



# Fall 2024

## Director of Education Highlights

September | October | November



# Introduction

**E**very day, I am inspired by the incredible work across the Grand Erie District School Board. With a vision to learn, lead, and inspire, we see innovative learning experiences, student achievements, staff excellence and community partnerships shaping the future of education.

As we support more than 28,000 students across 58 elementary and 14 secondary schools, Grand Erie focuses on building a culture of learning, well-being, and belonging for all. This is made possible by a dedicated team of more than 3,700 educators and support staff, whose commitment to student success is at the heart of everything we do.

Each month, I share a Director's Report with the Board of Trustees, highlighting the progress, successes, and milestones shaping Grand Erie. We thank students, families and staff for sharing their incredible work and accomplishments with us. We will bring those stories together, offering a window into the classroom, into this publication and share with the Grand Erie community in the Fall, Winter and Spring.

I invite you to explore this edition and celebrate the many ways Grand Erie schools and students are growing, innovating, and thriving.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

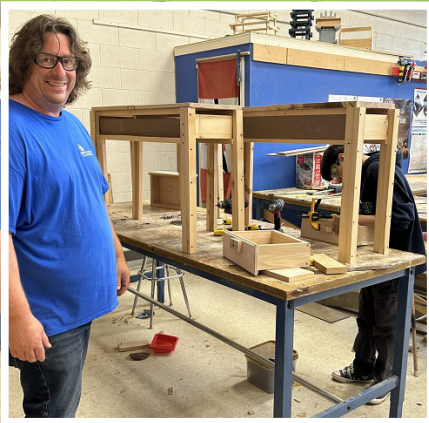
## **Dr. JoAnna Roberto, Ph.D**

Director of Education and Secretary of the Board  
Grand Erie District School Board





# September 2024



## Summer Learning

The learning continued over the summer for a number of elementary and secondary students. There was a great turnout at summer programs, including Camp Sail, Learen ün Spalen, the Organized Kaos Construction camps, culinary, small engine and welding camps, eLearning programs, and the This is my School and It All Adds Up to Me programs.



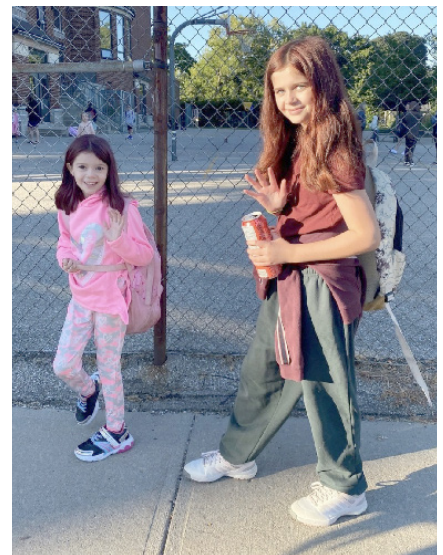
# September 2024

## Grand Beginnings

September 3 was an exciting day across the district as schools welcomed back students for the 2024-25 school year.



Director of Education JoAnna Roberto visited Pauline Johnson Collegiate & Vocational School and Graham Bell-Victoria Public School in the morning to welcome students back to school. Schools across the district were energized and welcoming.





# September 2024

## School Zone Safety

For the sixth year, we partnered with Brantford Police and Fire to ensure that the first day, and every day, of school is safe. Four schools were selected to receive on-site representation from police officers and first responders this year, supporting Cedarland Public School, King George School, Russell Reid Public School and Walter Gretzky Elementary School.

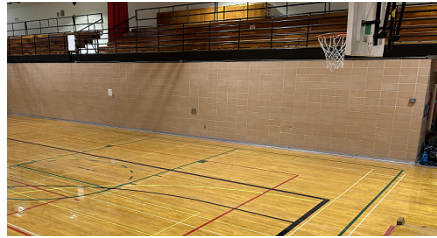
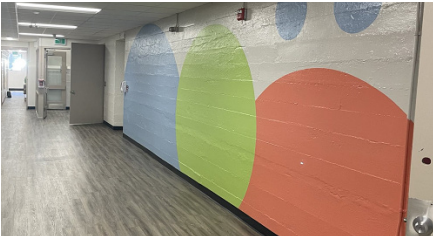


Click to  
watch the  
video

## Waterford Public School

Grade 7 and 8 students and teachers successfully transitioned to their new space within Waterford High School. A family night was held, and staff, students and families are excited about their new school within a school.

