



Director's Annual Report



2021



Our Vision: Learning Today,
Leading Tomorrow

Our Mission: To provide a quality education
for every student in a safe, accepting, and caring
environment.



Follow us on social media: Facebook,
Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

Download our FREE mobile app from the App
Store or Google Play by scanning our QR code!



Director's Message

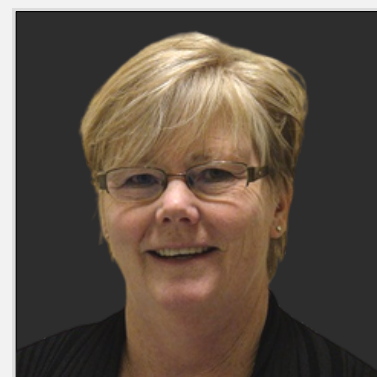


Lori Wilder, Director of Education

I am pleased to share the 2021 Director's Annual Report, which highlights the important work and progress achieved this past year in each priority area of our [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#). Our progress can be attributed to a significant amount of hard work, determination, collaboration, and resilience from everyone involved. I am thankful to all our students, staff, trustees, families, and partners, who have continued to support a positive learning and working experience in our board. The creativity, passion, and expertise exemplified in our school communities have given us much to celebrate and look forward to as we plan for the year ahead. When I reflect on where we were a year ago, I feel a sense of gratitude and renewed optimism. It is my hope that this overview will demonstrate our ongoing efforts in actualizing our mission, "To provide a quality education for every student in a safe, accepting, and caring environment."

Chair's Message

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, it is a pleasure to share in the recognition of our collective successes over the course of 2021. Our students, staff, parents/guardians, and countless others have shown a tremendous level of dedication and sacrifice in their efforts to protect and support the health, safety, and well-being of those in our schools and communities. I am impressed by the care and thought that have gone into our programming, and innovative ways in which we have leveraged and adapted to the use of virtual platforms, outdoor spaces, and other methods imposed by the pandemic. Since the physical return to school in September, after a period of remote learning in the spring, we have begun to see a gradual shift to a more normal school experience. I remain optimistic and encouraged by our path forward thanks to the excellent work reflected on these pages.



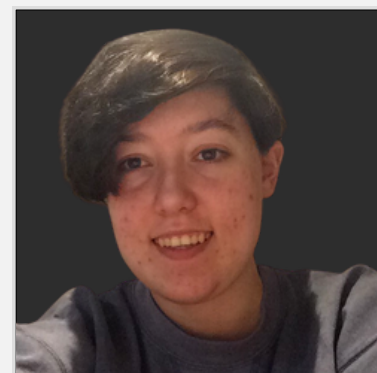
Jane Thomson, Chair

Student Trustees' Message



Gabriel Rossitter, Student Trustee

The priorities for the 2021-22 Student Senate are set for the year with several initiatives underway. Our efforts are focused on equity through racial and 2SLGBTQI+ awareness and education, supporting students in the areas of gender-based violence and healthy relationships, and ways in which we can promote mental health resources to students. Through social media, collaboration with board staff, special guests at our monthly meetings, and soliciting student feedback, we are well-positioned to continue serving and representing the best interests of the student voice in our board. Follow us on Instagram: [@bwdsbstudents](#)



Trinity Shaw, Student Trustee



QUICK FACTS:

Schools



40 elementary
9 secondary

Students



17,400 approximate
full time equivalent

Staff



3,000 approximate
permanent and casual



Coverage Area



8,673 square kilometres within
Bruce and Grey counties



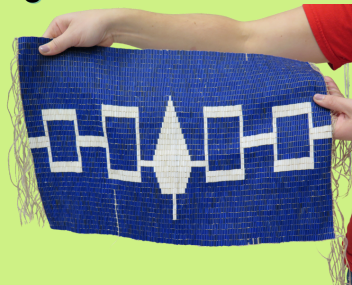
Bluewater District School Board is located on the traditional land of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, which is represented by the communities of Saugeen First Nation and Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation.

