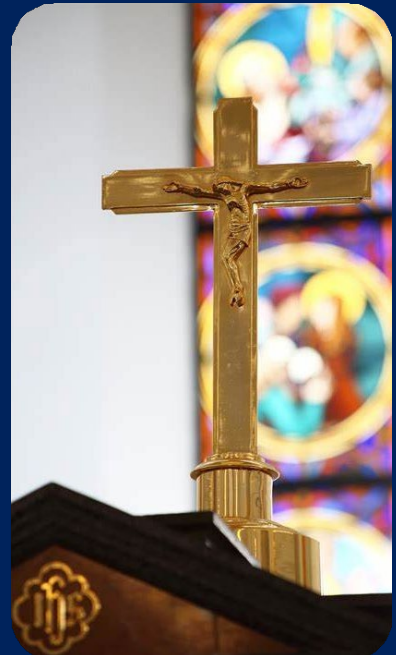




Mental Health & Well-being Action Plan 2025-26

Teaching
&
Learning



Wellness



BELONGING



The one-year action plan outlines priorities and goals identified in the three-year strategy.

[Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy Plan 2023-26.pdf](#)
(bhncdsb.ca)

Commitment

We are committed to mentally healthy learning environments that honour, celebrate and support the identities and lived realities of every student.

We make meaningful connections to life at home and in the community, while promoting hope, resilience, and optimism.

Key messages for 2025-26

We prioritize mental health and well-being as a key condition for every student to learn and flourish.

We do this through:

Relationships: We take the time to create and nurture relationships.

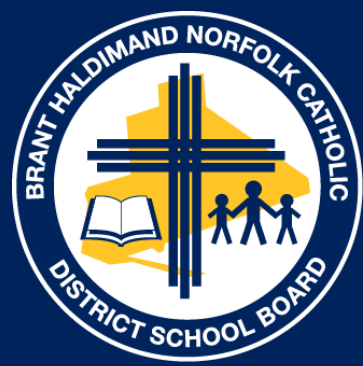
Belonging: We strive to ensure students see their cultures and identities reflected in their school experience.

Teaching & Learning: Staff are provided with training and resources to teach, model and embed mental health promotion and literacy skills with confidence in the classroom.

Engagement: We engage students, parents & caregivers, using cultural humility to lead the way.

Student leadership: Students are provided with meaningful mental health leadership opportunities which foster a culture of respect, communication, and active listening. Students feel their ideas and opinions are valued and supported.

for all




Priority Area 1: Identity Affirming Mental Health and Addictions Literacy

Teaching and Learning for All

GOAL	STRATEGIES IN ACTION	OUTCOMES & MONITORING
Enhance the mental health and addictions literacy of staff.	<p>Provide learning opportunities for administrators in Trauma-Informed Leadership.</p> <p>Provide Mental Health Literacy course and other related training to new Child and Youth Worker staff.</p> <p>Provide special education mental health resources to Special Education Staff available through School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON).</p> <p>Continue to support educators with mental health curriculum implementation.</p>	<p>85% of staff who complete the post training survey will report an increase in competency and confidence in the topics addressed.</p> <p>Staff will report an increased understanding of their role in promoting and supporting student mental health, and ways to assist students in accessing support.</p>
Enhance the mental health and addictions literacy of parents and caregivers.	<p>Provide evidence-based identity affirming resources and training opportunities (virtual and in person) to caregivers at the district and school level in collaboration with community partners and by using the <i>By Your Side Toolkit</i>.</p> <div><div><p>School Mental Health Ontario By Your Side</p><p>Parent/caregiver toolkit to support mental health learning and well-being for every family</p></div></div>	<p># of participants receiving information.</p> <p>75% of caregivers surveyed will report increased awareness and confidence in being able to support their child through conversations regarding mental health and substance use.</p>
<div><p>Bolster the mental health and addictions literacy of students.</p></div>	<p>Students to continue to receive mental health curriculum content.</p> <p>Jack Talk hosted in secondary schools to enhance student’s understanding of mental health, how to access care, and remove the barriers of stigma.</p> <p>Students in Grade 7 & 8 at two pilot schools to learn about Balanced Device Use through school CYWs (SMHO-ON resource).</p> <p>Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program for Grade 6, 7, 8 students, and information sessions for secondary students available in partnership with Haldimand Norfolk OPP.</p> <p>Expand evidence-based substance use programming (Pre-Venture) through community agencies and school CYW.</p> <div></div>	<p>65% of students who participate will report increased competency and confidence in topics addressed.</p> <p>100% of schools will report successful implementation of mandatory Mental Health curriculum.</p> <p># of students who attend Jack Talk.</p> <p>65% of youth who participate in the pilot programs will report increased competencies.</p> <p>85% of students polled through EQAO will report they know where to turn should they have questions related to mental health.</p>

