



A place where we all belong.

### **Mental Health, Addiction and Well-Being Strategy 2025-28 Strategic Directions & 2025-26 Annual Actions**

The Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) is committed to supporting student mental health through a clear strategic plan and yearly actionable steps. Our three-year strategic plan serves as a shared roadmap, guiding our collective efforts, while our annual actions help us build accountability and foster collaboration. Together, these efforts aim to weave mental health and well-being into the very fabric of our board and school culture. In doing so, we uphold our mission: To nurture student well-being and deliver high-quality Catholic education in a safe, inclusive, equitable, and caring environment that prepares students for lifelong success.

#### **Guiding Principals:**

- ✓ At the Northeastern Catholic District School Board, we are dedicated to fostering the mental health and well-being of every student across our Catholic learning environments through a comprehensive range of supports, interventions and services.
- ✓ Our mental health approaches and initiatives are firmly rooted in the directives of Policy/Program Memorandum 169 and aligned with the NCDSB Mental Health Strategy, ensuring consistency, integrity, and best practices across our programs.
- ✓ We recognize that supporting student mental health is a shared responsibility. Our efforts are grounded in meaningful collaboration among students, families, staff, and community partners.
- ✓ Our approach is intentional and responsive, with flexible, relevant mental health focus areas with clear goals and measurable outcomes.
- ✓ Our plans are informed by regular progress monitoring, consultation with our Mental Health Advisory, and input from stakeholders—guided by the leadership of the board's Mental Health Lead and Superintendent of Education with responsibility for mental health.
- ✓ At its core, our work is building upon proven, scalable practices that guide our mental health strategy and yearly actions. This foundation include: Strong leadership support, a clear and evolving mental health plan with focused actions, promoting consistent, shared language in our communication inside and outside our organization, reflecting the needs and strengths across our schools, clear protocols and processes that support a unified approach, ongoing staff training to build knowledge and skills, team work and enhanced partnerships with our students, families and community services and groups and tracking our progress and making adjustments through evidence and regular dialogue.

MHA Strategic Direction 2025-28					
Strategic Priority Areas	Partners	The Destination (we will see, hear...)	The journey	Measurement (data points, when) & Monitoring (on going process of tracking - how)	Alignment to SMH-On Priorities Areas
Leadership Commitment	Senior System Leaders (Director, SO, Managers) and School Principals (Principals)	System and School Administrators share a collective responsibility to influence, integrate & monitor scalable, effective mental health practices in school.	We will embed training, explicit communication and focused support for leaders to strengthen the implementation of the multi system of care (MTSS) in mental health.	-Leader perceptual survey (annual) - including board scan & PPM 169 focused question -Student EQAO data (annual) -Our School Survey markers	-Prioritize leadership across service continuum -Strengthen system and school staff knowledge
Accessible & Flexible Every Day Mental Health Promotion & Practices	Principals, Educators & CYWs, MHWs, EAs, Attendance	Educators and support staff across all roles, recognize and integrate student wellness into their everyday sustainable practices in the classroom and school environments.	We will focus on role-specific learning & professional development (i.e., training, information sharing, community of practice, pilot projects), allocate mental health curriculum resources and evolve our "conversations as interventions" and encourage shifts to strength-based language & promoting connection.	-Mental Health Advisory Team perceptual survey - including questions from Board Scan & PPM 169 reporting. -Educator & support staff perceptual survey (annual) - including questions from Board Scan & PPM 169 reporting -Our school survey markers (annual survey) --- Strategy implementation (tool usage, lesson delivery)	-Enhance mental health literacy and engagement -Strengthen system and school staff knowledge -Support school mental health professionals
Pathways, Community, Connection & Support	SO's, Principals, Community partners, District level staff, CYWs, MHWs, Attendance, ABSS, ISW	District staff strengthen their shared understanding of internal supports and emotion-regulating interventions and can support consistent messaging about pathways to community care.	We will support the uptake of our new mental health procedures and assess their effectiveness from the perspective of stakeholders, and we will use the feedback to refine and improve approaches.	-Student EQAO data (annual) -Service usage data -Perceptual survey -PHQ-9, GAD-7 pre-post markers	-Centre disproportionately impacted students -Enhance mental health literacy and engagement -Strengthen system and school staff knowledge -Support school mental health professionals
Student Engagement and Agency	Students, CYWs,MHWs, Principals	Students lead the wellness conversation and influence a culture of engagement and well-being at school.	We will focus on shaping well-being initiatives through student-led, student voice opportunities at school.	-% of schools participating in youth-led mental health initiatives -% of student participating as youth-leaders for mental health initiatives -% of students participating in events -Our school survey markers	-Centre disproportionately impacted students -Enhance mental health literacy and engagement -Create opportunities for student engagement -Strengthen system and school staff knowledge -Support school mental health professionals -prioritize leadership across service continuum
Parent/caregiver & Mental Health Literacy	Parents/caregivers, School Principals, Community Partners	Parents/caregivers express awareness of, and satisfaction with, engagement activities & mental health services at school.	We will offer a variety of accessible mental health learning, targeted communication and engagement opportunities for parents/caregivers.	-parent participation rates in mental learning sessions & engagement activities -perceptual parent survey (march)	-Enhance mental health literacy and engagement
Foundational to our work: Scalable mental health practices remain at the core in anchoring our mental health strategic direction and annualized goals. These include <b>1)</b> Leadership commitment; <b>2)</b> On-going mental health strategy and action plan (clear and focused vision, implementation processes); <b>3)</b> Internal and external communication (shared language); <b>4)</b> Assessing needs and capacity; <b>5)</b> Standard processes and protocols; <b>6)</b> Systematic professional learning; <b>7)</b> Engagement and collaboration; <b>8)</b> Evidence and monitoring					

