June 2024 is expected to show a five-year graduation rate consistent with our strong 86.1% result from June 2022, keeping WCDSB above the provincial average and ahead of many boards in Western Ontario. These results highlight the strength of our schools in creating the conditions for students to thrive, graduate, and take their next steps with confidence.

Grade 9 Cohort	4-Year	5-Year
2019-2020	85.2% June 2023	91.1% June 2024
2018-2019	86.1% June 2022	90.2% June 2023
2017-2018	82.9% June 2021	89.6% June 2022
2016-2017	88.2% June 2020	92.2% June 2021
2015-2016	85.6% June 2019	90.3% June 2020



- Mobility Pathways:
- FULL\*: Stayed at the Board all 4 years
  - OUT\*: Left the Board before graduating
  - MID\*: Left the Board, but returned before graduating
  - IN: Entered the Board after grade 9, but before graduating
  - THRU: Entered the Board after grade 9, but left before graduating
- \*are the pathways that are represented in our Ministry Graduate Rate



# Living Our Core Values





# Faith

## Blessed and Beloved

In 2024–25, WCDSB launched Blessed and Beloved, the new elementary Family Life Education program developed by the Institute for Catholic Education to replace Fully Alive. Grounded in Catholic teaching and approved by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, the program began with Grade 1 and will expand to Grades 2 and 3 in 2025–26.



Focusing on human dignity, relationships, and family through a Catholic lens, Blessed and Beloved helps students explore identity, vocation, and the sacred gift of family. WCDSB continues to support educators with in-service sessions, digital tools, student books, and teacher guides to bring this faith-filled program to life in classrooms.



# Innovation


## Leading with Innovation: Generative AI in Catholic Classrooms

In 2024–25, WCDSB strengthened its leadership in Catholic education by integrating Generative AI into professional learning and classroom practice. Grounded in updated guidelines for safe and ethical use, more than 1,000 staff engaged in training through webinars, one-on-one support, and team workshops. Resources were accessed over 1,600 times, while our Deep Learning Dialogues podcast reached nearly 2,800 listeners. By embedding AI into PA Days and ongoing PD, educators explored emerging technologies through a lens of discernment, innovation, and Catholic values—equipping them to lead with confidence in a digital world.

While AI tools may assist in drafting initial report card comments, teachers must:

- 1 Ensure any AI tools used in assessment meet privacy requirements and protect student data
- 2 Thoroughly review GenAI outputs against direct observations and assessment evidence
- 3 Substantially modify and personalize to reflect individual student achievements
- 4 Validated through professional judgment

Similar to using a comment bank, AI can generate comments, but teachers must then personalize them.



Katrina Gossert

Co-Hosts  
Katrina & Wh...

# DEEP LEARNING DIALOGUES

Waterloo Catholic  
District School Board

A WCDSB  
Podcast about  
AI in Education





## Esports: Building the Whole Athlete

WCDSB’s new Whole Athlete Esports Program opened exciting doors for students in Grades 6–12 to learn, lead, and compete in games like Rocket League, Minecraft, and Mario Kart. Rooted in Catholic teaching, the program fosters teamwork, wellness, and digital citizenship. With hundreds of participants and support from Conestoga College and Esports Canada, esports is becoming a powerful new avenue for student engagement.



# Student Leadership, Engagement & Belonging

## ProjectSEARCH Waterloo Region

ProjectSEARCH Waterloo Region welcomed its third class of interns at our WRHN@Queen’s Blvd site and our very first class of interns at Cambridge Memorial Hospital. This 10-month employment preparation program for students with a primary diagnosis of an intellectual or developmental disability who are in their final year of secondary school. Project SEARCH Waterloo Region (in partnership with WCDSB, WRHN@ Queen’s Blvd, Cambridge Memorial Hospital and KWHabilitation) combines real-life work experience with training in employability and life skills, and employment planning and support.



## Equity & Inclusion

Our schools are places where every student feels seen, valued, and supported. We work to remove systemic barriers and ensure students and staff have the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

We celebrate the diverse identities, backgrounds, and perspectives that enrich our communities, and we intentionally create spaces where everyone feels safe, respected, and able to participate fully.

Belonging is the result—when every individual knows they matter and feels confident being their authentic self.





