



Mental Health and Well-Being

STRATEGY 2024-2027



Message from the Director of Education

“Together we can support the mental health, of every student”
- School Mental Health Ontario

At the Niagara Catholic District School Board, we believe that our Catholic schools give young people a sense of hope, belonging and meaning. These are essential for creating mentally healthy environments that support and sustain positive mental health. In our Catholic schools, we recognize that we must honour commitments to Truth and Reconciliation and equity by taking an identity-affirming approach that acknowledges our staff and students as having unique experiences, identities, and perspectives that must be validated and celebrated as Children of God.

Good mental health is fundamental to every student’s ability to regulate, learn, and reach their full potential in education. We are committed to our focus on social-emotional learning and mental health awareness and promotion, to ensure that we continue to view mental health on a continuum that ranges from mental wellness to diagnosis. This will continue to help us recognize that every student has an individual journey that is nurtured to meet their needs.

The trustees and senior leaders of the Niagara Catholic District School Board are committed to making the Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy a priority, with a clear and focused vision for mental health. This Strategy builds on past strategies, in alignment with our 2021-2026 strategic plan and our Niagara Catholic Equity Action Plan and ensures that we comply with PPM 169.

Our 2024-2027 plan focuses on embedding social-emotional learning into our daily activities, increasing educator understanding of mental health from a culturally responsive, trauma-informed and identity-affirming lens, engaging student and family voice, and ensuring equitable pathways to care for students both internally and externally.

In this strategy, Niagara Catholic also focuses on developing, implementing, and improving the communication of a comprehensive holistic employee well-being plan and programming, as the well-being of our staff is imperative for the success of our students.

On behalf of trustees and the senior team, thank you to staff, parents/guardians, and community partners for your support of Niagara Catholic students. We must have a collective commitment to mental health and well-being, and we are grateful for all of your support.

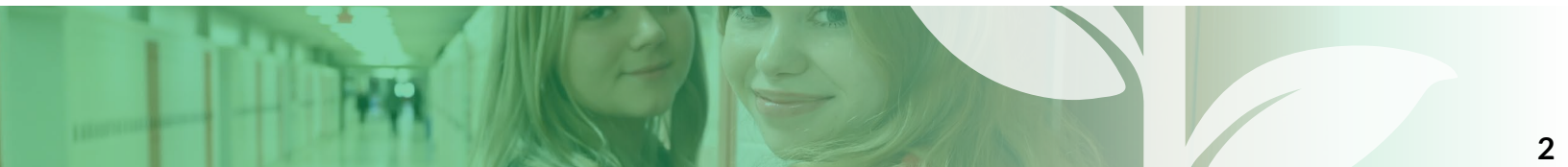


Camillo Cipriano,
Director of Education



“Mental health issues affect families, relationships, and communities. We must work together to dismantle the barriers of stigma and discrimination, and promote mental well-being for all.”

- Pope Francis



Message from the Chair of the Board

As we begin the 2024-2025 school year, I want to express my deep appreciation for our leadership teams, staff, and union partners for their hard work and commitment to our students. Together, our efforts have enabled our Board of Trustees to ensure that the mental health and well-being of all staff and students is a priority.

As a Catholic school board, we see the crucial connection between hope, faith, and mental health and well-being. Niagara Catholic, and the Board of Trustees, are committed and dedicated to making the mental health of our staff and students a priority. Our system is the optimal place to emphasize prevention, promotion, and awareness about mental health, and to create pathways to support those who may need additional help.

Trustees are committed to making the *Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2024-2027* a priority, with a clear and focused vision for mental health. The strategy provides a three-year plan with an emphasis on embedding social-emotional learning into everyday practice, increasing our family/caregiver and student voice, and ensuring that we always keep equity at the forefront of what we do. By embedding social-emotional learning into our everyday practice, we will help our youth to grow into resilient, and independent adults.

As a Niagara Catholic family, we are a community of faith, hope, and love. Everything we do is student centered, and our goal is to continue to prioritize the needs of our families. In times of adversity, our collective faith sustains us and guides us forward. Let us come together as a community, united in faith, to support each other along this journey as we prioritize mental health and well-being.



Danny Di Lorenzo,
Chair of the Board of Trustees



“Mental health challenges are not a sign of weakness or a lack of faith. We must foster a culture of openness and support, where individuals feel safe to seek help and receive the care they need.”

- Pope Francis



Message from the Manager of Mental Health and Well-Being

At the Niagara Catholic District School Board, we are committed to creating conditions to support the mental health and well-being of all of our students. As the Manager of Mental Health and Well-Being, it has been a priority to effectively communicate the shared responsibility of creating welcoming and supportive environments for our students. As school communities, we focus on identity-affirming practices, to create inclusive learning environments so that all students feel accepted and safe.