Strategic Priority Area	The Destination	Key Actions for 2025-26 School Year	Partners	Measurement & Monitoring	PPM 169 (#1-11)	AIM Tier (1,23)
Leadership Commitment	System and School Administrators share a collective responsibility to influence, integrate & monitor scalable, effective mental health practices in school.	<p>Principals and Supervisory Officers will receive training in Prepare, Prevent, Respond protocols, mental health procedures, and the updated mental health strategies. *Resources: Procedural documents, SMHO materials, with Mental Health Lead &amp; Team (Date TBD)</p> <p>Senior leaders will participate in mental health leadership development through a reverse learning model, engaging in both reflection and application of best practices. *Resources: MH Lit course for System Leaders, with Mental Health Lead (Fall, TBD).</p> <p>Trustees will receive communication related to the board mental health actions in alignment with mental health governance themes. *Resources: SMHO Governance materials, with Mental Health Lead and Supervisory Officer (1 x fall, 1 x spring).</p> <p>The Supervisory Officer will establish and support a sustainable structure for the Mental Health Advisory team and will co-lead advisory meetings in collaboration with the Mental Health Lead. *Resources: Expression of interest, Advisory materials &amp; release time: Sept (Communication), Nov (1/2 day), Jan (1/2 day), May (full day)</p> <p>Two Supervisory Officers will communicate a coherent vision for student mental health across the system through support of the implementation of new procedures. They will support alignment across schools, ensure best practices, and work closely with the Mental Health Lead to ensure consistency and clarity in roles and service delivery. *Resources: Procedure documents, MH Lead prepared discussion prompts + SO Desk Reference: 1 x school visit (TBD) + as needed</p> <p>The suicide risk protocol will be embedded in the annual school staff learning and reinforced through school Principals, to ensure consistent understanding, early identification, and appropriate response to student mental health concerns across all schools. *Resources: Suicide Risk Protocol + MH Lead prepared discussion prompts: Principal training (Aug) + Embedded training for educators (Aug)</p> <p>School Principals will communicate key mental health initiatives through planned and themed messaging across the school year. They will be supported through scheduled communication for parents and staff that will reinforce consistent messaging to foster a whole-school culture of mental wellness. *Resources: MH Lead prepared materials for FB + Staff meetings: Aug communication with Principals; Sept-June, End of each Month posted and shared at meetings through the wellness team.</p> <p>School Principals will engage in focused discussions with the Mental Health Lead for school-specific mental health needs, tailored strategies and to strengthen leadership capacity and foster an uptake in implementation of mental health practices at the school level. *Resources: MH Lit for School Administrators discussion prompts: 1 x Term 1, Term 2, during school visits or meetings (TBD)</p> <p>The new Mental Health Advisory Team will be onboarded through a structured orientation, supported through a process that outlines their role, responsibilities, and the strategic vision for student mental health. *Resources: MH Lead prepared materials: For Nov meeting</p>	Senior System Leaders (Director, SO, Managers) and School Principals (Principals)	<p>-Leader perceptual survey (annual) including board scan &amp; PPM 169 focused question</p> <p>-Student EQAO data (annual)</p> <p>-Our School Survey markers</p>	1,3,5,8,9,10	1,2,3