**The Arts: Building Belonging Through Expression**

The arts continued to inspire connection and creativity across WCDSB this year. Over 1,350 students took part in an expanded Folk Dance Festival, while others explored music through ukuleles, djembes, and full band ensembles. Drama and dance students led festivals and staged award-winning performances, and visual arts students wowed the community at the Expressions 50 gallery showcase—proving the arts are essential to helping students feel seen, valued, and inspired.



**Confidence in the Classroom, Camaraderie in Competition**

From prep courses to podium finishes, WCDSB secondary students are building confidence and connection through math. After completing the Grade 9 Math Prep Course, 71% of students reported greater confidence in their skills. The annual WCDSB Team Math Olympics brought together all five secondary schools for a high-energy competition—culminating in a big win for St. David’s with 176 out of 192 points.

**Community & Partnerships**

**Growing Together: Supporting Families, Strengthening Youth**

In May 2025, WCDSB partnered with community agencies to host Growing Together: Empowered Families, Thriving Youth—a gathering for parents and caregivers focused on youth mental health and wellbeing. Families engaged with keynote speaker Dr. Jean Clinton and chose from micro-sessions on technology, communication, substance use, and healthy relationships. Community partners hosted booths to ensure families left with practical tools and renewed confidence. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive: one parent shared, “The most valuable part for me is to realize that the school boards are aware of the issue and can support parents.”

**Welcoming Newcomer Families Through Partnership**

The YMCA’s Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program continues to play a key role in supporting WCDSB’s multilingual learner families. From census translation and Tigrinya-language immunization messaging to programs like Newcomer Youth Theatre and Newcomer Orientation Week, SWIS helps families feel informed, welcomed, and connected to their school communities.



**Student Leaders Building Safe, Inclusive Schools**

In 2024–2025, WCDSB launched the Elementary Safe & Caring Schools Ambassadors (SACSA) program, expanding a proven secondary initiative to Grade 7–8 leaders. Rooted in Catholic values of dignity and community, SACSA equips students to foster inclusion, reduce stigma around mental health, and strengthen school belonging. Each school designates a staff mentor and accesses a SACSA Toolkit with guides, resources, and a shared online space. Early pilot projects already made an impact - for example, one SACSA team created a “Wellness Wednesday” campaign, inviting classmates to pause, connect, and care for one another.



# Excellence in Learning

## Supporting Multilingual Learners

WCDSB continues to support Multilingual Learners (MLLs) through system-wide initiatives that promote equity and achievement. Over 500 newcomer students were welcomed at the Newcomer Reception Centre, where they received initial assessments in English and Math. Targeted support included a Lexia pilot for Grades 3–12 English Literacy Development (ELD) learners and 200+ co-taught lessons by Multilingual Support Teachers. Tracking through Aspen and Encompass has enhanced planning, and interpreter use is encouraged to foster strong two-way communication with families. With ongoing support from YMCA SWIS, newcomer families are engaged, informed, and welcomed into our schools and communities.



## Excellence in French Language Learning

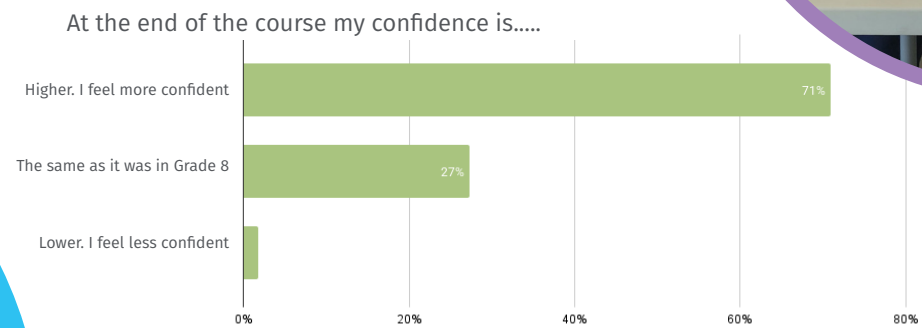
French learning flourished across WCDSB this year. Core French and French Immersion students earned top provincial honours in both speaking and writing competitions. Twenty-five secondary students earned their internationally recognized DELF B1 diploma, while 65 intermediate students engaged in hands-on cultural learning at a French-language day camp—from beekeeping to cooking over a fire—all while building confidence and connection in French. As we say in French, *C'est en forgeant qu'on devient forgeron* - practice is the key to success!