# September 2024



## Summer Facility Improvements

Summer is always a busy time for the Facilities team. Many facility upgrade projects were completed across the district, including gym improvements at Dunnville Secondary School and Jarvis Public School, new hallway paint at Major Ballachey Public School, Learning Commons completion and renovations at Brier Park Public School and Grand Erie Learning Alternatives, and dozens of other interior and exterior improvements, from boiler replacements to paving work.

We thank our Facilities staff for their dedication and hard work over the summer to create welcoming spaces for learning, well-being and belonging.

## Spongebob!

Pauline Johnson Collegiate and Vocational School was licensed to run three performances of the SpongeBob musical, including rental materials, thanks to winning a competition run by a major theatrical company, Concord Theatricals. Pauline Johnson was the only Canadian school to win this opportunity.





# September 2024

## Language Classes

Grand Erie offers international language classes in Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Tamil, Arabic, Telugu, Mandarin, Bengali and Polish. These offerings were well received by our growing and diverse communities, as the turnout for registration was huge.



ਪਲਵਿੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ- ਪਲਵਿੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ-Palwinder Kaur  
@MsKaurGEDSB

Please come to register your child on September 7, at 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Walter Gretzky Elementary School or register online.

Grand Erie District School Board @GEDSB · 2h

Ready for something new? Grand Erie is offering the following international language classes: Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Tamil, Arabic, Telugu, Mandarin, Bengali and Polish.

Full details: [ow.ly/gWJ350TgVmp](https://ow.ly/gWJ350TgVmp)



## Children's Safety Village

We were pleased once again to support the good work of the Safety Village of Brant. Over the years, thousands of Grand Erie students have benefitted from the hands-on safety training for children that this charity provides.



# September 2024



## Family of Schools and Professional Development

September 15 was a day for Administrators to learn from their Families of Schools, with Secondary Administrators focussing on the 'Why' and 'Now What' based on their learning journey through GEMAAP last year.

Staff participated in a variety of learning, with a focus on math and literacy for elementary and secondary educators.

## Professional Development commitment

As a district, we also made a strong commitment to supporting the priority of belonging – we will be providing central staff and school administrators focused professional development sessions at the Toronto Holocaust Museum. The Museum serves as a powerful tool for preserving the memory of the Shoah, and countering antisemitism and hatred in all forms.





# October 2024





# October 2024



## National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

September 30 was the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. In addition to the curriculum-focused learning for the day, several special events were held. Pauline Johnson Collegiate & Vocational School hosted three residential school survivors, joined by five Pauline Johnson students, in a circle discussion in the learning commons, streamed across the country through the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in partnership with Grand Erie and the Survivors' Secretariat.

Teeterville Public School's Reconcili"Action" Team created a medicine wheel and every student added a flag on September 30, in honour of Indigenous children. On the flags, students placed a word, phrase or drawing of what they feel like at school – what all students should feel like at school.

To cap off Truth and Reconciliation Week, Pauline Johnson hosted its annual Every Child Matters football game, once again providing a learning spotlight for the school community to honour and recommit to ongoing efforts building understanding, while also raising funds for community initiatives.