English Language Learners



880 students

Indigenous Education



822 students participated in and
completed 96 unique Indigenous
classroom and co-op courses

2 schools offered
Ojibway as a second language

French Immersion



10 elementary schools
(2 are French only)

6 secondary schools
with enhanced programming

PRIORITY 1:

Safe Supportive Learning Community



Strategic Goals:

- work together to support wellness
- foster the strengths, contributions, and overall health of students and staff

Student Well-Being

The following three-tiered, differentiated support model was utilized:

Tier 1 – Promotion and Prevention:

Promotes mentally healthy habits, social emotional learning, and partnerships with parents, students, and staff:

- partnership with Grey Bruce Public Health and the Grey Bruce COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force to implement initiatives, such as breakfast programs, asymptomatic testing, and vaccines
- training and support for school teams in Behaviour Management Systems, autism spectrum disorder, and Applied Behaviour Analysis
- promotion of School Mental Health Ontario and a wide-range of resources offered by community and other partners
- new 'Bluewater District School Board Guide to Mental Health Services'
- accessible resources through a dedicated [mental health and well-being](#) section on the board website
- [Bluewater Beacon newsletter](#) as a staff resource
- Classroom Champions program implemented in 10 schools



Tier 2 – Targeted Prevention:

Includes intervention services, such as structured counselling and targeted social-emotional skills training:

- school-based consultations with stakeholders and conferences to support youth and parents/guardians
- hiring of three mental health workers to close gap in service for Grade 7 and 8 students, and increase availability of therapeutic supports with a focus on earlier intervention in elementary
- anxiety-themed presentations, and discussions on COVID-19 related experiences of grief and loss
- the expansion of psychological services included consultation in the area of mental health for students from junior kindergarten to Grade 6
- creation of a [self-referral link](#) for students/families to access mental health support, which extended to the summer months
- creation of a mental health resource booklet for students, including a variety of resources on self-care, routines, and helpful links
- ongoing training for mental health workers on a range of topics (e.g., Brief Interventions for School Clinicians, Brief Digital Interventions, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Social Emotional Learning)
- mental health worker visits to Grade 7 and 8 classes

Tier 3 – Intensive Intervention and Assessment:

Supports students requiring more intensive assessment and intervention services:

- community partnerships (e.g., Keystone Child, Youth and Family Services, Mental Health and Addiction Nurses, CHOICES – Canadian Mental Health Association, Family Health Teams, Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre, Ontario Telehealth Network)

Staff Well-Being

Our Organizational Health and Wellness Committee supported staff well-being in several ways. In addition to actively promoting the Employee and Family Assistance Program, the committee spearheaded a video acknowledging staff, a two-part wellness presentation series, committee presentations on a range of topics (e.g., flourishing, managing anxiety and stress, workplace violence prevention), a partnership with Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe to provide wellness seminars to various employee groups, and the creation of new resources (e.g., mental health newsletter, 'A Guide to Mental Health Supports in Bluewater District School Board').



Click Here for Access to Our Mental Health Team

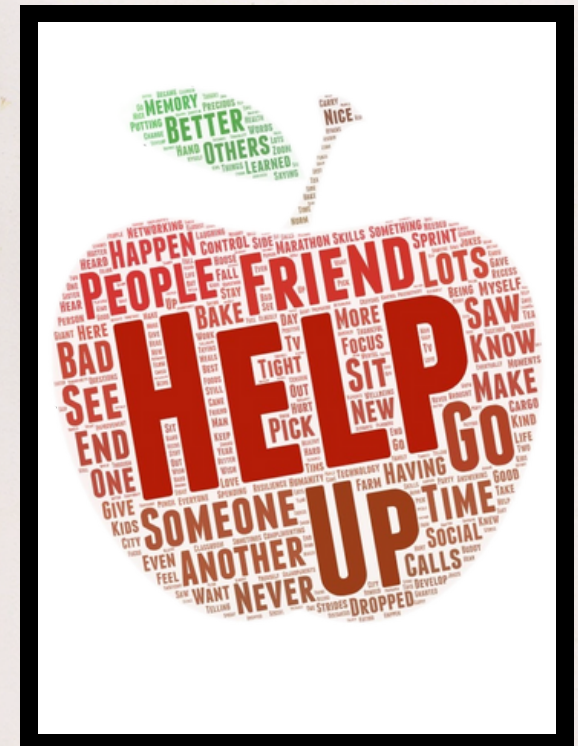


Mental Health Campaigns

In 2021, there was no shortage of board-wide and school-based mental health and wellness campaigns. To name just a few of the many examples, these included participation in School Mental Health Ontario's [Help Us #ShareTheGood](#) social media initiative, Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School's [Screen Free Friday Afternoon, Pink Shirt Day](#) on February 24, a [365-word graphic](#) by students/staff at Peninsula Shores District School to mark the first anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic, [Mental Health Week](#) in May, and [Pride Month](#) in June. Collaborative projects with local art galleries, such as '[Remnants of a Shifted World](#)' (Durham Art Gallery/Georgian Bay Community School) and the [#myessential art mural](#) (Tom Thomson Art Gallery/Owen Sound District Secondary School), enabled students to share their personal perspectives on the impact of the pandemic.

