

Director's Annual Report 2012



Vision:

**Preparing Our
Students Today
for the World of
Tomorrow**



Mission:

**We are a learning
organization committed
to providing a quality
educational experience
for every student in a
safe and caring
environment.**



Bluewater Sailing into the Future

Bluewater District School Board's Strategic Plan is a culmination of the hard work of numerous stakeholder group representatives, trustees and staff from planning sessions held in 2011. The vision, mission and priorities are the cornerstones that guide all board decisions and from which we demonstrate our commitment to student achievement and well-being.



VISION

Preparing Our Students Today for the World of Tomorrow

MISSION

We are a learning organization committed to providing a quality educational experience for every student in a safe and caring environment.

PRIORITIES

1. Ensure the well-being of students and staff in a safe supportive environment for teaching, learning and working
2. Provide quality instruction and learning experiences in an equitable and inclusive environment
3. Encourage parent engagement

The implementation strategies developed from the above three priority areas are highlighted in this report and set the course for our Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

Student Trustees' Message



As this year's student trustees, we are very excited to be representing the student voice within our board. With our peers in the Student Senate, we will once again be focusing on student mental health in our board. We all agreed that this very important issue is extremely relevant to students and that it needs to be further explored so that our students can have the best chance of succeeding in Bluewater District School Board.

To further explore and develop this goal, we have decided as a senate to organize another Support our Students conference in the spring, and we hope it will be as well-attended and as beneficial as last year's proved to be. This year's theme will be "Rumour Has It", which will be focusing on eliminating misjudgments, stigmas and stereotypes, to have a positive impact on student confidence and well-being. We would like to thank the trustees for all of their support and we look forward to making this year a great one!

Director's Message



It is with great pleasure that I bring you my annual report for 2012. You may notice some differences this year in comparison to previous editions. While we continue to utilize our various means of communication to highlight the many ongoing accomplishments happening throughout Bluewater, we are now integrating the Multi-Year Strategic Plan in this communication.

Our vision, mission and priorities are a significant achievement of the past year that have important implications for the future direction of our board, and for the benefit of student achievement and well-being. Thanks to the invaluable input of students, staff, trustees and stakeholders in carving out a roadmap in meeting our strategic goals and objectives. This report provides insight into our Multi-Year Strategic Plan that supports our vision of “Preparing Our Students Today for the World of Tomorrow”.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of our students and thank our partners, trustees and staff. We continue to exemplify Bluewater’s vision, mission and priorities through exemplary efforts of staff who focus on student achievement and well-being. The work of our school councils and the many parent and community volunteers within our Bluewater District School Board provide an enriched learning environment for our students. Our volunteers do make a difference and their countless hours of help are greatly appreciated.

Under the guidance of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan, I look forward to the work that lies ahead with all of our education partners to uphold our shared commitment of providing a quality educational experience for every student in a safe and caring environment.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Bryant".

John Bryant, *Director of Education*

Chair's Message



Serving as board chair over the past year has been an honour, which I have found to be deeply gratifying on both a professional and personal level. The opportunity to work more closely with stakeholders, fellow trustees, our director of education, student trustees/senators, senior administration, staff and their union representatives, has further enhanced my appreciation for the many perspectives in regard to the best interest of our students.

Despite its share of challenges, the past year has been a rewarding one. It was exciting to be part of our strategic planning sessions, which resulted in the vision, mission and priorities that are key to the decisions we make as the Board of Trustees. I welcome our collective venture into the future and thank our dedicated trustees, director, staff, students and stakeholders for all they do in preparing our students today for the world of tomorrow.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan Johnstone".