# October 2024

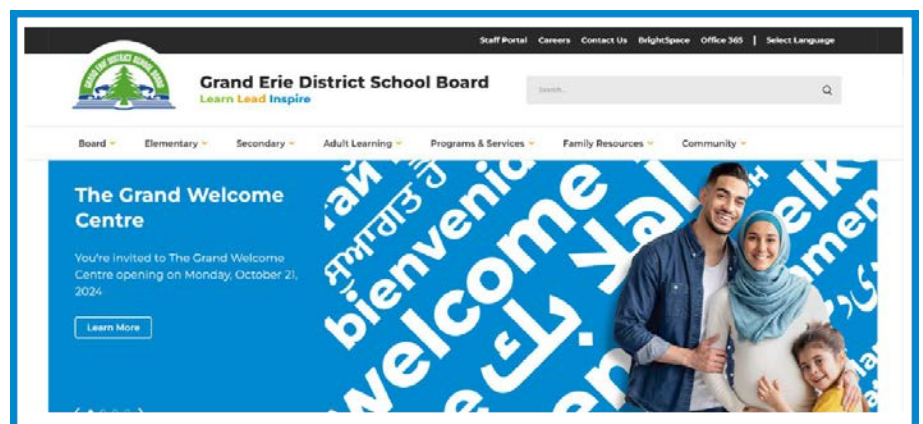


## Days Of Significance

We recognized several days of significance in Grand Erie, including National Custodial Workers Recognition Day on October 2 and World Teachers Day on October 5.

## A New Website

We launched a new website! Our thanks to the IT and Communications teams that made this possible. The new site provides a fully functional, easy-to-navigate and visually appealing web experience for all users.



# October 2024



## A New Welcome Centre

On October 21, we officially opened the new Grand Welcome Centre. Located just inside the Joseph Brant Learning Centre, this space is designed to support new families to Grand Erie and the diversity of the communities we serve.

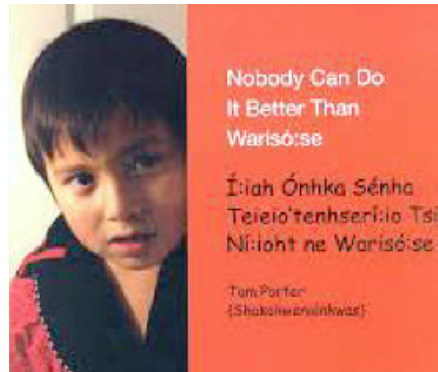
## River Heights French Immersion

River Heights Public School welcomed students who transitioned from Caledonia Centennial Kindergarten to Grade 3 French Immersion Program this September. River Heights is now a Kindergarten to Grade 8 dual track French Immersion school. Communication for all stages of the transition included community building, staffing and student supports, and a Welcome to River Heights Assembly and Spirit day.



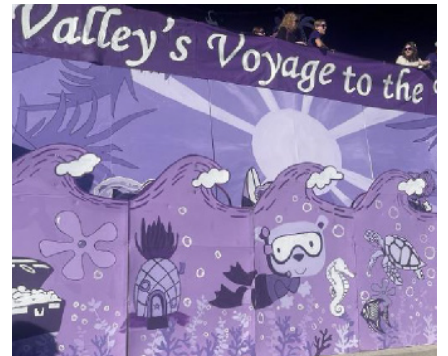


# October 2024



## Connecting our Learning Communities

On October 7, students and staff had the opportunity to listen to and participate in a presentation by Thomas Porter of the Bear Clan of the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne. Sakokwenionkwas or "The One Who Wins" is nationally respected as an elder of the Mohawk Nation, and he shared his message on the theme of "Connecting our Learning Communities." Thank you to Suzie Miller and the Indigenous Education team for hosting the event.



## Young Canada Day

Grand Erie students were full of school spirit at the Norfolk Fair this year for Young Canada Day. Students took part and supported each other in a variety of events to showcase skill, talent, school pride and a sense of belonging.



# October 2024



## Professional Development

Educators participated in professional learning with a focus on Math, School Improvement Planning and creating safe school environments. Grade 9 math teachers, administrators, school support staff, Math Coaches and system staff participated in the Secondary Grand Erie Math Achievement Action Plan kick-off sharing data, knowledge and planning. And October also saw a Manager and Supervisor learning session, and administrators visiting the Toronto Holocaust Museum.

## NTIP

The New Teacher Induction Program kicked off with nearly 100 new educators being welcomed to participate in learning together.





# October 2024



## You Belong Here Regional Information Nights

This year, Grand Erie is offering the first ever regional Information Nights for Future Grade Nines. These occurred at Joseph Brant Learning Centre, JC Hill Elementary School, the Haldimand County Caledonia Centre and the Norfolk Library - Simcoe branch. The events connected with prospective Grade 9 students to show them what Grand Erie offers to support a successful transition from elementary to secondary school.

