

Director's Annual Report 2013



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's Vision, Mission and Priorities

Bluewater District School Board's 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 progress achieved over the past 12 months in the implementation of strategies developed from the above three priority areas forms the basis of this report.

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 be focusing on youth leadership in our board. We all agreed that this important issue is extremely relevant to students, and that it needs to be further explored so that our students can experience all Bluewater District School Board has to offer to be successful in school and beyond.

To further explore and develop this goal, we have decided as a senate to organize another Support our Students (S.O.S.) opportunity in the spring. For this third annual senate-driven conference on student mental health, we hope to connect with Bluewater students about a variety of issues. Some of these include youth leadership, student well-being and school engagement. There will be much more about this exciting opportunity as the year unfolds.

We would like to thank the trustees, staff and students for all of their support, and we look forward to making this year an awesome one!

Director's Message



As I settle into my new role at Bluewater, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge former Director of Education John Bryant. The solid foundation that John established through guiding the formulation of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan sets a clear path forward that I look forward to maintaining and cultivating for continued growth within our board. This report is as much his as it is mine.

Building on the successful implementation of our Multi-Year Strategic Plan is the basis for this year's Director's Annual Report. I invite you to review the snapshot we have provided of some of this past year's achievements, as well as our look ahead to the next steps for each of the three strategic priority areas.

When I began my position as director this past September, I welcomed the opportunity to work with our trustees, staff, students, parents and broader communities to ensure that the success of each one of our students would remain our first priority. Inevitably, committing to such a priority does not come without its share of challenges and hard decisions along the way. It is our obligation to continue to tackle the difficult issues and explore all options if we are to truly determine what is best for all students throughout Bluewater.

I look forward to the work that lies ahead and the chance to engage with all of those who continue to demonstrate their dedication to the best interests of our students.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Blake".

Steve Blake, *Director of Education*

Chair's Message



I am very pleased to welcome our new Director Steve Blake, and at the same time, extend thanks to John Bryant for his previous leadership and expertise. As you will learn in the pages of this document, it is through their efforts and those of all our dedicated staff, trustees, union partners, parents, students and stakeholders that we remain firmly on course with our Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

From labour negotiations to student accommodation reviews, the past year saw some challenges for our board. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Board of Trustees to commend all of those passionate individuals who tirelessly committed their time and effort with unwavering resilience in working through these often difficult issues.

While certain pressures will continue to face our board, I am excited and optimistic about the opportunities that lie ahead to fulfill our strategic goals for the betterment of all our students.

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: 16,850 (approximate)

Staff: 1,900 permanent (approximate)

Full-Day Kindergarten: 28 schools

French Immersion: 14 schools

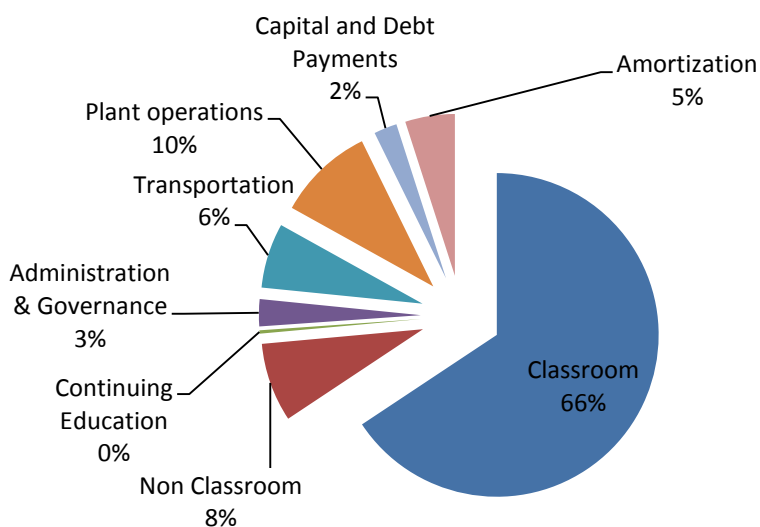
First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI): 248 secondary students took advantage of 19 Native Studies courses offered throughout the district in 2012-2013

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

Graduation Rate: 2012-2013 graduation rate was 85.3%, an increase of 4.2% over the previous year

73.4% of grade 11 students had earned 23 or more credits in 2012-2013, an increase of 3.1% from the previous year

2012-2013 Budget:



Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Bluewater's three Strategic Plan committees continue to meet to develop strategies/initiatives for the following identified priority areas and their associated goals. Each committee, which includes stakeholder, trustee and staff representation, is assigned to a specific priority area.