Jan Johnstone, *Board Chair*

Bluewater Quick Facts

Coverage Area: 8,673 square kilometres within Bruce and Grey Counties

Schools: 41 elementary
11 secondary

Students: 16,510 full time equivalent

Staff: 3,000 permanent and casual (approximate)

Full-Day Kindergarten: 22 schools

French Immersion: 14 schools

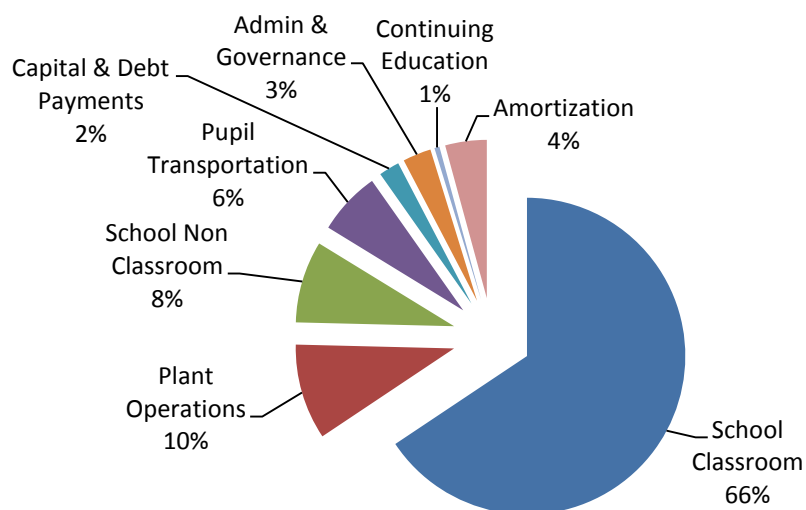
First Nation, Métis and Inuit: 22 Native Studies courses were offered in Bluewater schools in 2011-2012

1.7% of the 2012-2013 student enrolment self-identify as FNMI

Graduation Rate: 2011-2012 graduation rate was 81.1%, an increase of 2.1% over previous year

74.3% of students aged 16 had earned 16 or more credits in 2011-2012, an increase of 3.3% from the previous year

2011-2012 Budget:



Multi-Year Strategic Plan

In an effort to develop specific goals and SMART targets (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-sensitive), three Strategic Plan committees were established with a priority area assigned to each. Stakeholder representatives, trustees and staff comprised the make-up of the committees and developed the following goals:



1. Ensure the well-being of students and staff in a safe supportive environment for teaching, learning and working

- provide a safe and supportive work environment that values and recognizes the personal strengths, professional contributions, and personal well-being of staff
- create conditions where students, staff, and parents/caregivers are comfortable and confident in seeking help and responding to student mental health and emotional well-being issues

2. Provide quality instruction and learning experiences in an equitable and inclusive environment

- create a learning environment that promotes high expectations for all students
- provide authentic and relevant experiences that enable all students to connect their learning to the real world

3. Encourage parent engagement

- in conjunction with the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), the Parent Engagement Committee will collect information to assist Bluewater District School Board in developing strategies to further engage parents





Strategic Priority: Ensure the well-being of students and staff in a safe supportive environment for teaching, learning and working

Staff and student wellness was identified as a priority through the strategic planning process. From this priority, the following SMART targets have been developed:



- 1. Create conditions where students, staff and parents/caregivers are comfortable and confident in seeking help and responding to student mental health and emotional well-being issues**

To support this target, a number of projects have been undertaken:

- [The Jack Project](#) is a suicide awareness program that has been piloted in five Bluewater secondary schools this past year.
- The first ever "[S.O.S. \(Support our Students\) - Voices + Choices](#)" student conference on mental health was held on May 31, 2012, sponsored by the Student Senate and Canadian Mental Health Association.
- The Student Support Leadership Initiative supports current partnerships in Bruce and Grey counties, and establishes new ones, in the area of mental health and community resources for children and youth.
- Over 100 school and system based staff have been trained on Mental Health First Aid.



Bluewater students deliver an S.O.S.

- 2. Provide a safe and supportive work environment that values and recognizes the personal strengths, professional contributions, and personal well-being of staff**

Bluewater's Organizational Health and Wellness Committee has been looking at best practice recognition strategies to support meaningful value and recognition of all employees. The committee is currently working with the book, "12: The Elements of Great Managing", which identifies the work of Gallup through ten million workplace interviews. While the book discusses employee engagement, it is the value and recognition of staff that results in the dedication and commitment of staff. An engaged staff is a well staff.



Bluewater District School Board Education Centre

To further support employee wellness, all Bluewater administrators, supervisors and managers were trained in Connective Intelligence on August 20 and 21, 2012. This training “increases (leaders’) understanding of the cognitive and emotional skills that can lead to improving their performance as leaders” (OPC Connective Intelligence Brochure). Improved cognitive and emotional skills can enhance the interpersonal relationships within Bluewater schools and worksites.