To accompany these events, we were also proud to share some new material and videos developed to support and promote transitions to Grand Erie secondary schools.

## Tech is Grand

The Tech Is Grand initiative is an opportunity to showcase the amazing talent of Grand Erie students and educators while highlighting pathways in technology at Grand Erie and beyond. Both elementary and secondary schools have opportunities to participate in various tech-focussed activities, experiences and competitions throughout the school year.



## Sheila Bennett at SEAC

On October 3, the Special Education Advisory Committee hosted its first Community Partner Night, with a presentation from Dr. Sheila Bennett on: The Advantages of Inclusive Practices to Support Improved Outcomes of Students with Special Education Needs.



# October 2024

## Student Learning Support Days

The first of two scheduled Student Learning Support days was on November 5. These days are an opportunity for any secondary student to get caught up on work or redo assignments to improve marks. All schools were provided informational material to share with students and families.



## Eco Schools

The Facilities Team is launching an enhanced Eco-Schools program this year. To build momentum on previous years' success, the team has developed a full-year of activities, information and training to support increased participation and success for Grand Erie schools in developing and implementing "green" initiatives. The Facilities team will be supporting a variety of projects including tree planting, pollinator or food gardens, and recycling program improvements.

Grand Erie Eco Initiatives		
If you are looking for ways to gain credits towards your school's certification, consider some of the following "Eco Initiatives" supported by Grand Erie:		
EcoSchools Action	SDG	Grand Erie Eco Initiatives
Tree Planting and Maintenance  10 points	<b>15</b> LIFE ON LAND 	<b>Adopt a Tree Initiative</b> - Coming soon <b>Tree Planting Request</b> - Submit via eBase Form Logic - "Tree Planting Request". Guide to accessing the form. <a href="#">Click here to request support.</a>  Please note due to resource and/or site limitations not all requests will be possible.
Pollinator Garden or Grow a Food Garden  10 Points	<b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	<b>Garden Install Request</b> - Coming soon  Please note due to resource and/or site limitations not all requests will be possible.
Community Clean-up  10 Points	<b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	<b>Grand Erie Earth Day Clean-up</b> Grand Erie supports school yard clean-ups each year around Earth Day (April 22 <sup>nd</sup> ). Keep an eye out for more information and available support through What's Trending in late May.

## Mount Pleasant Playground

Mount Pleasant School was recently able to formally open a brand-new playground. Thanks to the support of the school community and local donors. The event was celebrated with much fanfare, and we're sure this structure will be enjoyed by students and the community for many years to come.





# October 2024



## Graduation Ceremonies

Secondary schools have completed their graduation ceremonies. We offer our congratulations and best wishes for these graduates as they move on to the next step in their life journey.

## Pauline Johnson 70th Anniversary

From October 17 to 19, Pauline Johnson Collegiate and Vocational celebrated their 70th Anniversary with events such as a Student Dance, Friday Night Lights Football game, brunch, Open House and Pub Night





# October 2024



## Friday Night Lights

Fall means football, and Grand Erie secondary schools were building excitement for the new season with a number of fun events – including Friday Night Lights. Old rivalries were renewed, and new ones created.



## Cayuga Football

Football is back at Cayuga Secondary School! Dubbed the re-birth of Cayuga football, the school has a team back in league play this season after an absence of a number of years. The football comeback was driven largely by student voice and interest, and our thanks goes to Colin Miller who has been instrumental in bringing the people and resources together to help make this happen.



# October 2024



## Community Events

Schools across Grand Erie participated in the annual Terry Fox Run to raise money for cancer research. Grand Erie schools have been strong supporters of this campaign over the years.

The Senior Leadership Team, administrators and students attended the Brant Food For Thought breakfast.