As a Catholic school board, we are fortunate to be in a position where we can have a significant impact on the lives of our students. At Niagara Catholic, our goal is to model healthy habits, validate student's experiences, and help them to learn and care about their mental health. This is why it is a priority to successfully provide educators and school staff with the knowledge, and tools to demonstrate these skills and to effectively deliver curriculum focused on mental health and well-being, and social-emotional learning skills. Mental Health is an essential component of overall health, and learning about these skills from a young age, is essential in supporting our students to develop to be healthy and successful.

As a member of the Mental Health and Well-Being Team, we recognize that we have the vital role in the school system, to utilize our expertise to guide and support both our staff and students. We help to address the barriers that reinforce oppression, to ensure that all services are culturally responsive to the unique needs of each individual student. We do not work in isolation, but instead rely on system level supports, school supports, leaders and subject-matter experts, to provide the best service for everyone. We are proud to work together as a Catholic community, to ensure all students view our Catholic schools as mentally healthy environments.

We are grateful for the support of all staff, families and students so that every face has a place at Niagara Catholic.



Andrea Bozza
Manager of Mental Health and Well-Being



“At its core, a mentally healthy school and classroom is a learning environment where every student feels like they belong.”

- School Mental Health Ontario



Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy Pillars

Our Mission

We are a Christ-centered Catholic faith community that celebrates diversity and fosters spiritual growth, inspiring all to reach their full potential in mind, body, and spirit.

The Niagara Catholic District School Board recognizes that a student's mental health and well-being is central to their development and learning. As Christ's followers, our faith permeates all aspects of our Catholic schools, programs, policies, and procedures. We are a community that responds to students' needs and celebrates the diversity of our community. Every student has equitable access, opportunity for success, and a safe and nurturing environment to grow and succeed.



Our Vision

Encountering souls and opening minds so that all students succeed.

As a Catholic school board, we have the opportunity and unique ability to impact youth of all ages through the lens of our faith with mental health and well-being as the foundation in our work. In alignment with our 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, *Called by Name: Listening, Learning, and Leading*, where student mental health and well-being is a focus under the priority of *Advancing Student Achievement for All*, our *Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy* highlights that student well-being is foundational for academic success.

Our Values and Commitment

School Mental Health Strategy

Ontario has a comprehensive and systematic multi-year *School Mental Health and Addictions Strategy* that follows scientific research and responds to student needs and service trends. The *Niagara Catholic Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy* aligns with *School Mental Health Ontario's School Mental Health Strategy*. By using resources and supports from SMH-Ontario, Niagara Catholic is dedicated to using evidence-based resources and student-centered thinking, aligned with Ontario's curriculum.



PPM 169: Student Mental Health

Niagara Catholic is committed to the full implementation of PPM-169. The Ministries of Education and Health are collaborating to build a continuum of mental health and addictions care across our Catholic schools, community-based child and youth mental health providers, and hospitals. This memorandum outlines requirements for school boards and school authorities to provide culturally responsive, evidence-informed student mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention. This memorandum outlines the importance of school boards working within the broader provincial system of care, with the following priority areas:

- Three-year mental health and addictions strategy and one-year action plan
- Joint local planning with community-based child and youth mental health providers
- Multi-tiered systems of support
- Consistent use of evidence-informed brief interventions and standardized measurement
- Suicide prevention, intervention and postvention protocol
- Virtual care delivery
- Enhanced educator and staff mental health literacy
- Mandatory mental health literacy learning for students
- Family mental health literacy and awareness
- Social-emotional learning
- Mental health absences

Niagara Catholic has long embedded mental health and well-being into our strategic plans, and each area of PPM-169 has been implemented. We now focus on the sustainability of these areas, through data-driven and evidence-based monitoring.

Alignment

Niagara Catholic Equity Action Plan

Niagara Catholic's Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy works to ensure that as we focus on identity-affirming our Catholic schools and workplaces, all strategies and action plans align with the Board's Mission, Vision and Values, and the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, *Called by Name: Listening, Learning, and Leading*, including the Board's *Equity Action Plan*. Niagara Catholic students represent a wide range of intersecting social and cultural identities. A Board priority "is to foster, inclusive, equitable and safe school communities where all are welcomed and called by name" supporting all students, staff and families.

A student's identity contributes to the development of a positive sense of self while acting as a protective factor that contributes to resiliency.

The *Niagara Catholic Equity Action Plan* focuses on embedding identity-affirming practices, which includes dismantling systems with inequitable access, engaging with our culture and faith leaders for supports, and ensuring that we highlight the perspectives of youth who are underrepresented to ensure we have culturally responsive approaches. All Niagara Catholic students will experience equitable and inclusive school and classroom practices, including mental health and well-being programs, to improve student achievement, engagement, representation and voice.