Next Steps: Strategies/Initiatives for 2012-2013

The Student and Staff Well-Being Priority Committee met on Wednesday, October 24, 2012 to review the 2012 goals and strategies for this strategic priority and to determine the next steps and targets for 2013. It was decided that the strategic goals would continue for 2013.

The strategies for student well-being will continue to be focused on mental health and wellness and be expanded to include bullying prevention and intervention, particularly cyber-bullying. The goal will be to increase the involvement of students in the development of strategies and initiatives. The Student Senate will play an integral and lead role in this regard.

The specific strategies and initiatives for staff well-being will continue to be focused on staff recognition and expanded to include work balance. For example, attention should be paid to changing roles and responsibilities in a time of decreased resources. The specific strategies and initiatives will be coordinated through the Organizational Health and Wellness Committee.

Students Supporting Students

Bluewater students continue to play a proactive role in raising awareness of the mental health issues affecting their peers. On April 13, 2012 at Chesley District High School, the first ever student organized ["Disable the Label Assembly and Workshop Event"](#) featured approximately 70 local mental health professionals hosting workshops and presentations. Local media along with a few famous Canadian television celebrities took a keen interest in the event, which aimed to help combat the stigma associated with mental illness. The initiative was a partnership with Keystone Child, Youth & Family Services and proved to be a tremendous success.



Chesley District High School receives some acknowledgement from CBC's Rick Mercer for the student organized "Disable the Label Assembly and Workshop Event".



Strategic Priority: Provide quality instruction and learning experiences in an equitable and inclusive environment

Bluewater EQAO and OSSLT Assessments

With a focus on whole school improvement, Bluewater will implement research-based instructional strategies and intervention methods for struggling learners to ensure success is maintained and increased in the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments of reading, writing and mathematics, and Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). Detailed EQAO results can be found at www.eqao.com.



Peninsula Shores District School was one of 27 elementary and secondary schools in the province to be presented with the 2012 Dr. Bette M. Stephenson Recognition of Achievement by



Peninsula Shores District School

EQAO. Recipients are celebrated for their demonstrated leadership and proactive efforts in making effective use of EQAO data to improve student outcomes. A school profile was featured on the EQAO website.

To address the priority of quality instruction identified during the strategic planning process, the following SMART targets have been developed:

1. Create a learning environment that promotes high expectations for all students

Progress made in the first year of implementing the Strategic Plan:

- Secondary students '16 by 16' goal – 74.3% of grade 10 students had achieved 16 credits by the end of the 2011-2012 school year, an increase of 3.3%
- Grade 12 graduation rate was 81.1%, an increase of 2.1% from previous year
- In grade 3 EQAO, a slight decrease was seen in reading and mathematics while students maintained the same rate in writing
- In grade 6 EQAO, reading and writing scores saw an increase while students maintained a level result in mathematics
- Grade 9 mathematics at the academic level saw a decrease while the applied level saw an increase of 2.0%

Next Steps – This year, the goals have been revised to reflect the next steps in achieving success for our students:

- Secondary students ‘16 by 16’ goal – continue to maintain or increase successful credit accumulation
- Graduation rate to increase to the Ministry of Education goal of 85%
- EQAO – continue with goals to increase the percentage of grades 3 and 6 students achieving at or above provincial standard on 2012-2013 EQAO testing

Continued efforts to promote student achievement:

- Maintain a focus on demonstrated student learning in literacy and mathematics
- Continue to focus on instruction, utilizing effective, research-based instructional strategies
- Develop school improvement plans that utilize EQAO, school and system data
- Maintain a focus on K-12 literacy and mathematics
- Disaggregate the EQAO data more deeply on a student by student basis and implement intervention strategies for struggling learners
- Continue to use instructional strategies in the provincial report to help teachers address the gender gap
- Use a school based professional learning model
- Monitor student progress
- Continue to focus on whole school improvement