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

Through the strategic planning process, student and staff wellness was identified as a priority for Bluewater.

In order to support this priority, work has continued at both the school and system levels, and with community and provincial partners. The addition of the Mental Health and Addiction Nurses has been a positive and proactive support for students.



Students Supporting Students



Student-designed "Rumour Has It" logo

Bluewater's Student Senate continues to lead in the area of student wellness. The senate hosted the 2nd annual "[S.O.S. \(Support our Students\)](#)" mental health conference on May 30, 2013. The theme was "Rumour Has It", with a focus once again on eliminating the stigmas surrounding mental health. Students listened to a dynamic keynote speaker and participated in a number of topical sessions, ranging from cyber bullying and youth suicide to body image and sexuality.

The Bluewater student voice continues to be heard at the provincial level. In 2013, Student Trustee Morgan Harmsen of Chesley District High School was named to the Minister's Student Advisory Council. Only 60 students across Ontario are selected for the council, which meets with the Minister of Education twice throughout the year to discuss educational issues from a student perspective. Student Trustee Bronwynne Harvey of Kincardine District Secondary School was elected as Public Board Council President of the Ontario Student Trustees' Association-l'Association des élèves conseillers et conseillères de l'Ontario (OSTA-AECO).

Supporting Teachers and Support Staff

Elementary and secondary teachers, professional student services staff, and office professionals and technicians attended the "[Out of the Shadows](#)" professional activity day on April 26, 2013 that focused on mental health related issues.

Bluewater's Organizational Health and Wellness Committee is currently looking at the recently released CSA Psychological Health and Wellness document. The committee will consider ways to work collaboratively with union and employee groups to identify and embed best practices from a health and wellness procedural perspective to support staff wellness.



"Out of the Shadows" professional activity day on April 26, 2013

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

On September 16, 2013, schools came together with members of their Safe Schools teams to review the data from their School Climate Surveys and create Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans. Safe Schools teams included a variety of representatives from staff, parents, students and the community.

Next Steps: Strategies/Initiatives for 2013 – 2014

- The Strategic Planning Subcommittee continues to meet and has determined that the Strategic Plan wellness goals continue to be relevant and require the ongoing support of the board, staff and students:



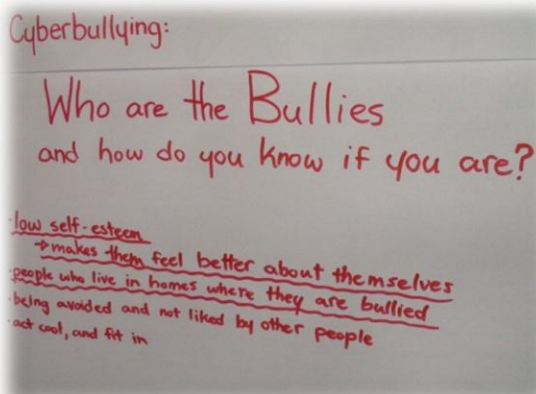
- To provide a safe and supportive work environment that values and recognizes the personal strengths, professional contributions and personal well-being of staff; and
- Create conditions where students, staff and parents/caregivers are comfortable and confident in seeking help and responding to student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

Strategic Goal: *Implement recognition strategies based on best practices*

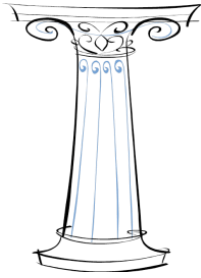
- Develop and sustain a psychological health and safety management system using the Bluewater District School Board Organizational Health and Wellness Committee with the expertise and support of our Health and Safety Officer and Mental Health Lead

Strategic Goal: *Students, staff, parents/caregivers will learn how to respond to mental/emotional health needs of students*

- Develop and implement a Bluewater District School Board Mental Health Strategic Plan
- Continue implementation of Mental Health and Addiction Nurses
- Student forum sponsored by Bluewater District School Board Student Senate – S.O.S. mental health conference for students
- Continue training school based staff on Mental Health First Aid – Canadian Mental Health Association program
- Implement board and school-based bullying prevention and intervention plans



Students brainstorm about mental health issues at a workshop on cyber bullying



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

In 2012 – 2013, a number of strategies/initiatives were developed to address the priority of quality instruction.