<p><b>Accessible &amp; Flexible Every Day Mental Health Promotion &amp; Practices</b></p>	<p>Educators and support staff across all roles, recognize and integrate student wellness into their everyday sustainable practices in the classroom and school environments.</p>	<p>Educators will promote a healthy return to school with welcoming routines and wellness strategies. *Resources: MH Lead prepared SMHO resources packages: 2 x roll out (mid Sept and mid January)</p> <p>School teams will receive faith-informed mental health materials to support curriculum. *Resources: MH Lead prepared packages &amp; baskets to schools, with Wayfinder, wellness materials (for Sept PA)</p> <p>Educators will implement the new Grade 6 curriculum focused on substance use and media literacy supported through curated classroom resources. *Resources: SMHO prepared materials: TBD by SMHO + Ministry</p> <p>Health teachers will receive targeted communication and resources that align with Grades 7 &amp; 8 mental health lessons. *Resources: Printed MH Lit student booklets: In schools by end of September</p> <p>Career studies teachers will receive targeted communication and resources that align with Grades 10 mental health lessons. *Resources: MH lit student materials accessible in Brightspace, Delivery TBD with school principal</p> <p>The Wellness Department (CYWs, MHWs, MH Lead, Attendance) will promote a "Best Part of Your Day" initiative to promote a positive reflection. Participating staff will prompt students to share their daily highlight, big or small, through conversation prompts that serve to build a culture of optimism and emotional awareness. *Resources: Team t-shirts with promoted strategies: In schools by mid September</p> <p>Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) aimed at Tiers 1 and 2 will be implemented to support classroom social, emotional and behavioural learning goals and the related School Improvement Plan (SIP), with support from Child and Youth Workers (CYWs). CYWs will collaborate with educators to support delivery, reinforce strategies, and model practices that promote emotional regulation, resilience, and positive peer interactions, for example. *Resources: Everyday Speech licenses (14), SMHO materials, Other MH Lead provided wellness materials: CYWs schedules will vary by school + discussion with Principals</p> <p>Teachers participating in the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) will be onboarded with a focus on creating mentally healthy learning environments, grounded in mental health promotion and early identification, including pathways to care. *Resources: MH Lead prepared materials, date TBD with SO</p> <p>Select schools will explore Indigenous concepts of life promotion through collaborative efforts between Indigenous Education and Mental Health teams, centering Indigenous worldviews, community partnership, and strengths-based approaches to wellness. This pilot project will honor diverse cultural teachings and emphasize the importance of identity, belonging, connection to land in fostering holistic well-being with group participants. *Resources: Thunderbird Foundation materials + ACHWM: Pilot with OICS + OHS Term 2 (date TBD)</p>	<p>Educators &amp; school-based support staff (CYWs, MHWs, EAs, Attendance, Secretaries)</p>	<p>-Mental Health Advisory Team perceptual survey - including questions from Board Scan &amp; PPM 169 reporting. -Educator &amp; support staff perceptual survey (annual) - including questions from Board Scan &amp; PPM 169 reporting -Our school survey markers (annual survey) - Strategy implementation (tool usage, lesson delivery)</p>	<p>3,7,8,10</p>	<p>1,2,3,10</p>
---	---	--	--	--	-----------------	-----------------

