



2022-23

Director's Annual
Report to the
Community



A message from Director Dance

In 2022-23, the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB), through our strategic priorities, focused on supporting students in being successful as 21st century learners. The year saw the continued evolution of teaching and learning, with our staff and students leading the way, demonstrating new and innovative ways to reach our goals in the areas of Well-being, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Community, and Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

As I reflect back on the 2022-23 school year, there are too many highlights to count. This report captures just a few of the exceptional programs, initiatives, and accomplishments of our students and staff, including:

- The return to the in-person Skills Ontario Competition and the achievements of the participating students
- The introduction of well-being facilitators to build capacity in classroom mental health practices and the delivery of mental health literacy
- The opening of the SCDSB's newest schools, Harvest Hills Public School and Marshview Public School
- Welcoming Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard to the SCDSB for a day of learning related to Black history and how to create change

Read on to learn more about the SCDSB experience in the 2022-23 school year, or [watch this video to experience some of the highlights for yourself!](#)

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "John Dance". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "D" at the end.

John Dance

Director of Education

Mission

To inspire and empower learning for life.

Vision

A community of learners achieving full potential.

89
elementary
schools

16
secondary
schools

7
Learning
Centres

39,531
elementary
students

16,343
secondary
students

87%
5-year grad rate

\$691M
balanced budget

Excellence in teaching and learning

Furthering leadership in outdoor education

Outdoor education is about the environment, in the environment, and for the environment. It provides students of all ages with an interactive opportunity to learn, lead, and innovate in nature, in a way that cannot be duplicated in the classroom. In spring 2023, the SCDSB announced an updated vision for outdoor education, focusing on programming and professional development at the elementary and secondary levels.

The centrepiece of the SCDSB's vision for outdoor learning is the establishment of the Education Centre as an outdoor learning hub for students and staff. By capitalizing on the greenspace and natural opportunities for learning that exist on the Education Centre property, and leveraging partnerships with the Ministry of Natural Resources, multiple defined outdoor teaching and learning spaces were created for the beginning of the 2023-24 school year.

The successful execution of this vision will help ensure that the SCDSB remains a leader in providing meaningful, fulsome outdoor education experiences and opportunities for students throughout their educational experience.

[Learn more about the plans for outdoor education in the SCDSB.](#)

Professional development to inspire and support school leaders

During the 2022-23 school year the SCDSB continued to support school leaders with professional learning opportunities. In addition to regular school leaders' meetings, the SCDSB hosted conferences for principals and vice-principals focused on inspiring and supporting these leaders as they work within their school communities to create a sense of belonging and help all students achieve success.

The SCDSB Leads Principal Conference was held in November 2022 in partnership with the Ontario Principal's Council and attended by principals from every SCDSB school. In April 2023, over 100 SCDSB vice-principals attended the SCDSB Leads Vice-principal Conference. These professional learning events included keynotes focused on pursuing excellence and equity, as well as a variety of breakout sessions related to assessment, the early years, healthy schools, human resources, mathematics, the Right to Read Inquiry, school safety, student well-being, and more.



SCDSB educators named as recipients of Prime Minister's awards

Two SCDSB educators were honoured with Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence during the 2022-23 school year. Elizabeth Dewey (Barrie North CI) and Leah Russell (Cundles Heights PS) each received a Certificate of Achievement. Teaching excellence award recipients are honoured for their remarkable achievements in education and for their commitment to preparing their students for a digital and innovation-based economy.

"Elizabeth Dewey has always been a very creative teacher and continues to try new approaches in her classes," stated Greg Brucker, Principal at Barrie North CI. "She always allows students to reach their full potential by tapping into their interests and true passions, and by making learning a fun and rewarding experience."

"Leah Russell cares about the whole student," said Paula Smith, Principal at Cundles Heights PS. "By creating a safe, supportive environment inside the classroom, she builds trusting relationships with her students."

Summaries of Dewey and Russell's nominations, including some classroom strategies and outstanding achievements, are available on the [Government of Canada's website](#).

SCDSB students bring home five medals from Skills Ontario Competition

In May 2023, 31 SCDSB students from five schools represented the board at the 2023 Skills Ontario Competition. Participating students showcased their talents and competed for the title of best in their trade amongst the province's most skilled youth. In a return to in-person competition after three years of being held virtually, SCDSB competitors won medals in five categories. Medals were awarded to:

- Katarina C. and Arub S. from Bear Creek SS – silver in TV/Video Production
- Lauren P. from Banting Memorial HS – silver in Baking
- Elise I. from Banting Memorial HS – bronze in Auto Painting
- Maddy H. from Innisdale SS – bronze in Restaurant Service
- Stephanie T. from Banting Memorial HS – bronze in Hairstyling

Participation in the Skills Ontario Competition is made possible through the support of the experiential learning program, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), and the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program.