- All system initiated projects focus on:
 - The effective use and implementation of learning goals, success criteria and descriptive feedback
 - Creating opportunities for students to deepen their understanding through dialogue, problem solving and student inquiry projects
 - Student tasks that are relevant and challenging, allowing for multiple entry points that reflect the diverse interests found in the classroom
 - Recognizing the importance of hearing the student voice to inform instruction and planning
 - Using computer technology in a pedagogically sound manner and as a mechanism to strengthen the student voice

- Examples of system level supports include:
 - Early Primary Collaborative Project (EPCI)
 - Collaborative Inquiry for Learning Math (CILM)
 - French as a Second Language (FSL)
 - Early Learning professional development
 - Inquiry Learning Projects
 - EQAO workshops
 - iPad projects
 - Intermediate literacy and numeracy coaching
 - Early Learning initiatives (Full Day Kindergarten)
 - Learning Rounds
 - Leadership workshops and mentoring programs



Next Steps: Strategies/Initiatives for 2013 – 2014

Strategic Goal: *Create a learning environment that promotes high expectations for all students*

Secondary Students:

- '16 x 16' – 76% of all grade 10 students will have earned 16 credits by year end, and will continue to maintain or increase successful credit accumulation
- Continue to increase the graduation rate board-wide

Elementary Students:

- Increase the percentage of grades 3 and 6 students achieving at or above the provincial standard on the 2012-2013 EQAO

Strategic Goal: *Provide authentic and relevant experiences that enable all students to connect their learning to the real world*

- Students will 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
- Students accessing 'Specialized Equipment Amount Per Pupil' funded computers will increase their use

Full Day Kindergarten Roll Out Continues

In Bluewater, 2013 was the fourth year of implementation of the Full Day Kindergarten program. There are now 28 of the 39 schools which have kindergarten aged students offering the full day program. The remaining sites will add the program in the fall of 2014. A recent report published by the [Ministry of Education](#) demonstrates that students who attend full day junior and senior kindergarten are better prepared to enter grade 1 and be successful in school. Testing shows that students who attended two years of Full Day Kindergarten demonstrate a significantly reduced risk of delays in language and cognitive development, social competence, communications and general knowledge.

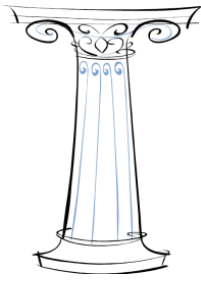


Students Utilize Technology to Learn About the Environment



Students and staff hold paper leaves and form the shape of a tree at Saugeen District Secondary School on October 22, 2013

Bluewater students achieved the feat of Canada's largest 'viewing event' for the global conversation on carbon pollution, ["24 Hours of Reality: The Cost of Carbon"](#), hosted by Saugeen District Secondary School on October 22, 2013. In addition to providing students with a truly unique educational experience on the cost of carbon pollution and climate change, the event exemplified the amazing capabilities that now exist through technology to connect local students to like-minded young learners, experts and leaders around the world. One of the highlights of the day was a personalized video to the students from Rick Mercer of CBC fame.



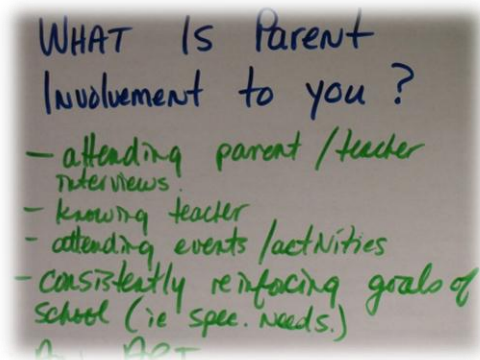
Strategic Priority: Encourage parent engagement

Following the identification of parent engagement as a Bluewater priority during the strategic planning process, the following strategies/initiatives were developed for the 2011 – 2012 school year:

- Develop an information collection process to identify parent engagement practices
- Design, implement and analyze an engagement survey for parents



Parent Engagement Survey and Community Forums



An exchange of ideas at one of Bluewater's community forums on parent engagement

In 2012 – 2013, the Parent Engagement Committee met four times between September and June. Much of the work centered on development and implementation of an online survey for parents to gauge the welcoming nature of Bluewater schools, the barriers to parent engagement and determine potential next steps. Additionally, the director in partnership with the co-chairs of the Parent Involvement Committee, hosted three community forums on parent engagement.

At a meeting held in May 2013 to review over 1,200 survey results and forum comments, it was determined that the strategic goals and strategies were met in 2012 – 2013.

This has been a year of consultation and data gathering. Analysis of all data available has resulted in new strategic goals and strategies for the 2013 – 2014 school year.