<b>Pathways, Community, Connection &amp; Support</b>	<p>District staff strengthen their shared understanding of internal supports and emotion-regulating interventions and can support consistent messaging about pathways to community care.</p>	<p>High School Guidance teachers will participate in learning through a reverse learning model, with the Mental Health Lead and the Mental Health Worker, engaging in reflection, clarity around staff mental health roles and pathways to care for accessing additional support for students. *Resources: MH Lit for Guidance, Mental health procedures, SMHO resources: Fall (TBD) 1 session</p> <p>The Mental Health Lead will engage community partners in co-creating new meeting agenda topics that align with the implementation themes in Right Time Right Care. The outcome of process changes to pathways, if any, will be shared with board district staff to share within their networks and schools. *Resources: RTRC implementation guide, phase two: 3 x meetings with partners (TBD in the fall) and 2 x meeting with District staff (fall, spring)</p> <p>Pivot response skills to intervene in emerging mental health concerns and heightened emotional responses (i.e., anger) will be explored. *Resources: Dr Adele, In-person, Expression of interest, 30 participants (Date TBD)</p> <p>The wellness team will enhance their constructive conversation intervention skills through a continued Community of practice. *Resources: Consulting with Alesya Courtinage: Oct 2, full day (in person-Timmins), 3 x virtual, 1 hr (Nov 26, Jan 28, April 29) *Sessions with MHWs to integrate in clinical work: 2 x virtual, 1 hr, (Oct 29, May 29)</p> <p>Thirteen schools will promote service pathways to, through, and from care by utilizing bulletin boards and other platforms accessible to students. *Resources: MH Lead &amp; Wellness team prepared materials, SMHO materials (by Nov)</p> <p>Mental Health Workers (MHWs) will attend School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) trainings, including Motivational Interviewing, substance use, and participation in a Community of Practice for Suicide Intervention (SRAM). *Resources: SMHO training calendar</p> <p>Mental Health Workers (MHWs) will increase fidelity in implementing evidence-based interventions, such as BRISC, Brief Coping Interventions, substance use strategies and responding to student suicidal behaviours by utilizing clearly defined tools and aligning to student defined objectives. MHWs will engage in ongoing clinical supervision with their supervisor for ongoing develop and to ensure consistent practice. *Resources: MH Lead, Team Shared Drive: Weekly referral meetings + 2 times fall, 2 times spring case supervision (schedule TBD)</p> <p>Child &amp; Youth Workers (CYWs) will support class or small group themed lessons aimed at building empathy, strengthening active listening skills, and equipping students with conflict management strategies, in response to student-reported bullying trends. *Resources: Everyday speech or MH Lead materials: TDB, discussion with Principals and team (Oct-Nov)</p> <p>Schools will receive attendance communications (procedure flow), newsletters, FB posts, and awareness activities through classroom visits. *Resources: Team materials, conversation starters, flow visuals, attendance prompts: Launch with attendance newsletter and activities through Oct-June</p> <p>Special Education teachers (Coordinators, Resource Teachers) will participate in learning through a reverse learning model, with the Mental Health Lead and the Superintendents, engaging in reflection, clarity around staff mental health roles and pathways to care for accessing additional support for students. *Resources: MH Lit for Spec Ed course (Term 2, 1 x (in-person))</p> <p>Grade 6 students will participate in a Circle of Support lesson, delivered in collaboration between Child and Youth Workers (CYWs) or Mental Health Workers (MHW) and classroom teachers. *Resources: Circle of support materials: Term 2 (by end of May)</p> <p>Mental health referrals will be integrated in a new mental health referral system (TBD). *Resources: Electronic system by end of 2025-26 school year</p> <p>The Mental Health Lead + intermediate school Principals will explore the feasibility of implementing the Preventure (substance) program for the 2026–2027 school year. *Resources: Youth wellness hubs: Discussions + plan by end of 2025-26 school year</p> <p>Child and Youth Workers (CYWs) and Mental Health Workers (MHWs) will receive coaching and support to align Tier 2 and Tier 3 services, supports, and their reporting expectations with newly implemented mental health procedures to ensure consistency, accountability, and tiered student care across all levels of intervention. *Resources: Procedure materials + Existing internal processes + job descriptions: Meeting dates TBD through 2025-26 school year.</p>	<p>Community partners, District level staff, CYWs, MHWs, Attendance, ABSS, ISW</p>	<p>-Student EQAO data (annual) -Service usage data -Perceptual survey -PHQ-9, GAD-7 pre-post markers</p>	<p>2,3,4,5,6,11</p>	<p>2,3,4,5,6,7</p>
--	--	--	--	--	---------------------	--------------------