Well-being

Supporting student mental health and well-being with new well-being facilitators

In the SCDSB, sustainable everyday mental health and well-being practices in classrooms and schools are a key area of focus. To support this commitment to mental health and well-being, in 2022-23 the SCDSB introduced well-being facilitators as a central support for educators. These two staff members work with staff in assigned schools to enhance and build capacity in classroom mental health practices and the delivery of mental health literacy. [Watch as students at Tay Shores PS participate in an activity with a well-being facilitator.](#)

The support and resources offered by the well-being facilitators builds on staff skills, knowledge, and confidence and are enhanced with in-person learning and modelling. School-based activities include engaging school staff in mental health-focused planning, providing in-class support, and leading professional learning related to mental health and well-being at staff meetings, school council meetings, and at evening school events.

In 2022-23, the facilitators also provided professional development for new and aspiring leaders, developed mental health and well-being resources for use by educators throughout the SCDSB, and organized the Choose Your Own Adventure Well-being Conference for Grade 7 students.

Character education in the SCDSB receives a fresh new look

The SCDSB's character education program was initially developed in 2003. During the 2022-23 school year, the SCDSB initiated a consultation, review, and update of this program. Based on feedback from students, staff, and parents/guardians, the SCDSB's character education program was revised to celebrate the whole individual, reflect all voices, and acknowledge the continued learning of Indigenous ways of knowing, the Seven Grandfather Teachings, and the SCDSB Strategic Priorities. Learn about the SCDSB's revised character attributes on the [SCDSB website](#) or [in this video](#).

The 2022-23 school year also marked the return to the SCDSB's annual in-person Character Recognition Awards Evening, where nominees from schools throughout the SCDSB are recognized for demonstrating good character in their daily lives. [Take a look at the Character Recognition Awards Evening](#), where 300 students, staff, and community members were celebrated!



SCDSB staff and students honoured with awards from the LSRCA

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) recognizes watershed heroes who engage in positive environmental actions that contribute to a more sustainable and healthier watershed. In October 2022, the organizations recognized Anne Wright, SCDSB elementary teacher, and the 2022 Enviroventure class at Nantyr Shores SS with conservation awards.

Anne Wright was presented with the Healthy Community Award. Wright worked with intermediate and Kindergarten students, as well as students with special education needs, at Fieldcrest ES to help them discover their roles and responsibilities as global citizens. They worked together to create a 'no mow zone' in the schoolyard, creating a conservation area with native plants, paths, and shrubbery for students and staff to learn from and preserve.

The Enviroventure program was presented with the Ernie Crossland Young Conservationist Award. Enviroventure is an outdoor and environmental leadership program focused on engaging students through experiential learning to inspire action. Students participate in numerous community initiatives that improve the quality of life for area residents, and those living all around the Lake Simcoe watershed. The award recognizes individuals and groups under 30 years of age who are involved in a significant leadership role in a conservation project, or with a conservation-based group or organization. [Watch a video from the LSCRA highlighting the Enviroventure program.](#)



Community

Supporting parent/guardian engagement through the Parent Involvement Committee

The SCDSB's Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) is a group of parents/guardians and community representatives from across Simcoe County who work with staff and trustees to support student success through parent/guardian engagement. During the 2022-23 school year the PIC hosted two events for SCDSB families.

In October 2022, the PIC hosted Connections, an annual school council orientation event. Over 85 school council members from across the SCDSB registered to attend this in-person event. Attendees learned about promoting diversity and parent/guardian voice, school generated funds, and where to get information to support them in their roles on school council.

Safe Connections: Navigating a Digital World, featuring guest speaker Chris Vollum (CMV SocialMedia) and Sergeant Aaron C. Arnett (Ontario Provincial Police), was held in spring 2023. Over 275 SCDSB families registered for this virtual event focused on digital mindfulness and well-being and Internet safety.

In addition, the PIC facilitated the engagement of its members in Equity and inclusion: our collective impact, an evening with Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard in February 2023. By holding an in-person meeting at Bear Creek SS, members of the PIC were able to participate in this additional parent/guardian engagement opportunity as part of Black History Month.

[Take a look at some of the ways that school councils contribute to our communities!](#)

The SCDSB celebrates the opening of two new elementary schools

During the 2022-23 school year, the SCDSB opened two new elementary schools in Bradford. Harvest Hills PS opened its doors in September 2022, while Marshview PS welcomed students and the rest of their school community into their new building in April 2023.

The SCDSB received funding for both schools in January 2018. Harvest Hills PS was funded for \$13.7 million and can accommodate 501 students. Marshview PS was funded for \$17.4 million and can accommodate 593 students.