Accessible Personal Hygiene Products

As of September 2021, designated washrooms in our schools and facilities serving students in Grade 4 to 12 began offering free [accessible personal hygiene products](#). The installation of new product dispensers has supported student privacy and eliminated barriers to access.



365-word graphic by students/staff at Peninsula Shores District School

PRIORITY 2:

Quality Instruction



Strategic Goals:

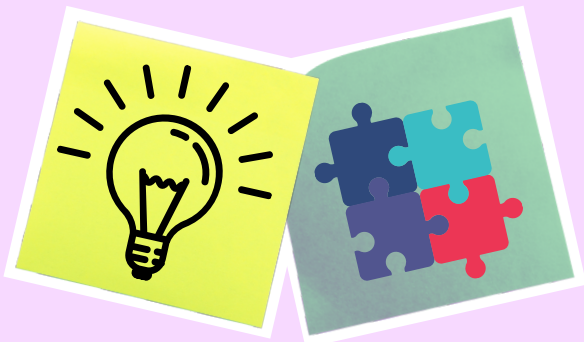
- provide relevant learning experiences that foster critical and forward thinking, innovation, creativity, and problem solving
- use evidence informed instructional methods to support competency in literacy and numeracy

Professional Development

A range of [professional development opportunities](#) were offered to staff to coincide with the return to in-person learning in September, including voluntary and after school sessions, which focused on topics such as mathematics and remote teaching.

Additional Qualification courses were offered through Ministry of Education subsidies in Mathematics, Indigenous Education, Special Education, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and French as a Second Language.

In literacy, the [Science of Reading Project](#) focused on evidence-based, effective whole class reading instruction in selected kindergarten and Grade 1 classes.



Summer School/Summer Learning

Virtual elementary and secondary [summer programs](#) focused on supporting student mental health and well-being. Grade 11 and 12 students facilitated a newly developed transition program, [Gearing up to Secondary](#), which enabled them to assume a leadership role in supporting incoming Grade 9 students, while securing a summer job and earning two co-operative education credits.



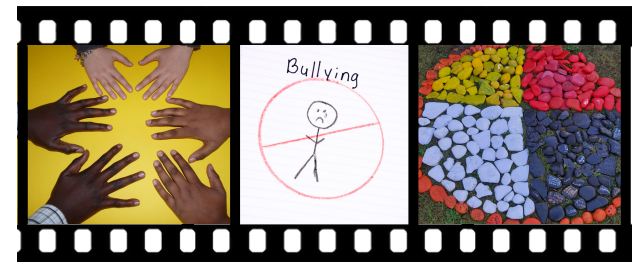
Outdoor Education

Despite the past year's pandemic restrictions, [Bluewater Outdoor Education Centre](#) staff were able to creatively adapt programming through school visits, virtual opportunities, and other innovative options to engage students in unique outdoor learning experiences. The return to in-person learning in September has allowed for the resumption of student visits to the centre.

Equity and Inclusion

Presentations to support the dismantling of systemic discrimination and inequities were provided to staff by our Indigenous Advisor, Canadian academic and writer Dr. Niigaan Sinclair, and educator George McAuley. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Education Committee was established to support the diverse needs of students across the system and enhance student success throughout the board.

During [Black History Month](#), Grade 7 students and staff explored the resource, "Trailblazers – The Black Pioneers who have shaped Canada", while Kincardine Pride sponsored Canadian award-winning community leader/speaker Saidat to present to students across the district on the power of inclusion and anti-bullying.



Indigenous Education

System staff continued to collaborate and partner with stakeholders through the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee. Schools increased their learning and commitment to reconciliation through recognition occasions, such as the [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#), [Indigenous History Month](#), and the unveiling of [Reconciliation Hall](#) at Saugeen District Senior School. In response to the discovery of an unmarked mass grave in British Columbia, Paisley Central School students engaged in a [letter writing campaign on residential schools](#) to their local MP.