Niagara Catholic Indigenous Education

The Indigenous Education (IE) Team identifies Indigenous Student Success as the top priority at Niagara Catholic and strives to support students who voluntarily self-identify as Indigenous; First Nations, Métis or Inuit. The IE team understands and recognizes that student mental health is always at the forefront of the work they are doing, and historical underpinnings of the Indigenous people and the connection to the students, is taken into consideration in all that we do. The IE team works closely with students to support their needs from a culturally sensitive and holistic approach. The team ensures that traditional and cultural methods are considered when supporting students and a connection to outside resources, including Indigenous organizations that specialize in traditional and holistic practices, are essential at Niagara Catholic.

The IE team has developed a referral process with Indigenous organizations within the Niagara region to support Indigenous students, and an Indigenous resource guide for Niagara Catholic has been created. This guide offers an overview of the programs and services offered by organizations across Niagara. These Indigenous services make supporting our students more accessible, creating pathways to service both internally and externally.

The IE team has a goal to create Indigenous Student Wellness Toolkits geared toward specific audiences: administrators, educators and support staff, and parents/caregivers. The goal of providing these toolkits is to improve accessibility to culturally relevant resources that will address mental wellness and well-being for Indigenous students. The toolkits will identify practical considerations to create a safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive school system and environment where Indigenous students have support and are encouraged to fulfill their social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual goals.

2021-2026 Strategic Plan: Called by Name: Listening, Learning, and Leading

Niagara Catholic's Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy aligns with our 2021-2026 Strategic Plan Called by Name: Listening, Learning, and Leading. The first priority, Advancing Student Achievement for All, focuses on supporting student's mental health and wellness and supporting all pathways for student achievement. This will be supported through our focus on social-emotional learning through curriculum in the classroom. A second priority is to foster inclusive, equitable and safe school communities, where all are welcomed and called by name. Through our Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan with a focus on identity-affirming practices, we will strengthen and promote opportunities for student voice, develop and honour a culture of acceptance, and prioritize a diverse workforce that reflects our communities.



NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



2021-2016

STRATEGIC
PLAN

LISTENING,
LEARNING,
AND
LEADING

STRATEGIC
DIRECTIONS

Our Mission

We are a Christ-centered Catholic faith community that celebrates diversity and fosters spiritual growth, inspiring all to reach their full potential in mind, body, and spirit.

Our Vision

Encountering souls and opening minds so that all students succeed.

Our Values

JUSTICE

We are committed to equity, works of social action, and the celebration of diversity.

COMPASSION

We practice forgiveness, generosity, kindness, humility, and service in our interactions with others.

STEWARDSHIP

We care and act respectfully and responsibly for all God's creation.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We take ownership for the impact and consequences of actions and decisions.

COMMUNITY

We foster connections where all belong and work collaboratively with our partners.

INTEGRITY

We act in a manner that is consistent with gospel values.

FAITHFULNESS

We are nourished by our Catholic faith through the word, spirit, and prayer.



ADVANCE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Focus on student success promoting and supporting all pathways for student achievement
- Support students' mental health & wellness
- Prepare students in global competencies



CELEBRATE THE RICHNESS OF OUR CATHOLIC FAITH AND OUR HOLISTIC, VALUES-BASED, CATHOLIC EDUCATION

- Anchor our work in the Gospel as lived in the person of Jesus Christ
- Prepare our students to live out the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations
- Appreciate and highlight faith-based role models putting a 'face to our faith'



FOSTER INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE, AND SAFE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES WHERE ALL ARE WELCOMED AND 'CALLED BY NAME'

- Strengthen and promote opportunities for student voice
- Advance Indigenous Education guided by the Truth & Reconciliation recommendations and the local Indigenous community
- Develop and honour a culture of respect, acceptance, and belonging
- Prioritize a diverse workforce that reflects our communities



MANAGE OUR RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD IN THE NIAGARA REGION

- Design opportunities to address changing enrollment
- Optimize our facilities through responsible stewardship and engage in environmental sustainability