2. Provide authentic and relevant experiences that enable all students to connect their learning to the real world

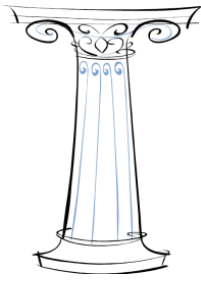
- Students have access to and use technologies to support and document their learning
- Authentic real world experiences are built into all subject areas and programs to provide meaningful connections for students
- Strive to increase access and use for special education students in their daily use of computers

Celebrating 40 Years at the Bluewater Outdoor Education Centre

An important milestone in 2012-2013 is the 40th anniversary of the Bluewater Outdoor Education Centre near Wiarton. On October 19, 2012, the Bluewater Education Foundation organized a special [40th anniversary kick-off celebration](#), which included a visit by the Honourable Laurel Broten, Minister of Education. The first minister of education ever to visit the facility, Minister Broten spoke about the importance of sustaining outdoor education and met with foundation and board officials to discuss the benefits of learning in the outdoor environment. The ongoing partnership of Bluewater District School Board and the Bluewater Education Foundation and all of its contributors continues to support unique outdoor learning experiences for local students at the Bluewater Outdoor Education Centre.



Bluewater Outdoor Education Centre



Strategic Priority: Encourage parent engagement

The priority of parent engagement, which was identified through the strategic planning process, has resulted in the development of the following SMART target:



In conjunction with the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), the Parent Engagement Committee will collect information to assist Bluewater District School Board in developing strategies to further engage parents

Bluewater District School Board has always had an active Parent Involvement Committee as mandated by provincial legislation. School councils operate in each school and there is a strong presence of Home and School Associations in certain communities.

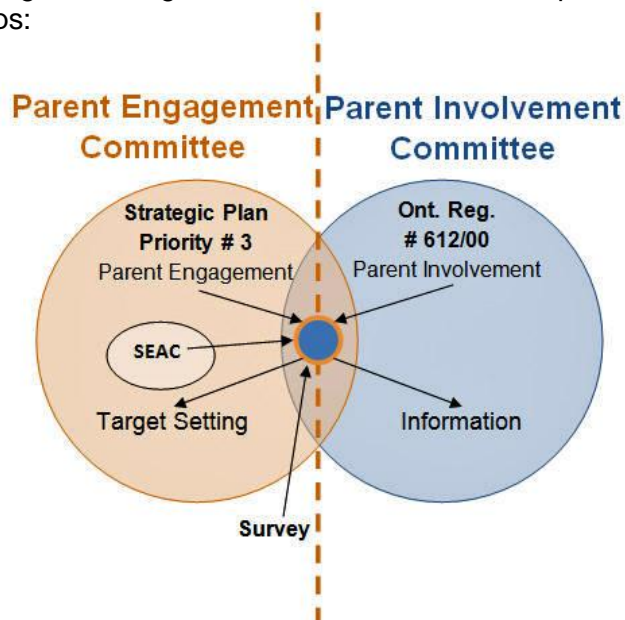
A newly recognized group, the Parent Engagement Committee was created to inform the Strategic Plan. This group felt strongly that they should work in conjunction with the Parent Involvement Committee.

Strategic goal:

- The Parent Engagement Committee will engage in an information collection process to identify parent engagement practices.
- Survey results will be shared with the Parent Involvement Committee and Board of Trustees in an effort to make schools more welcoming, and to support the goals of increased student achievement and well-being.

Progress made in the first year of implementation:

Some parents are members of both the Parent Involvement Committee and Parent Engagement Committee. The following Venn diagram illustrates that relationship and how the survey will be accessed by both groups:



The Parent Engagement Committee met three times between January and June 2012. The most recent meeting in early November 2012 reviewed the goals and strategies for this priority. A sample survey was presented.

The survey is currently being finalized to target sub categories of School Climate, Eliminating Barriers, Supporting Parents, Special Education and EQAO. Having a member of the Special Education Advisory Committee on the Parent Engagement Committee will ensure that consideration has been given to the special education lens.

The Parent Engagement Committee also wanted to ensure that all schools were using the self-assessment tool in the provincial School Effectiveness Framework, targeted specifically on the Home, School and Community Partnerships indicators.