Stephen Lewis Presents on the Power of Education

Grade 7 to 12 students and staff had the privilege of attending a [special virtual presentation](#) on Thursday, April 29 featuring Canadian diplomat and humanitarian Stephen Lewis. As a precursor to Education Week, it was an opportunity to learn about the power of education as an agent of change.



Promoting the Skilled Trades

It was another big year in the skilled trades. Through the [Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program \(OYAP\)](#), and a partnership involving Canadian Welding Bureau, Bruce Power, and United Association Local #527, schools received welding equipment upgrades and personal protective equipment. The partners will work to develop welding certification opportunities for students and teachers. During the summer, the first [High Level Welding Camp](#) was held in Bruce and Grey counties. John Diefenbaker Senior School purchased a new [Specialist High Skills Major \(SHSM\) trailer](#) to promote the school's five SHSM programs, and the opportunities that exist within the skilled trades. Two students contributed to the trailer's design.



PRIORITY 3:

Community Engagement

Strategic Goals:

- use effective communication skills (e.g., listening, speaking, observing, and empathizing) to engage families and community to support students and enhance learning
- actively seek input from students, staff, families, and community on matters of achievement and well-being

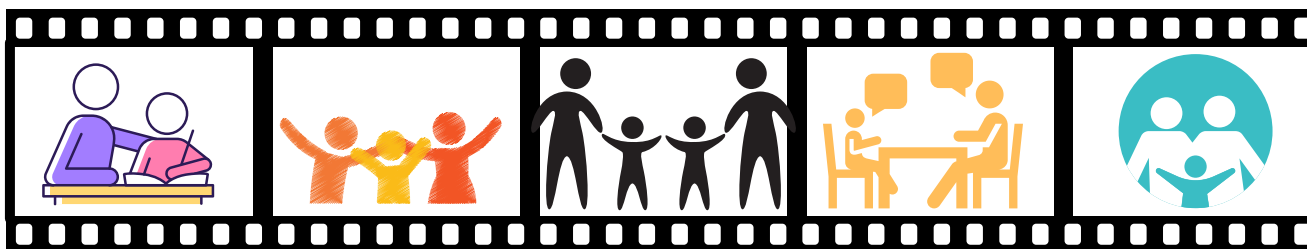


Parent Involvement Committee

Our Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) met throughout the year to honour its mandate of supporting, encouraging, and enhancing meaningful parent engagement to improve student achievement and well-being. Meetings were held virtually to accommodate participation during the pandemic, and to ensure accessibility to all parents interested in attending. The committee launched its first ever ThoughtExchange, which asked parents/guardians to share feedback on their greatest challenges and areas that they felt were working well during the remote learning period. The PIC has contributed to the cost of a ThoughtExchange license to assist the board with this form of interactive communication, which has further expanded our reach and capabilities for gathering public input.

Parent Portal

A parent portal is being investigated to determine ways to better meet the needs of parents/guardians in quickly and conveniently accessing information and communications. Current gaps to access and the information that is most important to families are being identified. Through a ThoughtExchange, input was gathered from parents/guardians, staff, and other stakeholders on priorities for a new 'parent portal', which could serve as a 'one stop shop' for accessing information and communications. Staff will continue to work with the feedback received to develop a solution.



Engaging Virtually

Despite pandemic restrictions, several opportunities were provided at the school and district levels to engage parents/guardians virtually in a variety of initiatives. Some of these included school council meetings, school assemblies, skilled trades events, family math nights, and the After School Applied Behaviour Analysis Social Skills Building program, which allowed students and parents/guardians to engage in lessons and practical applications to support ongoing learning.

Bluewater District School Board Joins Instagram

To further expand our communication channels and social media presence among target audiences, a [new corporate Instagram page](#) was launched to coincide with the first week of the school year. This decision was informed by consultation with the student voice and exploration of the practices of other school boards, which revealed the growing popularity of Instagram. In addition to accommodating the increasing number of parents/guardians who are gravitating toward this platform, the new page will narrow the gap in our social media outreach with students due to Instagram's high usage among youth. To further connect with this demographic and leverage the platform's capabilities, staff will seek out cross-promotional opportunities with the Student Senate, who continue to utilize Instagram to engage and inform students on a variety of topics of interest. In addition to Instagram, our corporate social media portfolio includes Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.