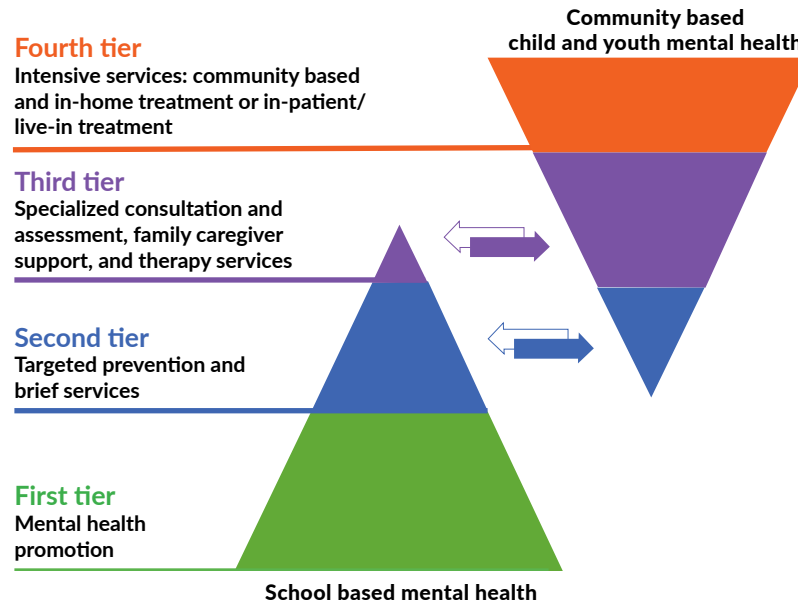


FOSTER AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL OUR STAFF TO STRENGTHEN OUR WORK WITH STUDENTS

- Facilitate positive employee engagement, faith formation, and community belonging
- Create opportunities to promote staff health and wellness
- Invest in staff learning opportunities and leadership development

Multi-Tiered System of Support

A multi-tiered system of support approach is seen as crucial for school mental health service delivery. This structure establishes priorities, clarifies roles, and ensures service coordination. This includes a continuum of services: mental health promotion, early identification, prevention and early intervention, and service pathways / clinical support for more intensive mental health needs.



Tier 1

Tier 1 prioritizes mental health promotion, highlighting the role that our Catholic schools play in everyday wellness. Tier one support is universally offered at the school and classroom level and ensures that we are creating mentally healthy Catholic schools and classrooms for **all** students. School staff have daily opportunities to focus on wellness as part of everyday practice, and to notice and support when students show signs of a mental health problem. At Niagara Catholic, we are focused on educator mental health literacy through professional development, so that school and system leaders can embed Tier one strategies into their everyday learning.

Tier 2

Tier 2 focuses on prevention and early intervention. When students show signs of an emerging or escalating mental health problem, Tier two school-based prevention and early intervention services are essential. At Niagara Catholic, school mental health professionals are available to assist in identifying mental health challenges, providing brief, evidence-informed interventions to help students with mild-to-moderate mental health problems, and supporting referrals to other professionals. School staff are available to continue to support reinforcing skills and removing barriers for our students.

Tier 3

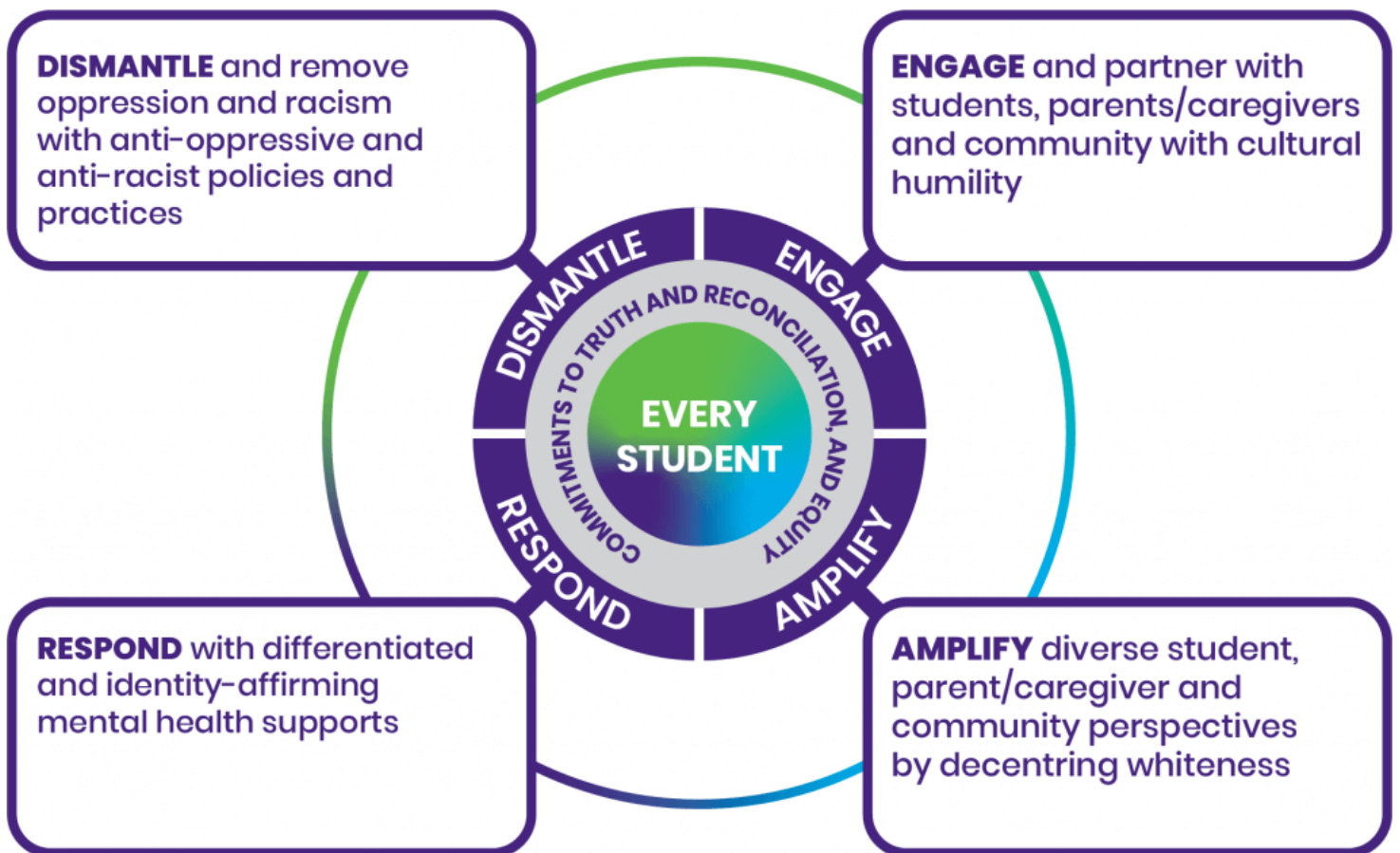
Some students may present with complex mental health needs and will require more intensive services or supports, which may be referred to as Tier 3 support. School mental health professionals provide support and help with transitioning students and families to access other community supports. Niagara Catholic has worked closely with our community partners to ensure there are effective pathways to receiving these services in the community. As a community, we work together to have a shared vision for an integrated and coordinated system of care for child and youth mental health. Together, we have used the document, *Right Time, Right Care: Strengthening Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions System of Care for Children and Young People* that summarizes the relative roles of our Catholic schools and community mental health organizations with respect to service delivery. Niagara Catholic has worked closely with all community partners on protocol development and collaborations to ensure equitable access to service.