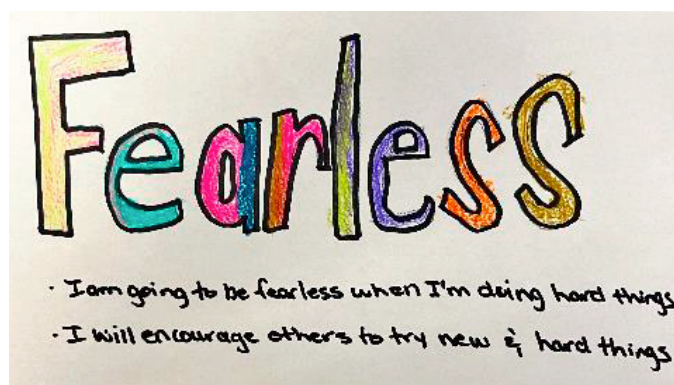
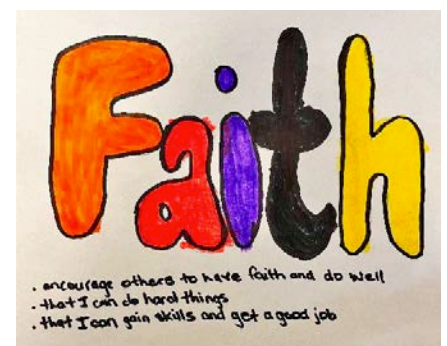
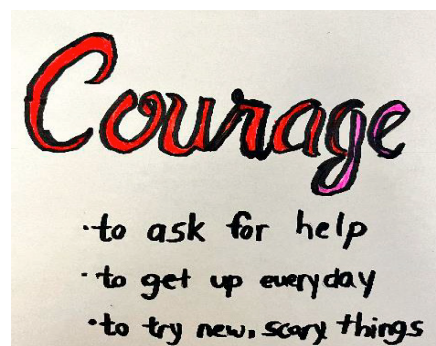
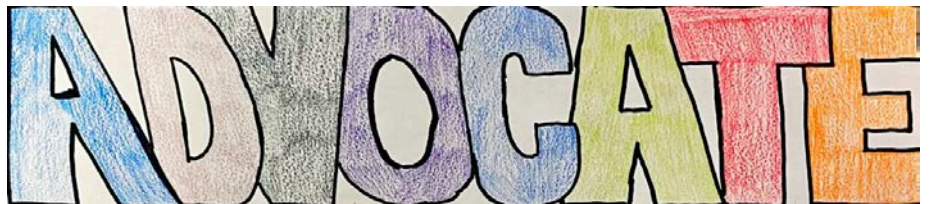
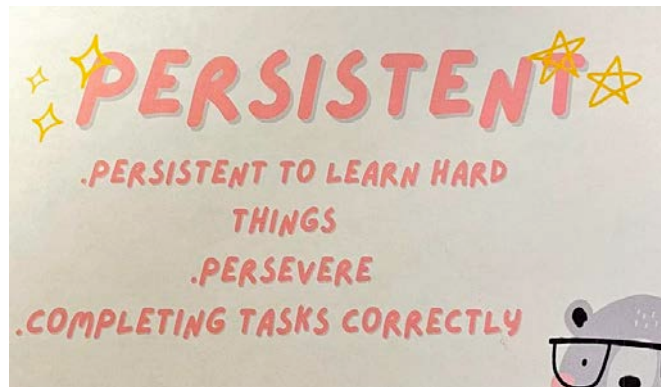
## Career Fairs

Human Resources staff were at Brock University working to make connections and recruit the next generation of educators to Grand Erie.

# October 2024

## Project SEARCH – One Word

Director of Education JoAnna Roberto sent a message to staff, asking them to consider what is the one word that could serve as a personal guiding principle for the year: something to focus on, embody, and live by. The Project SEARCH team recently kicking off a new year with new students was inspired to challenge their students to come up with their one word and shared back their words.





# November 2024



# November 2024



"I'm going to space to look at stars and take some notes."

- Dimitra -



"I would find a way to stop cancer."