Next Steps: Strategies/Initiatives for 2013 – 2014

Strategic Goal: *Build and support home, school and community partnerships by sharing current information about student learning and achievement in an ongoing and transparent manner*

- Build on the results of the first Parent Engagement Survey to share best practices and examples of parent engagement strategies that improve student achievement
- Investigate the use of online tools, quarterly newsletters and social media, by January 2014, to allow parents the opportunity to connect with their child's school and learning

- Each school will identify a Parent Engagement strategic priority in their School Improvement Plan (SIP); SIP goals are monitored by superintendents on school visits
- The committee will be referred to as the Strategic Planning for Parent Engagement Committee (SPPEC)
- Continue to have up to two parent representatives from the Parent Involvement Committee, and seek new parent and employee group members from throughout the district
- A public report is being shared with the board in June 2014

Parent Involvement Committee Website Project and Logo

Through the Ministry of Education's Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant program, Bluewater's Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) applied for and received \$30,000 in funding for a website project. A new PIC website was developed to bolster the committee's online presence and help to encourage parent engagement. The project also extended to some aesthetic changes to the Bluewater website in an effort to improve navigation and ease of use for parents/guardians and members of the public.



A fresh online presence for the Parent Involvement Committee



Visit the new PIC website at <http://pic.bwdsb.on.ca>.

A new logo for the Parent Involvement Committee was also introduced during the 2012 – 2013 school year. The logo will be used as part of the committee's ongoing branding and marketing efforts.

From Great to Excellent: The Next Phase in Ontario's Education Strategy

Bluewater representatives, including the co-chair of the Parent Involvement Committee, were invited along with other education stakeholders to participate in a [regional consultation](#) conducted by Minister of Education Liz Sandals on October 18, 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to provide feedback on the seven questions developed by the Ministry of Education to help build the next phase in Ontario's education strategy.

Members of the public also had an opportunity during the fall to submit feedback on the seven questions through the Ministry of Education's website.



L to R: Student Trustee Bronwynne Harvey, Minister of Education Liz Sandals, Director of Education Steve Blake

2013 Awards of Excellence

At the June 18, 2013 Regular Meeting of the Board, trustees presented the [2013 Awards of Excellence](#) to members of the community from each of the family of schools throughout Bluewater who have made outstanding contributions to our education system. The recipients are determined through nominations submitted by teachers, administrators, parents and guardians, students, support staff and community members. Congratulations to the 2013 recipients and thanks to all of the dedicated individuals in school communities who go above and beyond for students.



2013 Awards of Excellence recipients

Bluewater's Board of Trustees consists of nine elected and two appointed trustees who represent all municipalities, townships and First Nations throughout the district.

The Student Senate brings a student perspective to the board. Members are elected annually at each Bluewater secondary school with three chosen by their fellow senators to serve as student trustees at the board table.

The Administrative Council provides senior staff expertise to assist and inform the board in its decision making in accordance with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

Student Senate 2013–2014



Front L to R: Christine Halliday, Nick Mountain, Madeline Taylor, Student Trustee Emiko Hunt, Student Trustee Reed Bell, Sarah Wildeman, Student Trustee Bronwynne Harvey

Back L to R: Tara Ritchie, Arleigh Kochany, Tianna Wong, Ali Gladwell

Absent: Reed Rogers

Board of Trustees



L to R: Director of Education Steve Blake joins Trustees Marg Gaviller, Marilyn McComb, Theresa Root, Fran Morgan, Chair Jan Johnstone, Vice-Chair Jim Dawson, Terry Bell, Dan Wong, John Chapman
Absent: Kevin Larson, Tony Pedoniquotte

Administrative Council



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

Bluewater Enhancing its Online Presence



As part of the Bluewater Parent Involvement Committee website project funded through the Ministry of Education's Parents Reaching Out Grant, a new look and feel to the Bluewater District School Board website was unveiled in December 2013.

Please visit: www.bwdsb.on.ca

A new Bluewater District School Board Twitter feed was launched in November 2013 to enhance communications with parents/guardians and stakeholders by sharing 'good news' that celebrates student success throughout the district, important advisories, board media releases, public meeting and event notifications and more.



Follow us on Twitter: [@BluewaterDSB](https://twitter.com/BluewaterDSB)



**P.O. Box 190, 351 1st Avenue North
Chesley, Ontario N0G 1L0
Telephone: (519) 363-2014 Fax: (519) 370-2909
www.bwdsb.on.ca**