Identity Affirming School Mental Health

At Niagara Catholic, we recognize that Identity and mental health are connected. A student's identity can impact how they feel and it is a priority to ensure that our student's identities are affirmed, and celebrated to ensure they have a sense of purpose and belonging. At Niagara Catholic, our goals are to:

- place the student at the center of mental health support at school
- recognize and build upon individual, cultural and our faith community strengths
- adapt mental health programming to meet each student's needs, in a trauma-informed, and culturally relevant way
- recognize the importance of every staff member reflecting on their practice, exploring and understanding their identities and how who they are impacts the work they do and the relationships they have
- ensure that service delivery is accessible and inclusive
- have partnerships and relationships with communities and organizations with unique expertise in equity, reconciliation, and mental wellness



At Niagara Catholic, we are committed to the implementation of the [Cultural Humility Self-Reflection Tool](#) to allow staff to explore and reflect on their cultural humility, to ensure we provide identity-affirming support to every student.

Mental Health Leadership Team and Inter-Departmental Collaboration

At Niagara Catholic, we have a multidisciplinary team focused on student mental health. Our team includes mental health professionals, system leaders, subject matter experts, curriculum consultants and school staff.

System Leaders

System leaders create the supportive environments for effective and sustainable practices in school mental health. Our leadership team includes superintendents and management from all departments, including Human Resources Services, Communications, Programs and Innovation, Student Support Services, and alternative learning programs. Through collaboration and communication, we ensure that all departments view mental health as a primary part of their work and priorities.

Subject Matter Experts

Our Mental Health Leadership Team relies on subject matter experts with focused areas and lived experience. As we develop our mental health strategies and action plans, we embed the voice and expertise of our Indigenous Lead, Chaplaincy Leader, Behaviour Analyst and community partners to ensure all areas of expertise are included.

Curriculum Consultants

At Niagara Catholic, we focus on embedding mental health and well-being into our curriculum, to ensure that students and staff are focused on social-emotional learning. We work closely with our Health and Physical Education Consultant, to ensure we have effective implementation, training and sustainability of the Mental Health Literacy modules in health and physical education. As a Catholic board, we are supported and aligned with our Religion and Family Life Consultant, for the effective delivery of mental health curriculum in Religion and Family Life, and as we introduce the MH LIT modules into our Secondary Religion and Family Life classes. We will also be implementing the MH10 Literacy module in the Career Studies course in Niagara Catholic secondary schools.

Our teams collaborate ensuring that Niagara Catholic's mental health strategy is aligned with priorities and practices in the province, and with our community partners.



Intentional Link Between Faith and Mental Health

In our Catholic schools, we focus on the transmission of knowledge through classroom curriculum, and the formation of the whole person - mind, body, and spirit. With a Christ-centered approach, Catholic schools across Ontario focus on developing discerning believers, effective communicators, reflective, creative, and holistic thinkers, lifelong learners, collaborative contributors, caring family members and responsible citizens through our Catholic School Graduate Expectations. In Niagara Catholic, we believe that faith and mental health and well-being work together hand-in-hand to support and strengthen these expectations. We work together to align programs and resources which highlight the importance of mental health and well-being along with strategies and supports for students through a Catholic lens.

