



# The Leader

## BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

### Regular Board Meeting

May 30, 2022

All reports for this meeting can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3wYk0d8>



**Above:** Gurnirmal Kaur, top right, a student at North Park Collegiate and Vocational School, received recognition for her science project developing an interactive chatbot trained to respond to signs of emotional distress online.

### Learn Lead Inspire Award Presentation

The Learn Lead Inspire award recognizes the students, staff members and volunteers who have made outstanding contributions to our school communities, aligning with the Board's mission to build a culture of learning, well-being and belonging. This month, two incredible deserving members of the Grand Erie community were honoured.

Earlier this spring, **Gurnirmal Kaur**, a Grade 12 student at North Park Collegiate and Vocational School, competed in the Bay Area Science and Engineering Fair with a project titled EzerBot: Detecting Phrases Indicative of Emotional Distress Within Online Platforms. Noticing that signs of emotional distress becoming more prevalent online, Gurnirmal set out to create an intelligent chatbot that uses a neural network to detect instances of emotional distress within online platforms. Trained with data samples, the EzerBot is programmed to engage the online user in conversation and offer relevant well-being resources in their area, with a goal of establishing it as a functional tool for mental health support, and a preventative online measure for reducing self-harm and suicide. Kaur returned with multiple awards and \$4,000 in cash prizes for the project.



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### Learn Lead Inspire Award Presentation Contd..

She was selected to go on to compete at the Canada Wide Science and Engineering Fair earlier this month, where she was honoured with a Senior Gold Medal Excellence Award and a Senior Challenge Award for Health and Wellness. She was one of eight gold medalists to be given the Youth Can Innovate Award with a cash prize of \$1000, and further selected as one of four senior gold medalists to be awarded a cash prize of \$7,000. Gurnirmal is the epitome of what it means to learn, lead and inspire. Congratulations!

**Jayme Wilson** is the behind-the-scene coordinator of a food program active in 11 Grand Erie elementary schools.

The grassroots program ensures students who need them receive hot, healthy meals, enabling

a successful day of learning. Jayme is the driving force behind the city of Branford's Downtown Central Neighbourhood Association, and her volunteer efforts are dedicated to effecting positive change in the area. In 2016, the Neighbourhood Association met with the principal at Central Public School along with parents in the school community to find ways to bridge gaps in support for families. A number of community initiatives followed. It also put the wheels in motion to get the food program established.

Following the shutdowns of the pandemic – and with the combined efforts of many volunteers and partner organizations – the Gifts of the Heart food program was born, and has grown to a five-days-a-week operation, with pantry bags available for students to take home on the weekend. It currently provides 855 meals a week, and is growing still. Changemakers like Jayme make all the difference, and her dedicated commitments help Grand Erie build a culture of learning, well-being and belonging.



**Above:** Jayme Wilson, bottom row middle, was honoured for her work coordinating a food program serving students in 11 elementary schools.



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### Strategic Communications Plan

In June 2021, Trustees approved the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee to create a Strategic Communications Plan. The purpose of a Strategic Communication Plan is to align key messages and communication activities to support Grand Erie's Multi-Year Plan, 2021-2026.

The Ad Hoc Committee met on four occasions: October 24, 2021, November 18, 2021, January 13, 2022 and May 25, 2022. Grand Erie's Strategic Communications Plan addresses fundamental goals established in the multi-year strategic plan related to Learning, Well-Being and Belonging. Its actions and success criteria demonstrate how communications efforts support Grand Erie's vision to Learn, Lead and Inspire. Monday's board meeting introduced the new 2021-2026 Strategic Communications Plan, and outlined the specific goals and objectives. The full report can be found on pages 28 – 37 here: <https://bit.ly/3wYk0d8>

### Land Acknowledgement

A new land acknowledgement statement for Grand Erie was introduced at the May 9 Committee of the Regular Board meeting. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was formed as a result of recognition of the cultural genocide and assimilation inflicted upon Indigenous Peoples in Canada for generations, and in concluding its work, created 94 Calls to Action including a number specifically focused on education. A land acknowledgement statement became a formal part of the procedures preceding meetings, events and opening exercises throughout our board. It recognizes the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples, and the special, enduring connection they have to the lands they've been stewards of for millennia. In its commitment to reconciliation and ongoing learning, Grand Erie has updated its previous land acknowledgement statement to better recognize the ongoing processes of colonialism and its damaging long-term effects, and to continue to express gratitude to those whose traditional territory we reside on to work and learn. Read the new land acknowledgement statement [here](#).