Pandemic Communications

With the return to in-person learning in September, staff continued to utilize the board website, social media, and the SchoolMessenger platform to keep families updated on the latest COVID-19 health and safety protocols and other developments. The [Return to School](#) web page included a three-part Q and A on school operations, program and instruction, and remote learning, COVID-19 screening information and a link to the daily screening tool for students and staff, and other resources. The [COVID-19 Updates](#) web page kept parents/guardians and the public informed on emerging cases in schools, communications from the Director of Education, Grey Bruce Public Health, and the Minister of Education, and vaccination attestation statistics among staff, trustees, and visitors. Ongoing updates on the status of [ventilation in schools](#) were also published to show the work being done to optimize air quality in classrooms and learning environments, to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. Our media partners were helpful in supporting our messaging.



PRIORITY 4:

Stewardship of Resources

Strategic Goals:

- align human and financial resources to maximize operational efficiencies and manage risk
- cultivate leadership to facilitate succession planning
- ensure transparency
- encourage partnerships
- support and promote, where possible, the implementation of environmental procedures, practices, and programs that are consistent with a healthy, safe, and sustainable environment



New Builds

In September 2021, the [new Georgian Bay Community School](#) opened in Meaford to students and staff. Funded through \$29.6 million from the Ministry of Education, the junior kindergarten to Grade 12 facility features 1,033 student spaces and an EarlyON Child and Family Centre room. An [official opening ceremony](#) for invited guests included a school tour, ribbon cutting, and plaque unveiling.

Progress continued in selecting a site for a new replacement for Kincardine District Senior School based on feedback from 1,100 respondents in a public survey. Staff will continue working towards determining a site prior to submitting an “Approval to Proceed” to the ministry for the future \$26.4 million Grade 7 to 12 facility.

The replacement build project for Beavercrest Community School in Markdale continued to move forward with the purchase of additional land adjacent to the current school property finalized, and school designs shared with the public for feedback. Ministry funding of \$6.4 million will be dedicated to the new school, with an additional \$2.1 million for two childcare rooms and two EarlyON rooms, and over \$320,250 for the additional land.

To meet projected enrolment growth, business cases were submitted to the ministry for funding to build a new school and add childcare spaces in [Dundalk](#), and for the construction of a new junior kindergarten to Grade 6 school with childcare spaces in [Kincardine](#).



Capital Investments



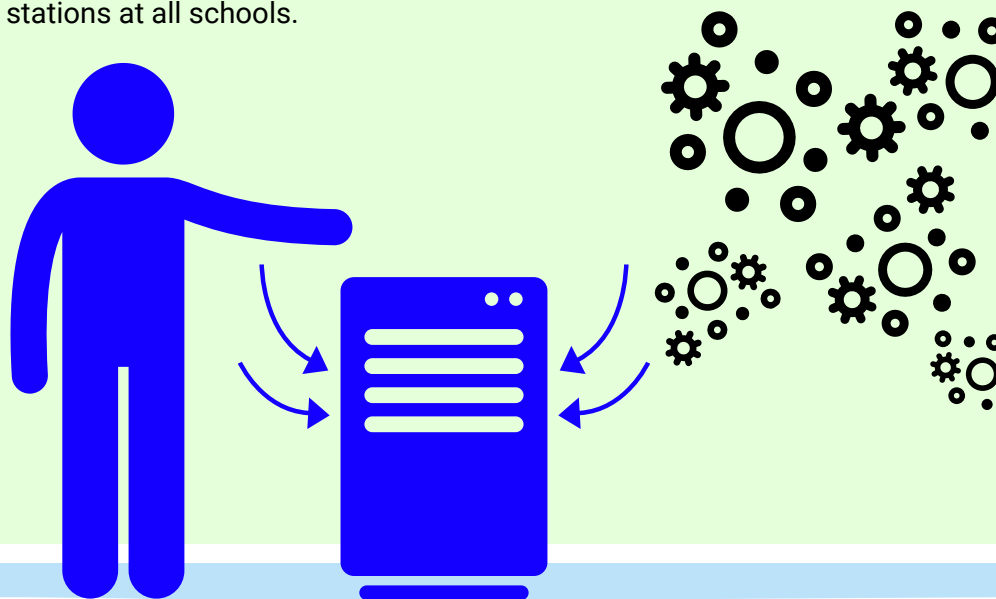
Capital Priorities, School Renewal, and School Condition Improvement funding from the ministry enabled a \$7.7 million investment in [capital projects](#) to ensure safe and supportive school environments for students and staff.