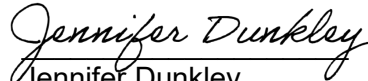
<b>Student Engagement and Agency</b>	<p>Students lead the wellness conversation and influence a culture of engagement and well-being at school.</p>	<p>Students will learn how to foster safe, inclusive, and supportive school environments, promoting belonging, empathy, and respectful engagement amongst peers. *Resources: Vector learning themes for grades 5-8: Mandatory monthly lessons across schools (Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec)</p> <p>The Mental Health Lead and St Anne (SAIF) school team will collaborate for uptake of a student engagement project aligned to SAIF goals, aimed at fostering student behavioural, cognitive, emotional and social engagement and well-being. *Co-developed materials, MLead + Principal with team: 8 weeks (starting Sept)</p> <p>A small-scale pilot will take place at select schools aimed at engaging students in a Journaling Club to provide participants with a safe, creative space to express themselves through writing, fostering self-awareness, emotional regulation, and reflective thinking. Guided prompts, themed sessions, and opportunities for voluntary sharing will support student voice and connection. Mental health staff will facilitate sessions that align with social-emotional learning goals and promote overall well-being. Resources: MH Lead supplied materials, Pilot in four schools: Term 1, BBS, SAIF, SJTM, AWCH (1 x 4-week cycle)</p> <p>A virtual "Chill Space" and a Mental Health Resource binder will be designed and promote student mental health through self-guided resources that support emotional well-being and stress management. *Resources: Brightspace (TELT Support), SMHO, student wellness + communication materials: Soft launch pilot with OHS, ECCS, SPKP, SHKL, HFEN (Oct-Feb)</p> <p>Student-led mental health initiatives (TBD) and a Health &amp; Wellness Fair (OHS) will take place with guidance and support from Child and Youth Workers (CYWs) or Mental health Workers (MHWs) and supported by the school principals. *Resources: Allocated budget from the mental health strategy, student + facilitator booklets (to be developed) + Principal communication: Term 2 (By June 11)</p>	<p>Students, CYWs, MHWs, School Principal</p>	<p>-% of schools participating in youth-led mental health initiatives -% of student participating as youth-leaders for mental health initiatives -% of students participating in events -Our school survey markers</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>1,8,10,11</p>
<b>Parent/Caregiver Engagement &amp; Mental Health Literacy</b>	<p>Parents/caregivers express awareness of, and satisfaction with, parent engagement activities &amp; mental health services at school.</p>	<p>The Mental Health Lead will partner with experts to offer parent/caregiver webinars focused on supporting their children at home, with themes centered around mental health awareness, emotional regulation, and practical strategies for fostering well-being, connection and resilience. *Resources: Pine River (5 sessions) Dr Adele (1 session): Oct, Nov, Jan, Feb, April, May</p> <p>A March Break kit parent/caregiver draw will be organized with resources for student well-being during the March Break. Resources: FB communication materials + Principal support: 50 kits, draw date Feb and in schools by Mid Feb (home by March break)</p> <p>Parent Council members will receive mental health updates through a mental health newsletter that connects them with information about initiatives, resources and student well-being efforts. *Resources: MH Lead prepared materials + Principal support: 1 x fall, 1 x spring</p> <p>Schools will include targeted communication for Grades 6, 7, 8, and 10 in their report cards, to highlight Student MH Lit curriculum connections and provide families with resources to support learning and well-being at home. *Resources: Printed MH Lit personalized letter + SMHO resources: In schools by end of Oct for November report cards</p>	<p>Parents/caregivers, School Principals, Community Partners</p>	<p>-parent participation rates in mental health learning sessions &amp; engagement activities - perceptual parent survey (march)</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>1</p>

**Foundational to our work: Scalable mental health practices** remain at the core in anchoring our mental health strategic direction and annualized goals. These include **1)** Leadership commitment, **2)** On-going mental health strategy and action plan (clear and focused vision, implementation processes, **3)** Internal and external communication (shared language), **4)** Assessing needs and capacity, **5)** Standard processes and protocols, **6)** Systematic professional learning, **7)** Engagement and collaboration, **8)** Evidence and monitoring.

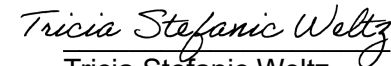
Northeastern Catholic District School Board's 2025-28 Strategic Priorities and 2025-26 Annual Actions aim to enhance our system's shared understanding and capacity to support student mental health and well-being. Our implementation plan was developed with engagement from system and school stakeholders through intentional conversations and actions to help move our strategy forward. We acknowledge and are grateful for the guidance, resources and support received through our provincial support team, School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO), a partner with the Ministry of Education.



Kim McEntee  
Supervisor of Mental Health & Wellness



Jennifer Dunkley  
Superintendent of Education



Tricia Stefanic Weltz  
Director of Education