- Lauren -

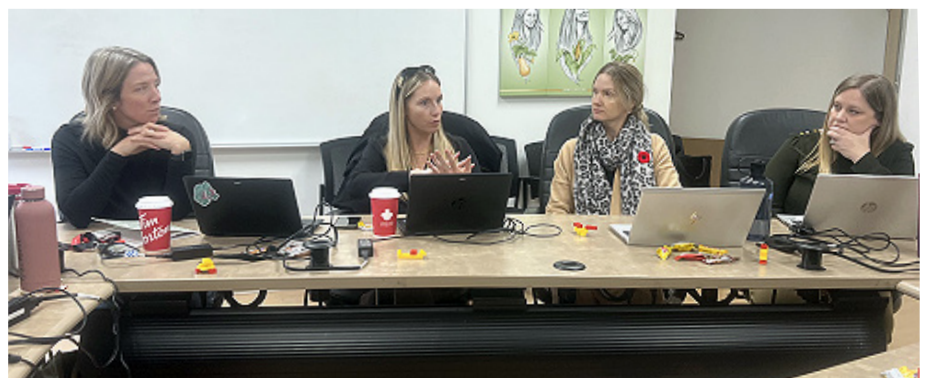
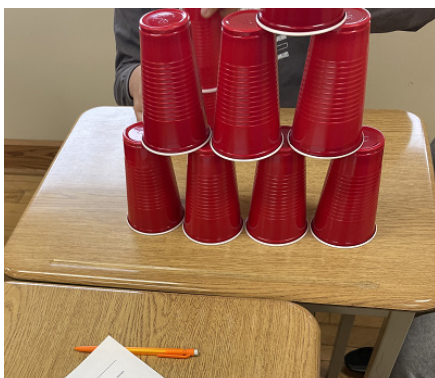


"I would invent a collar for cats and dogs so you can understand them."

- Molly -

## Future STEAM students

November was host to National STEM/STEAM day and the STEAM curriculum team did some livestream learning. Primary classes were asked what problem they would solve if they were a scientist. Clearly some of the future innovators in Grand Erie have some big ideas!



## Math Learning

Math continues to be a focus across our schools. We share a monthly math newsletter with all families with resources available online for parents and caregivers to use to help support math learning in fun ways at home.



# November 2024



## Remembrance Day

Remembrance Day was recognized across the district with respect, dignity and focussed learning. We had an opportunity to attend a special ceremony at Pauline Johnson Collegiate and Vocational School, which included a presentation by the student band.

## Professional Development

Professional development and learning opportunities happen across the district for all staff. Chris DeSouza delivered an interactive presentation encouraging participants to analyze their own power and privilege, and how that could impact others in the workplace. We launched a year-long Speaker Series presented through Grand Erie Parent Involvement Committee.



## 2024-25 Speaker Series

**Thursday, November 21, 2024**

**Speakers: Curtis Carmichael and Mark Daley**

**About Curtis Carmichael:** Curtis has 10+ years of experience as a certified teacher in K-12, special education, STEM, and instructional coaching. He built his own professional development training and instructional coaching business directly training 500,000+ teachers across Canada and the USA and is a doctoral researcher at Hampton University in Virginia focused on AI, Quantum Computing and Social Justice.

**About Mark Daley:** Mark is the Chief AI Officer at Western University and a Professor in the Department of Computer Science with cross-appointments in five other departments, The Rotman Institute of Philosophy, and The Western Institute for Neuroscience. He is also a faculty affiliate of Toronto's Vector Institute for Artificial Intelligence. Mark was named in the Maclean's magazine "Power List 2024" of the top 100 Canadians shaping the country.



# November 2024



## Take Our Kids to Work Day

November 6 was take our kids to work day, and Grand Erie hosted a number of Grade 9 students exploring a variety of career possibilities.



## Innovation Hub Grand Opening

On November 21, Grand Erie students, families, staff members and Trustees celebrated the official opening of the Innovation Hub, located at North Park Collegiate and Vocational School. This unique space is designed for experiential learning, allowing Grand Erie students in Grades 7 to 12 to explore cutting-edge STEAM tools meant to help them ideate, build, test and refine their inquiries. The multifunctional hub will bring together contributors including educators, researchers, technological innovators, entrepreneurs and community partners to fuel learners' future-ready curiosity and creativity.