We recognize the importance of making the intentional link between faith and mental health. At a curriculum level, implementation of mental health modules and curriculum, are implemented in collaboration with our Religion and Family Life Consultant to strengthen the mental health components of our Religion and Family Life classes. Our well-being and social-emotional learning programs are introduced in collaboration with our Chaplaincy Leaders, to ensure our Catholic faith is recognized as a strength and protective factor for many of our students. We have collaborated on Mental Health Awareness Week and Catholic Education Week events, faith and wellness retreats, professional development sessions and our compassionate care and crisis response in our Catholic schools.



Priorities of the Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy

Niagara Catholic has identified five priority areas for 2024-2027 through data collection, community reports, consultation with system level and school level staff, community partners and Niagara Catholic students and families.

PRIORITIES

GOALS

Embed wellness promotion and social-emotional learning into everyday school culture

- Effective and sustainable implementation of the mental health and wellness modules in grades 7 and 8 Health and Physical Education curriculum and Career Studies (GLC 20).
- Effective and sustainable implementation of evidence-based social-emotional learning programs through educators and support staff, such as Child and Youth Workers.
- Inter-departmental collaboration to embed a mental health and well-being lens into all curriculum, training and initiatives.

Increase educator understanding of mental health and well-being from a culturally responsive, identity-affirming and trauma-informed lens

- Provide mental health professional learning for educators and staff about mental health, from a framework that acknowledges the impact of systemic oppression and colonialism.
- Consistent use and understanding of the multi-tiered system of supports in all professional learning sessions.
- Expand professional learning opportunities for all staff through a variety of learning opportunities.

Expand mental health awareness and promotion to better engage student and family voice

- Promote and enhance student voice in all mental health activities and initiatives.
- Enhance the use of existing family and caregiver pathways, and create new opportunities to gather family/caregiver voice, and provide learning opportunities.
- Enhance the involvement and collaboration with families or students who have been historically excluded and underrepresented.

Sustain and strengthen equitable pathways to care both internally and externally

- Provide tools and resources to support administrators, educators and support staff, in identifying signs and symptoms of student mental health concerns and how to access services.
- Engage in joint local planning with community-based child and youth mental health providers, to support pathways and protocols that are culturally responsive, identity affirming, and trauma informed.
- Create and enhance internal mental health services with the consistent use of evidence-informed interventions and standardized measurement.

Develop, implement, and improve communication of a comprehensive holistic employee well-being plan and programming

- Support a mentally healthy workplace environment for all staff.
- Create and enhance internal communication with all staff regarding well-being programs.
- Create an understanding of the link between staff mental well-being and student mental well-being.

Each year, an action plan will be developed with a primary goal of incrementally moving towards this vision. Niagara Catholic's Action Plan for 2024-2025 can be found at the Niagara Catholic DSB's website at <https://niagaracatholic.ca/mental-health-and-well-being>.

Foundations for Effective School Mental Health Practices at Niagara Catholic

Foundations	Understanding	Demonstration	Resources Being Utilized
<p>Leadership Commitment</p>	<p>When senior leaders and administrators prioritize mental health and well-being, it sets the tone for all staff to do the same. Educators and staff members feel encouraged to target these areas, and feel valued for their work in this area. It allows all staff to prioritize their students' mental health needs.</p>	<p>At Niagara Catholic, our Director of Education, Senior Administration and central level management have participated and been certified in the MH System Leaders Lit Course through SMH-Ontario. This course was designed to deepen system leaders' understanding of the interconnection between learning and mental health, and to enhance their capacity to lead in this critical area. All administrators have been trained fully in suicide intervention, and will be trained with the <i>Leading Mentally Healthy Schools</i> eBook in 2024-2025.</p>	<p>Mentally Healthy Schools Ebook (SMH-ON)</p> <p>MH System Leaders Course</p> <p>ASIST Training</p>
<p>Engagement and Collaboration</p>	<p>Engaging staff, students and community partners helps to build shared ownership and leads to more impactful outcomes. Meaningful collaboration and engagement require openness and an intentional effort to center the voices, and expertise of those with lived experience in our Catholic schools.</p>	<p>Niagara Catholic engages with several parent and family groups to ensure family and caregiver voice is represented in decision making. Through Student Senate at a system level, and wellness and equity groups at the school level, student voice is a crucial contributor to planning for mental health and well-being initiatives. The Mental Health Team regularly meets with community partners to ensure consistent and equitable access to treatment, and regular communication occurs about mental health services.</p>	<p>Right Time, Right Care: Strengthening Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions System of Care for Children and Young People</p> <p>Student Engagement Toolkit (SMH-ON)</p>