Strengthening Numeracy: Confidence, Capacity, and Classroom Impact

WCDSB’s Elementary Math Achievement Plan delivered results in 2024–2025. In six priority schools, targeted coaching reached 165 students and 24 teachers, leading to achievement gains of 20% in Grade 3 and 17% in Grade 6. Student confidence also soared: 62% of Grade 3s and 53% of Grade 6s now believe, “I am good at math.” Math Lead Teachers across the board led in-school PD after participating in eight sessions focused on high-impact strategies—earning strong praise from educators.



WCDSB Team Math Olympics

The WCDSB Team Math Olympics supports grade 9-12 students in tackling challenging math questions and enhancing their problem-solving skills. This event unites students from all five high schools who are passionate about math to collaborate on complex tasks. This year, St. David’s won the plaque, scoring 176 out of 192 points.



Turning the Page on Early Literacy

In 2024/2025, we strengthened early literacy through the rollout of a new screening tool for students in Kindergarten (Year 2) to Grade 2. A total of 5,833 students were screened, with 60 percent meeting the benchmark. Our eight Literacy Special Assignment Teachers supported implementation and provided Tier 2 reading intervention to 393 students. This work supports early identification and responsive instruction, which are essential to long-term achievement across the curriculum.

St. Louis Adult Learning & Continuing Education Centres

In 2024–25, St. Louis supported over 17,000 student registrations across 22 programs and services, offering hope and opportunity to learners of all ages—from infants in childminding to adults pursuing personal, academic, and career goals.

As a proud member of the WCDSB community, St. Louis provides accessible pathways through day and evening programs, weekend and summer learning, and school-based support across the region. Informed by student voice and community feedback, St. Louis continues to evolve to meet the needs of diverse learners.





# Stewardship & Strategic Growth





# Building for the Future

## Welcoming Two New School Communities

Construction began in 2024 on two new elementary schools to meet the needs of our growing communities. Both projects were completed in 2025, and we were proud to welcome students, staff, and families into the new spaces for the start of the 2025/2026 school year.

### St. Patrick

St. Patrick Catholic Elementary School, located on River Road East in Kitchener, opened with space for more than 540 students. The 60,000-square-foot facility includes four Kindergarten classrooms with dedicated outdoor areas, a special education classroom, and flexible learning spaces designed to support modern instruction. The site also features a purpose-built RisingOaks Early Learning Child Care Centre with capacity for 88 children, supporting early learning and local families.



**ST. PATRICK**  
Catholic Elementary School



### Holy Trinity

Holy Trinity Catholic Elementary School, located in Kitchener’s growing Rosenberg neighbourhood, was delivered in partnership with the City of Kitchener. The 53,000-square-foot school includes 23 classrooms, a Learning Commons, and a dividable gymnasium shared with the adjoining community centre.

These new schools represent a significant investment in Catholic education and reflect our continued commitment to serving students and families in high-growth areas.



**HOLY TRINITY**  
Catholic Elementary School





# Financial Stewardship

The Financial Services team, led by Executive Superintendent of Corporate Services Shesh Maharaj, is proud to reflect on another successful year supporting the planning, development, presentation, and monitoring of the 2024–25 school year budget.

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board’s budgets are primarily shaped by student enrolment and the province’s Core Education (Core Ed) grants along with related funding regulations. Additional revenues are generated through one-time provincial grants, facility rentals, federal funding, extended day programs, and international education.

Budgets are actively monitored year-round, with formal interim financial reports presented quarterly to both the Board of Trustees and the Audit Committee.

The fiscal year ending August 31, 2025, resulted in a small surplus of funds. Thanks to conservative planning, rigorous financial oversight, and ongoing collaboration with budget holders, the Waterloo Catholic District School Board continues to maintain a strong and stable financial position.