# November 2024

## Athletics Success

Athletics were in full swing across Grand Erie. The Brantford Collegiate Institute and Vocational School football team took home the senior title with a win over St. John's, and participated in the CWOSSA semi-finals. The BCI Colts junior football team won their fourth straight AABHN junior football championship. Cayuga Secondary School junior girls basketball team also qualified for CWOSSA, and the Waterford District junior boys basketball team won CWOSSA silver.



## ECE Awards

The 2024 ECE Awards Celebration was held in Brantford on the evening of November 7. The annual event celebrated the contributions of Early Childhood Educators from across the sector. Several Grand Erie ECEs were nominated for awards. Congratulations to Cindy Fiebiger of Ecole Dufferin who received a "Love of Reading" Award.



# November 2024



## Retirement Gala

The Annual Retirement Gala was held to recognize and honor the incredible careers and contributions of our retiring educators, support staff and administrators, whose dedication and passion have profoundly impacted our school board and community. It was an inspirational evening, headlined by Valedictorian Lisa Vanleeuwen, a retired elementary Principal.



## Holiday Events

'Tis the season for holiday-themed fundraising.

Cayuga Secondary School had its Winter Craft and Artisan sale and Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser for the football and spirit teams.

Delhi District Secondary School Student Council sold holiday cards leading up to the holidays.

Pauline Johnson hosted its holiday market and McKinnon Park hosted its Plant and Bake Sale.





# November 2024



## Registration Opportunities

Across the district, registration for Kindergarten for the 2025-26 school year opened up, accompanied by a promotional campaign – that includes large format banners at all our elementary schools. French Immersion Registration has also opened up and is accessible from the website.



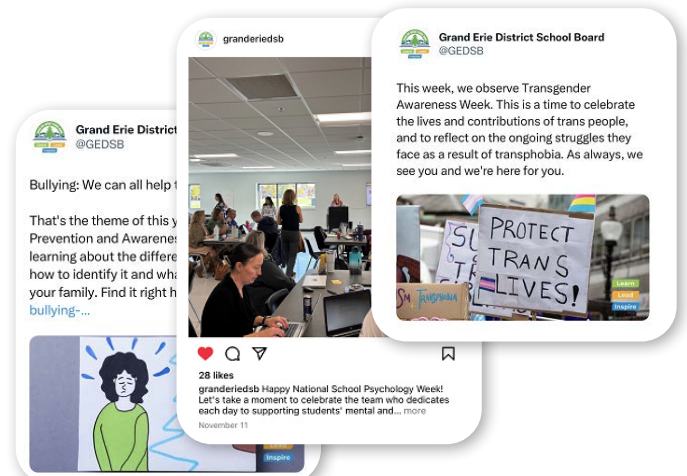
## Banbury Child Care

We hosted a ground-breaking ceremony at Banbury Heights School for the new BGC Banbury Childcare Centre. The project includes 4,300 square feet of expansion, including infant, toddler and pre-school rooms, along with designated play areas. We want to thank the Boys and Girls Club of Brantford for their partnership and collaboration on this important project.



## Days of Significance

November 8 was Indigenous Veteran's Day, an opportunity to remember veteran Edith Monture Elementary School. School Psychology Week was November 11 to 16, and we recognized the teams dedicated to supporting student mental and emotional well-being. November 18 to 22 was Bullying Prevention and Awareness Week with resources available in schools and online to help stop bullying. November 11 was also the start of Transgender Awareness Week, an opportunity to reflect on the struggles people face as a result of transphobia.



# November 2024

## West Brant Bussing

In partnership with Brantford Transit, Grand Erie is piloting a project to make it easier for students in the Brantford Collegiate Institute and Vocational School catchment area to attend highschool. As part of this program, transit passes will be provided free of charge to students residing in West Brant who don't qualify for school transportation, promoting environmental sustainability and providing more options for families in this region.



## Ontario Student Trustees' Association

Grand Erie's Student Trustees had the opportunity to participate OSTA-AECO's 2024 Fall General Meeting. This was a forum for trustees to voice your opinions and make a difference in our education system.



# November 2024



Click to  
watch the  
videos

## You Belong Here Video Series

The You Belong Here campaign continued with a series of videos featuring Grand Erie students.



## **Grand Erie District School Board**

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