

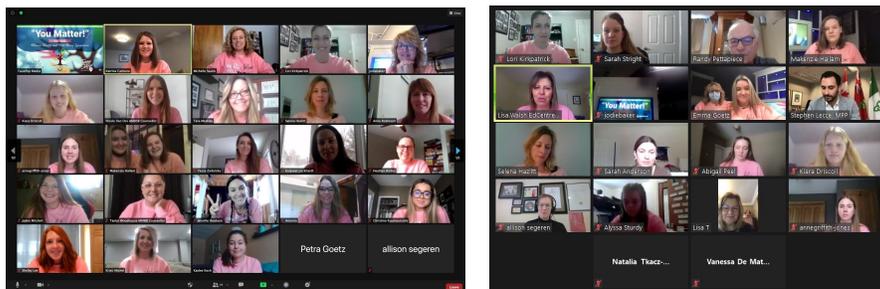
Good News

Students Host You Matter! 2 to Raise Awareness and Continue Work in the area of Mental Health and Well-being

You Matter! 2 was hosted online on January 19 and involved all schools from across the district (grades 6 to 12). The event was planned by students and guided by student feedback from the November 2019 event (You Matter!). The event was hosted by [Fauxpop Media](#) and welcomed guest speakers [Fahd Alhattab](#) and "[Mindful Mike](#)" [Masse](#).

After an introduction and review of the materials which had been sent to participants ahead of time, school teams moved to virtual breakout rooms where they developed plans for their own schools to increase awareness of Mental Health and Well-being resources aimed at reducing stigma associated with mental illness. Local provincial representatives (MPP Randy Pettapiece and MPP Lisa Thompson) and Minister of Education Stephen Lecce also had the opportunity to join and learn about the event.

Student senators reported that the event was very well received and despite a few technical challenges, the feedback was excellent and they look forward to next year's event!



Optimist Club of Stratford Funds New Scholarship for SDSS Students

The Optimist Club of Stratford is offering an annual \$3000 scholarship to a Stratford District Secondary School student who has developed leadership qualities working with children or youth in the community. Students are asked to write an essay about "How volunteering with children or youth in the community has changed my perspective" and demonstrate how they have shown leadership in the community

(beyond the minimum required hours). A preference will be given to those that were involved in child or youth centered volunteerism. Thank you to the Optimist Club for their generous support!

Trustees and Board Staff Attend Professional Development for Leaders

Trustee Schenk reported that she attended "Human Rights for School Board Leaders (Part 1)". Participants heard from a student panel that addressed many different scenarios including students being bullied because of their ethnicity, colour and culture (including cultural practices). Lawyers highlighted key points under the human rights code and breakout sessions discussed two case studies and how they should be handled. Part 2 will be held on February 17 and will focus on Indigenous human rights.

Schools Provide In-Person Learning for Students with Special Education Needs

Vice Chair Geddes reported that on December 23, the Ministry of Education directed school boards to provide in-person learning for students with complex special education needs, who can not be supported online. Over the holidays, the Learning Services team created a plan to offer in-person learning. Students with significant developmental learning needs, who typically require full time EA support, were identified and a list was created for each school. The plan was initially sent to secondary schools but when the Ministry announced that elementary student return would be delayed, in-person learning for elementary students was offered to those who fit a similar profile. Secondary students started in-person learning on January 11, and elementary students started on January 14. She was pleased to share that there are 121 students across AMDSB currently attending in-person, supported by 145 staff.

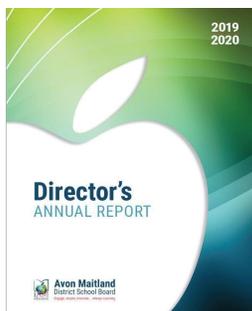
She expressed how proud she is of the Learning Services team, for pulling all this together in a short period of time. Schools have reported that students are glad to be in school and are doing well.

Student Trustee Update

Student trustees (Makenzie Hallam and Elizabeth Benoit) provided an update. The pen pal nursing home project that they have planned is on hold until the provincial lock down has been lifted. The video project that introduces the senate (what they are and what they do) to feeder schools is almost ready to launch. Their Personal Protective Equipment recycling program is ready to launch (at the schools that are not already doing so). They will be participating in a Ministry of Education project that is collecting stories about student experience regarding racial and cultural diversity. The Stratford District SS senators are setting up a tutoring session with students in feeder schools for how to get volunteer hours during these challenging times. Finally, they will be posting self-care ideas on social media to promote Bell Let's Talk Day (January 28).

Staff Presentations

Director's Annual Report for 2019-2020



Director Walsh, supported by the senior team and Communications Manager Longston, presented the Director's Annual Report for the 2019-2020 school year. The report highlights key work that contributed to the overall four year goals of the 2016-2020 AMDSB Strategic Plan. [Click here to view the report.](#)

Senior Staff Updates

Board Approves the 2020-2021 Revised Budget

The Board of Trustees received and approved the 2020-2021 Revised Budget. The operating budget presented includes Operating Revenues and Transfers of Reserves of \$215,604,287 and Operating Expenses of the same. The capital budget approved includes Capital Spending of \$28,196,405. While the operating budget is compliant with the Ministry of Education's budget compliance rule, the total operating deficit for the 2020-2021 year is expected to be \$2,782,272.

[The approved Revised Budget package can be viewed on the board website.](#)

Comprehensive Online Resources Developed to Support Educators

Superintendent Morris highlighted a comprehensive online resource for educators. The Online Learning Playbook outlines best practices and ready to use resources to help educators with the shift to full online learning. The Playbook is regularly updated to keep abreast of ongoing changes.

IT Team Deploys More Devices to Connect Students to Online Learning

Superintendent Morris reported that another 2200 devices were deployed in January. In addition, 200 internet-enabled devices are also on loan to connect families.

Future Board Meetings

- February 9, 2021 – 4:30 p.m. Committee of the Whole, Open Session
- February 23, 2021 – 4:30 p.m. Committee of the Whole, Closed Session, 6:00 p.m. Regular Board Session

Meetings will be hosted online using Microsoft Teams until further notice. [Links to join the meetings will be posted on the Board Meeting page.](#)

Future Meetings/Events with Trustee Representation

- Special Education Advisory Committee – February 3, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.
- Parent Involvement Committee – February 10, 2021 – 6:30 p.m.
- Supervised Alternative Learning – February 22, 2021 – 9:00 a.m.

Meetings will be hosted online until further notice.