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### Director's Report Highlights

#### Virtual Learning for 2022-23

As confirmed through a February Ministry announcement, Grand Erie will continue to offer virtual learning during the 2022-23 school year. A survey conducted in April showed the families of approximately 125 students from Kindergarten to Grade 8 have opted for online learning next year. Additionally, Six Nations Federal Schools has confirmed that they are unable to offer online learning for the upcoming school year. As a result, we are pleased to share that up to 48 students from Six Nations may be joining Grand Erie's online learning through the Reciprocal Education Agreement process. With the addition of Six Nations students to our elementary program, we hope to offer opportunities to Six Nations students to engage in cultural-based learning and to work with a cultural mentor. Based on the current numbers for elementary online learning, programming will be offered through Graham Bell-Victoria Public School and Grandview Public School.



**JoAnna Roberto,**  
Director of Education

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#### The Year in Leadership

Leadership training has continued across Grand Erie, with 22 leaders and aspiring leaders recently completing part one of the LEAD program. In this part of the program, participants have focused on leadership of self through Learning to Develop Leadership. Part 2 will focus on Leadership to Develop Learning.

Additional Qualification courses have been successfully completed by 74 NTIP teachers this year. NTIP teachers have also had the opportunity to participate in in-person professional learning exploring topics including Indigenous Education, equity, assessment and evaluation, classroom management, special education and universal design for learning.

Administrators have engaged in opportunities for mentorship and deep learning this year in areas of finance, equity, safe schools, and human resources, with 28 participating in multiple new administrator sessions.



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### Compass Update

Compass for Success, a collaboration of school boards working together to build capacity to use data to improve student achievement, has been integrated with Grand Erie information systems and a core team trained in software implementation. A training plan for educational staff is scheduled for fall 2022.



### School Improvement Planning

All Grand Erie elementary and secondary schools have engaged in school improvement planning and implementation, with each school developing goals aligned with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan, using student need as a driver. Dr. Steven Katz has supported professional learning of both administrators and senior administration in this endeavor, guiding us in developing effective practices to support school improvement.

### Information Technology Update

Grand Erie's Information Technology Services staff has been working to roll out the Safe Arrival absence reporting tool, now being used in 90 per cent of all Grand Erie elementary and secondary schools. Additionally, the Cyber Security campaign has launched across all employee groups.

Recently, the Ministry of Education expressed sincere appreciation to John Ecklund and the ITS team for the successful modernization of the network across Grand Erie. Achieving the target bandwidth speed throughout the board was made possible through the commitment, professionalism and hard work of the team, and the collaboration of staff across the board. John's continued participation and collaboration in Ministry initiatives are invaluable and ensure continuous quality improvement.





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### Mental Health Week Fundraising

Part of Grand Erie's Mental Health Week activity included an opportunity for staff to donate to support local mental health initiatives. As a result, \$255 was raised for Camp Unity, a program run by Woodview offering a supportive learning environment for youth with symptoms of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. An additional \$300 was raised for Haldimand Norfolk REACH to help create mental health coping kits for youth.



### Spirit of Norfolk Awards

Congratulations to Lakewood Elementary School and Simcoe Composite School, both winners through a resident voting process in the recent Spirit of Norfolk awards, being recognized as favourite Norfolk County Elementary School and favourite Norfolk County Secondary School respectively.



### New Governance By-laws

The Grand Erie District School Board passed a new Governance Working By-law, a General Governance Policy, and Governance Policies. [Read more...](#)

### Jarvis Public School Primary Choir Presentation

Principal Todd Bannister and teacher Julie McIntyre shared a video of the Jarvis Public School Primary Choir presenting two favourites. The students enthusiastically sang and performed actions for *The Lion Sleeps Tonight* and *Bare Necessities*.

Check out a video of the performance [here](#).



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### Additional Items

**Approval of Minutes:** Trustees approved the minutes of the following meetings:

- April 25, 2022 (Regular Board)
- May 9, 2022 (Committee of the Whole Board)

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### Multi-Year Plan Stories

In 2021, Grand Erie approved a new strategic direction to guide the work that the school board is doing. At the centre of this multi-year plan is the vision to Learn, Lead and Inspire, and a mission to build a culture Learning, Well-Being and Belonging for each learner.

The following stories showcase some of the most recent stories related to the Multi-Year Plan.

### Belonging

- **Incoming Student Trustees Ready to Learn, Lead and Inspire:**  
<https://www.granderie.ca/board/news/incoming-student-trustees-ready-learn-lead-and-inspire>
- **Ryerson Heights Elementary School to be Renamed Edith Monture Elementary School:** <https://www.granderie.ca/board/news/ryerson-heights-elementary-school-be-renamed-edith-monture-elementary-school>