COVID-19 Safety in Schools

Several initiatives supported and promoted a healthy, safe, and sustainable environment in schools. Combined federal and provincial funding of almost \$3.5 million was approved for 89 projects that focused on air quality and ventilation, health and safety promotion, and technology upgrades. [COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream funding](#) helped to mitigate risks associated with COVID-19 transmission, while supporting a modern technological environment for students.

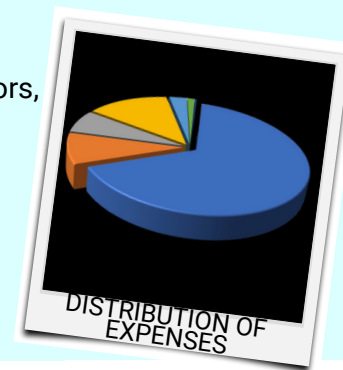
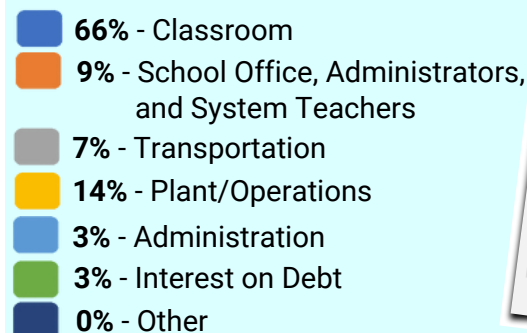
Federal and provincial funding exceeding \$2.4 million assisted with heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) spending to improve safety for the return to school. Standalone high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter units were installed in all occupied learning environments with no or poor mechanical ventilation. In schools with mechanical ventilation, these units were placed in all kindergarten classrooms. Upgrades to a higher efficiency air filter product and increased replacement frequency also helped to maintain optimal air quality.

Physical spaces were monitored to ensure proper distancing, while personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies were sourced for monthly delivery to all schools. Investments were also made in enhanced cleaning protocols, touchless hand wash stations, and water bottle filling stations at all schools.



Budget

On June 15, trustees approved the [2021-22 budget](#) in the amount of approximately \$226.7 million. A [budget public consultation survey](#) helped to inform the key focus areas for trustees and staff in the development of the budget.

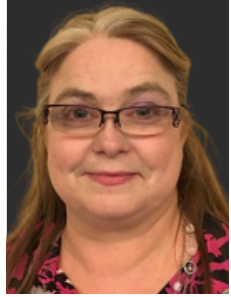


Community Planning and Partnerships

The annual Community Planning and Partnerships meeting was held virtually on May 11. Partners representing upper and lower tier municipalities and community organizations were invited and exchanged information and ideas. Participants received an [overview](#) of our potential partnership opportunities and capital planning priorities.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Tracy Lynn Atkinson
Municipality of West Grey/The Town of Hanover



Terry Boyd-Zhang
Municipality of Brockton/Municipality of South Bruce



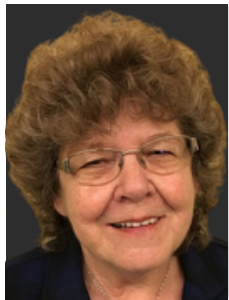
Jim Dawson
Township of Southgate/Municipality of Grey Highlands



Vice-Chair
Jan Johnstone
Municipality of Kincardine/Township of Huron-Kinloss



Katie Lutz
Town of Saugeen Shores/Municipality of Arran-Elderslie



Marilyn McComb
Township of Georgian Bluffs/Township of Chatsworth



Jennifer Miller
City of Owen Sound



Fran Morgan
Municipality of Meaford/Town of The Blue Mountains



Chair
Jane Thomson
Town of South Bruce Peninsula/Municipality of Northern Bruce

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL



Top Row (left to right): Lori Wilder, Director of Education; Rob Cummings, Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer; Sheryl Elliott, Superintendent of Education
Bottom Row (left to right): Keith Lefebvre, Superintendent of Education; Lauren Penner Lipsett, Superintendent of Education; Andrea Tang, Superintendent of Education

STUDENT SENATE



Top Row (left to right):
Student Trustees: Gabriel Rossitter, OSDSS; Trinity Shaw, GHSS
Student Senators: Shaan Banday, SDSS; Mahalah Brown, JDSS; Maggie Klunder, PSDS

Bottom Row (left to right):
Student Senators: Wren Marritt, GBCS; Julianna Rutledge, KDSS; Ireland Sawyer, SDSS; Jessica Verhees, WDCCS; Mackenzie Zevenbergen, BPDS