Next Steps: Strategies/Initiatives for 2012-2013

Members are investigating the use of SurveyMonkey online resources for survey completion during the month of January 2013. Details regarding access will be advertised on the board and individual school websites and newsletters. Paper copies of the survey will be available in all schools.

Survey results will be shared as they become available, and revised parent engagement goals will be established as needed.

As part of Bluewater's re-designed School Improvement planning process, each school is required to target parent engagement goals with specific strategies. These school goals are currently being tabulated and will inform the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement.

Three public forums will be held in the new year in each of the school areas. The topic for discussion will be parent engagement. The director, area superintendent and representatives of the Parent Engagement Committee and Parent Involvement Committee will be invited to participate in the forums.

Parent Involvement Committee Raises Awareness

Bluewater's Parent Involvement Committee began the 2012–2013 academic year with an awareness campaign aimed at parents and guardians of Bluewater students. The committee, which is mainly comprised of parents with some community and board representatives, released its first awareness tool in the form of a postcard to households throughout the district. The purpose was to promote the work of the committee to build on opportunities for parent involvement in order to improve student achievement and well-being. It was also an opportunity to encourage responses from those seeking to learn more about getting involved with the committee.

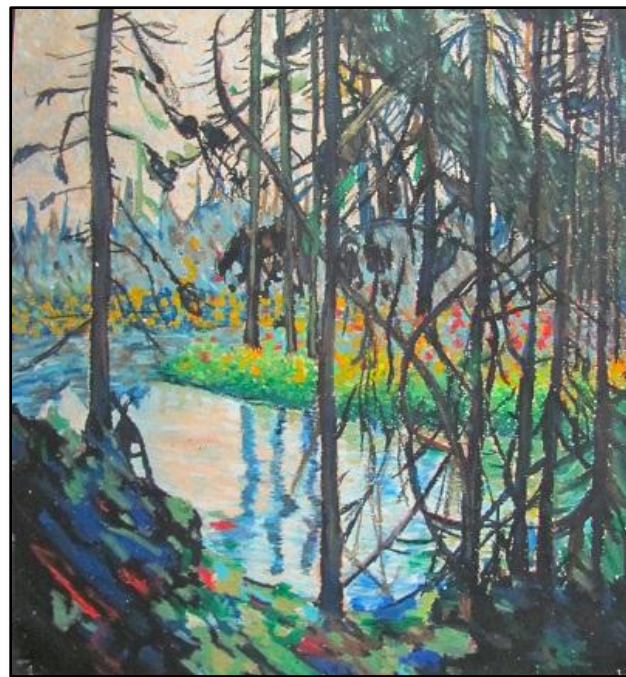


Parent Involvement Committee postcard

The Parent Involvement Committee continues to work in conjunction with those at the board level, school councils and the parent community to support and encourage parent engagement. Some exciting initiatives are planned over the next several months to support this priority.

Board Choice Art Award

The [Bluewater Student Art Exhibition](#) held from May 31 to June 2, 2012 showcased student talent from seven secondary visual arts programs throughout Bluewater District School Board. “Pastel Group of Seven” by Kincardine District Secondary School student Valeria Contartese was selected as winner of the Board Choice Art Award.



Board Choice Art Award winner,
“Pastel Group of Seven”

Student Senate 2012–2013



L to R: Student Trustee Bronwynne Harvey, Emma-Cole McCubbin, Student Trustee Morgan Harmsen, Meghan Huehn, Marissa Hartley, Thomas Humble, Mitchell Kingsley, Student Trustee Ian Beitz
Absent: Bryanna Bell, Christina Tennyson, Kyle Kahgee, Ian Hyland

Board of Trustees



L to R: John Chapman, Chair Jan Johnstone, Vice-Chair Jim Dawson, Marg Gaviller, Terry Bell, Marilyn McComb, Fran Morgan, Theresa Root, Tony Pedoniquotte, Dan Wong, Kevin Larson

Administrative Council



L to R: Superintendent of Education Jean Stephenson, Director of Education John Bryant, Superintendent of Education Lori Wilder, Executive Officer of Human Resources Services Cynthia Lemon, Superintendent of Education Alana Murray, Superintendent of Business & Treasurer Brenda Booth