<p>Vision and Strategy</p>	<p>All school boards in Ontario are required to have a three-year mental health and well-being strategy with an annual action plan (as per PPM 169: Student Mental Health) that aligns with the <i>Student Achievement Plan</i>. Goals within the strategy focus on mental health needs and priorities and often align with Ministry expectations and <i>School Mental Health Ontario</i>.</p>	<p>Niagara Catholic has a three-year <i>Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy and Action Plan</i> that uses a tiered system model in compliance with <i>PPM-169</i>. Our strategy aligns with the <i>Niagara Catholic Equity Action Plan</i>, our 2021-2026 strategic plan and <i>School Mental Health Ontario's Strategy</i>. Niagara Catholic's goals and priorities are data-driven and include input from Niagara Catholic's Mental Health and Well-Being Leadership Team, community partners, and students with the goal of embedding system level priorities in school improvement planning to reach and meet the needs of students.</p>	<p>Mental Health and Well-being in School Improvement Planning</p> <p>Leading Mentally Healthy Schools Reflection Tool</p>
<p>Infrastructure</p>	<p>In Ontario, every school board has a Mental Health Leadership Team to assist in reviewing related data, making key decisions, and communicating progress to all departments. Our Catholic schools have, or can create a school-level team to support coordinated decision-making and implementation of mental health and well-being initiatives.</p>	<p>Niagara Catholic has a leadership team composed of system level staff, school staff, and subject-matter experts. Niagara Catholic's Mental Health Team is composed of Social Workers/ Psychotherapists Child and Youth Workers and Mental Health Champions. Many Niagara Catholic schools have student-led wellness groups planning and carrying out wellness activities at the school level. Students and staff are provided mental health training opportunities through professional development days and sessions, to support the wellness work in their schools.</p>	<p>MH in Action- Online Course</p>

<p>Process and Protocols</p>	<p>In Ontario, every board is expected to have protocols and processes related to mental health supports and services as per <i>PPM 169</i>. Protocols provide guidance and system clarity in supporting student mental health promotion, prevention and intervention of mental health concerns. These protocols also ensure that evidence-informed practice is a priority in our Catholic schools and processes ensure safe, culturally responsive, and evidence-informed decision-making.</p>	<p>Niagara Catholic has focused on creating, implementing and updating mental health and well-being protocols and processes. We use the Decision Support Tool to ensure speakers, activities, and programs are vetted and appropriate for students at the school or grade level, and include an approved guest speaker list. Niagara Catholic has created the <i>Compassionate Care Response Guide, Protocol for Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention, and an Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocol</i>, and maintains protocol agreements with community partners related to mental health and well-being.</p>	<p>School Mental Health Decision Support Tool</p> <p>Compassionate Care Response Guide</p> <p>Protocol for Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention</p> <p>Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocol</p>
<p>Evidence and Monitoring</p>	<p>Reviewing and assessing needs, gaps, resources, initiatives, and capacity is an essential part of the planning process. It is necessary to inform mental health supports for students with data, and it is just as important to evaluate and monitor those supports to ensure their effectiveness.</p>	<p>Niagara Catholic has invested in EMHware software to collect, monitor, and report on the data collected by the Mental Health Team. We have embedded Greenspace Measurement Based Care software, a tool focused on evidence-monitoring and assessing treatment. This ensures that treatment for students is evidence-based, embeds progress monitoring, and as a result mental health treatment or services, can be adjusted or changed based on the needs of the students.</p>	<p>EMHware</p> <p>Greenspace</p>

Internal and External Communication

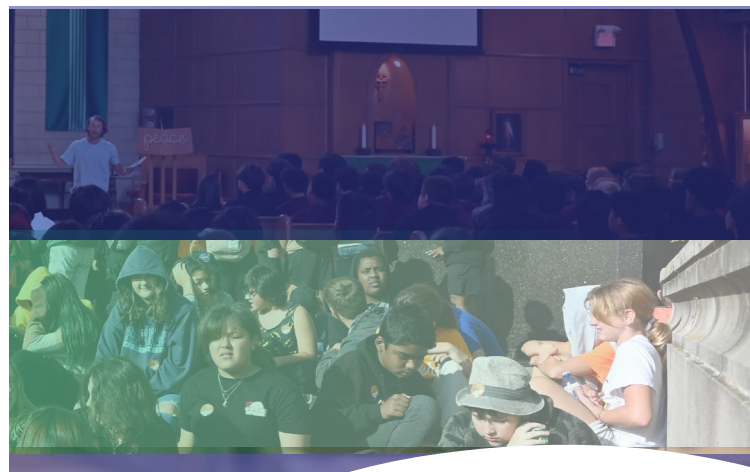
Having clear and regular communication with internal and external stakeholders about student mental health builds shared language and understanding. This allows seamless pathways to care, and an understanding of each other's systems. System leaders and school administrators also share the responsibility of ensuring that the *Board's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and Action Plan* is communicated to school staff, to ensure school-based activities align with the strategy

At Niagara Catholic, a variety of channels are used to openly communicate about the *Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy*, goals and priorities, protocol development and implementation, and response guides for staff. Communication occurs at committee meetings, principals' meetings, school-based staff meetings and on professional activity days. The Niagara Catholic website and social media accounts are used to share information with families and caregivers, and the Niagara Catholic VLE is a form of communication for teaching staff. Representatives from Niagara Catholic serve on community committees such as the Core Service Provider Table, to ensure community partners are aware of internal documents and procedures.