[Take a look at the SCDSB's newest schools.](#)



The SCDSB celebrates anniversaries at elementary and secondary schools

In 2022-23, the SCDSB celebrated 50th anniversaries at two schools!

In March 2023, Twin Lakes SS welcomed past and current students, staff, and community members to 50 Years of Twin, a weekend of commemoration of the occasion. The event featured an open house, the Thunder Years – Five Decades of Twin Lakes Productions musical production, alumni athletics, and a ‘stay and play’ featuring concert band and jazz music. [See some highlights from this special day!](#)

The Goodfellow PS Gators celebrated their 50th anniversary in May 2023 with an afternoon ceremony and evening open house complete with a memory walk, time capsule opening, games, food trucks, and more!

Highlighting opportunities in the electric vehicle sector through virtual reality

In June 2023, the SCDSB announced a partnership with Georgian College to raise awareness among secondary school students regarding the opportunities available in the electric vehicle sector. The partnership, which was funded by the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network’s (OVIN) Regional Future Workforce Program, uses extended reality (a combination of augmented reality and virtual reality programming) to bring the electric vehicle sector right into SCDSB secondary schools. Access to this extended reality platform will allow students the opportunity to explore various aspects of electric vehicles in hopes of sparking interest in the growing electric mobility sector.

The program was rolled out at schools across the SCDSB during the 2023-24 school year. [Take a look as students from Orillia SS participated in this experience!](#)



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Learning about Black history and how to create change with Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard

In February 2023, the SCDSB was honoured to host The Honourable Wanda Thomas Bernard, Senator for Nova Scotia, for a day full of learning and discussion about Canadian Black history and how to create change. The day began with professional development for school leaders, followed by an interactive, board-wide live streamed session for Grade 10 civics and history students focused on Canadian Black history and understanding the role of the Canadian Senate.

Members of the SCDSB's school communities were invited to join the learning at Equity and inclusion: our collective impact, an evening with Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard.

[Watch some highlights from this special day of learning.](#)

Recognizing Asian Heritage Month with members of the Canadian Senate

In May 2023, the SCDSB partnered with SENgage to host a virtual learning opportunity for approximately 700 Grade 10 to 12 students from across the SCDSB. The live-streamed session included a panel discussion with five senators of Asian descent, moderated by SCDSB Student Trustee Rosa Yu. Students heard about the background and lived experiences of each of the senators, followed by a question-and-answer period. Questions were developed by students from the participating classes and posed by Student Trustee Yu.

Truth and Reconciliation Heart Garden unveiled at Nottawasaga Pines SS

In partnership with the Essa Public Library, staff and students at Nottawasaga Pines SS and the SCDSB's Indigenous Education department created a Truth and Reconciliation Heart Garden at the school. Planning and development of the garden was a year-long project which culminated in the unveiling on Sept. 29, 2022. Attendees were encouraged to wear orange shirts in honour of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The project included the installation of two eight-foot stainless steel feathers on the outside walls of the school and planting of 'hearts' in the community garden. The hearts display was created by Nottawasaga Pines SS students and local community members in recognition of residential school survivors and victims.

[Learn more by watching this video, which also highlights the unveiling of a mural at Innisdale SS.](#)



Leadership and learning opportunities offered for students with diverse identities throughout 2022-23

During the 2022-23 school year, the SCDSB facilitated a variety of leadership and learning opportunities for students with diverse identities. Key events included the INSPIRE Young Women's Conference, All Gender Sexuality Alliance (AGSA) Conference, and Conference for Black Secondary School Students.

Held on International Women's Day, the INSPIRE Young Women's Conference was a celebration of the strength and resilience of young women, focused on fostering self-advocacy, self-care, and self-confidence. Eighty secondary school students attended the event, which included traditional Indigenous smudging, presentations from three engaging speakers, and interactive workshops including small-group activities. [Take a look at this 'inspiring' day of learning.](#)

Members of AGSAs from SCDSB secondary schools participated in the AGSA Conference: Stonewall – Celebrating Our History in April 2023. This event was a celebration of the 2SLGBTQI+ student community and marked the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, a pivotal event in the formation of LGBTQ rights in Canada. More than 130 attendees engaged in interactive workshops which provided take away ideas that they could implement in their schools and within their families and personal lives. The day also featured a keynote from Martin Boyce, a Stonewall Riot activist who shared the story of this historic event.

In May 2023, the SCDSB held Community Builds Inspiration: A Conference for Black Secondary School Students at Georgian College. This conference was an opportunity to pay tribute to, celebrate, and bring awareness to Black culture and local Black artisans and entrepreneurs, while providing students opportunities to network with local community partners and their peers from across Simcoe County. Approximately 200 SCDSB secondary school students attended the event which included a keynote from Cherilyn Scobie-Edwards and a variety of workshops from presenters including Harmony Movement, Shak's World and Tru Stuart.



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