## Waterloo Catholic District School Board Year ending August 31, 2025

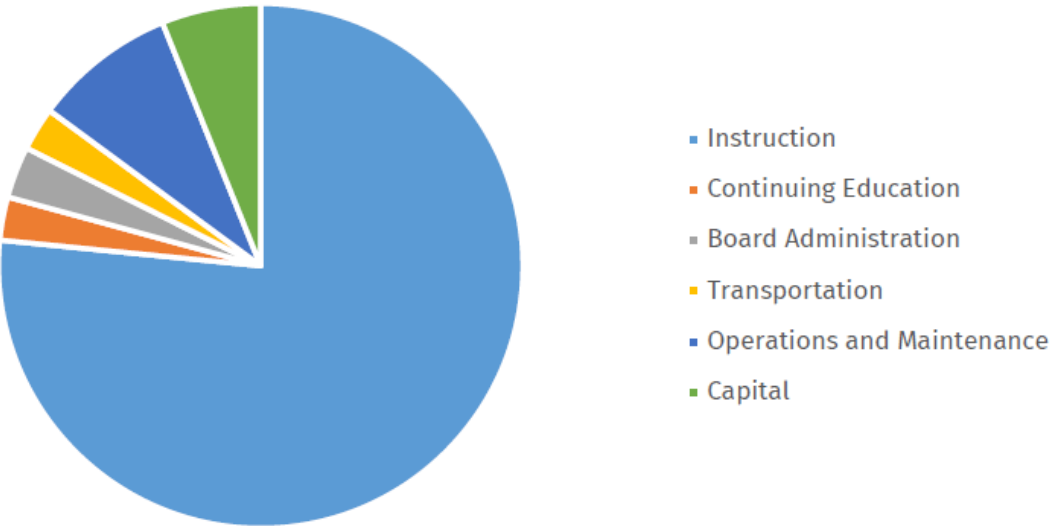
### Expenditures

Instruction	323,140,791
Continuing Education	11,251,475
Board Administration	13,427,063
Transportation	11,285,540
Operations and Maintenance	37,114,173
Capital	25,818,520
	<u>422,037,562</u>
	<u>422,037,562</u>
	<u>-</u>

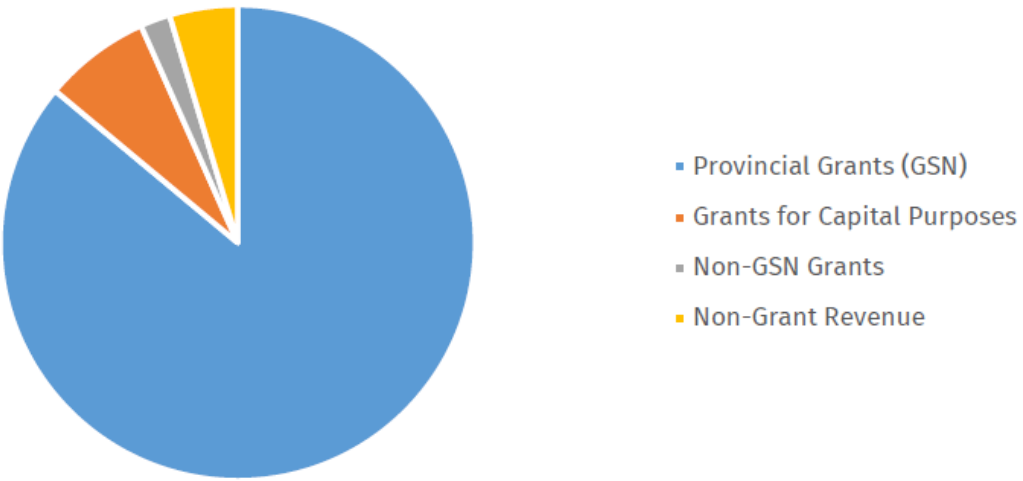
### Revenues

Provincial Grants (GSN)	363,233,913
Grants for Capital Purposes	30,722,357
Non-GSN Grants	8,594,756
Non-Grant Revenue	19,599,589
	<u>422,150,615</u>
	<u>422,150,615</u>
	<u>-</u>

2024-2025 Expenditures



2024-2025 Revenues





# Board of Trustees

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Detailed information about the Board of Trustees – including contact information, board agendas and minutes and board policies can be found on our website. [www.wcdsb.ca](http://www.wcdsb.ca)