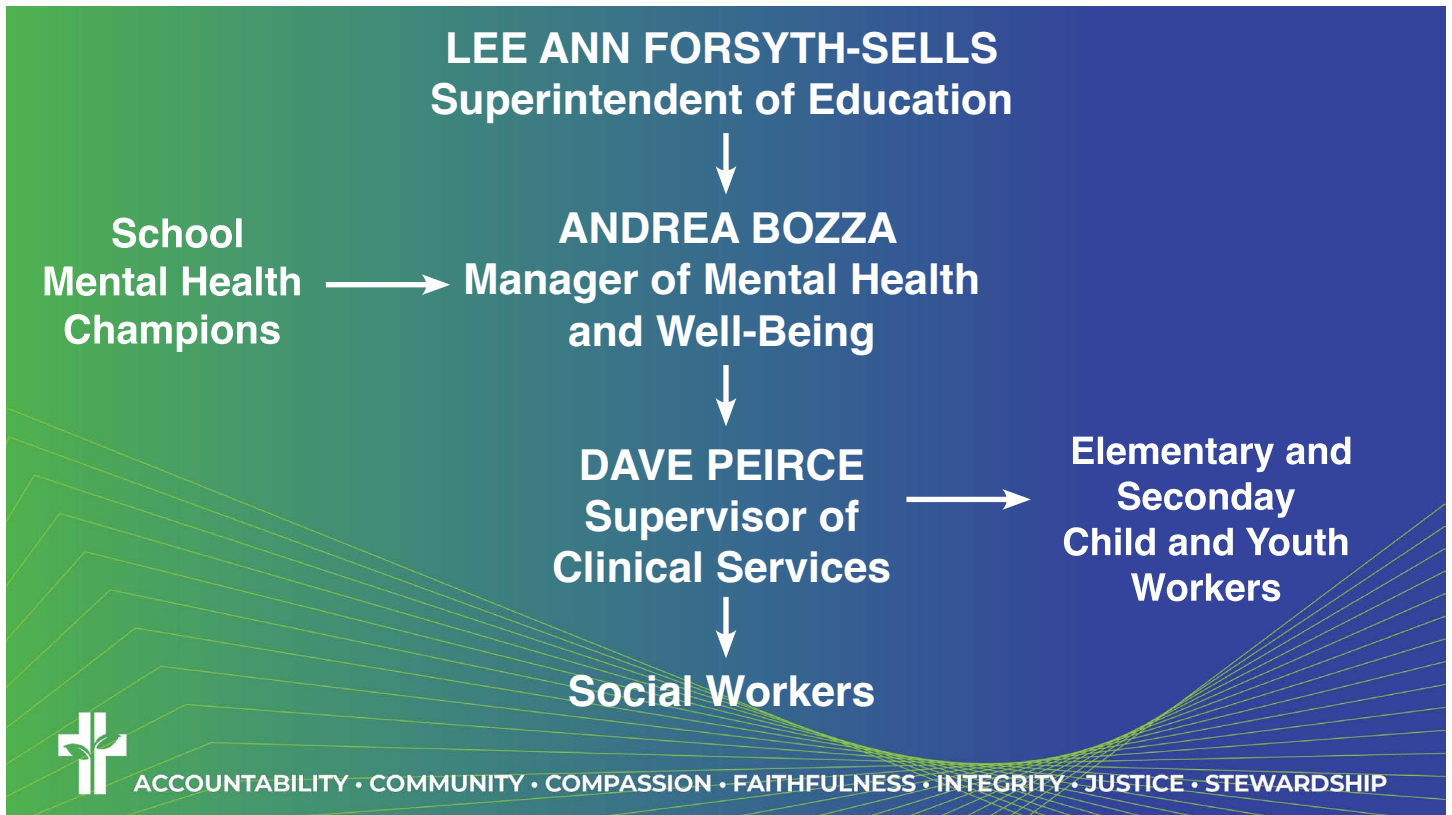
[Niagara Catholic District School Board Mental Health](#)

As we move forward into the next three years, we continue to focus on ensuring that everything we do is student-centered, aligned with the Ontario curriculum and keeping our Catholic teaching and values at the forefront.

***“Let us thank all those who teach in Catholic schools.
Educating is an act of love; it is like giving life.”
- Pope Francis***



**Niagara Catholic District School Board
Mental Health and Well-Being Team 2024 - 2025**



Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells, Superintendent of Education
Andrea Bozza, Manager of Mental Health and Well-Being
Dave Peirce, Supervisor of Clinical Services
Social Workers/Psychotherapists
Child and Youth Workers
Mental Health Champions