Priority Area 2: Safe and Mentally Healthy Schools

Wellness for All

GOAL	STRATEGIES IN ACTION	OUTCOMES & MONITORING
Strengthen capacity of administrators to lead safe and mentally healthy schools.	<p>Provide learning and consultative opportunities to administrators and support staff regarding Trauma-Informed Leadership, and Shanker Self Regulation.</p> <p>Train-the-Trainer model in Restorative Practices to be initiated, ensuring the ability to build capacity internally.</p> <p>Administrative Procedure re: memorialization to be created to ensure trauma informed, equitable practices.</p>	<p>90% of administrators and support staff will report increased confidence in supporting staff and students through a Trauma-Informed, self-regulation lens.</p> <p># of restorative training sessions delivered via new trainers.</p> <p>Administrators will report confidence in supporting their school communities through Trauma-Informed responses to loss and memorialization.</p>
Enhance capacity of school staff to use approaches that support mentally healthy classrooms/schools .	<p>Administrators to share their Trauma-Informed Leadership learnings with school staff through staff meetings, communications, resources, and case conferences.</p> <p>Increase implementation of Mind UP in primary classes, alongside the SMHO-Wayfinder tool across the district.</p> <p>Child and Youth worker staff to increase capacity of school staff by sharing Emotion Validation and Shanker Self-Regulation strategies and resources.</p>	<p>School staff will report an increased understanding and ability to support students through a Trauma-Informed lens.</p> <p># of schools who include Mind Up and Wayfinder in school improvement plans.</p> <p>Educators will report an increased confidence in promoting and teaching about, and supporting student mental health through year-end survey data.</p> <p>School Climate Survey data to reflect increase in sense of student wellness and belonging.</p>
Increase and support Social Emotional Learning skills in students.	<p>Increase in staffing complement of Child and Youth Workers to bolster and support the Social Emotional Learning Skills of students within their life space so they are better able to manage emotion, cope with stressors, develop healthy relationships, demonstrate positive conflict resolutions skills, and develop a greater sense of belonging and well-being.</p> 	<p>Educators and administrators will report an increase in pro-social actions and decrease in aggressive behaviours in students through year-end survey data.</p> <p>Students will report satisfaction in obtaining or progressing towards their mental health goals.</p> <p># of students supported per school.</p> <p># of students supported through school team collaboration and a Self-Regulation lens.</p>

Priority Area 3: Early Identification, Prevention & Intervention

Wellness for All

GOAL	STRATEGIES IN ACTION	OUTCOMES & MONITORING
Enhance the knowledge of school staff to understand and recognize signs of mental health concerns in students.	Provide learning opportunities in Suicide Prevention utilizing SMHO-ON resource: <i>Prepare, Prevent, Respond</i> for: -Administrators -Guidance Educators -Chaplains -Student Support Staff (CYW).	Staff will report increased confidence and competence in the ability to: -promote daily wellness -recognize warning signs for suicide -respond if a student tells them they are having thoughts of suicide.
Enhance consistent use of evidence informed, brief interventions that use standardized measurement tools.	School based Social Workers use a variety of evidence-based approaches to support the mental health and well-being of students, including: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): Helping students recognize and shift negative thought patterns in a structured, supportive way. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR): Teaching mindfulness techniques to reduce stress and promote emotional balance. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT): Guiding students to accept their thoughts and feelings while building resilience and coping skills. Suicide Risk Assessment and Management: Identifying students at risk, providing immediate support, and implementing safety plans in collaboration with school staff and families. To ensure students continue receiving the best possible support, the Board provides ongoing training for staff in advanced modules of these therapies and is also incorporating play therapy and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) approaches. These efforts aim to create a nurturing, responsive environment where every student's mental health is valued and supported.	80% of contacts will indicate use of Brief clinical interventions. 85% of Board Mental Health Professionals will report an increased confidence in supporting students and school teams. 75% of students who complete the end of year service survey will report satisfaction in progressing towards their mental health goals. 100% of Regulated mental health professionals will be trained, and report increased confidence in supporting students with on-going suicidal ideation.
Reduce student absences by 10% year over year.	Revise and improve current attendance and engagement practices with administrators via our work in <i>Leading Mentally Healthy Schools</i> . Senior Leadership will meet with Principals three times per year to review attendance data, conduct audits, and ensure each school has a clear plan with measurable goals. Designated Attendance Counsellor to provide mental health services to students in need; linking up to community services where needed. 	85% of administrators will report increased competency and confidence in engaging students. 100% of schools will submit updated attendance plans following each leadership meeting. Student absentee rate will decline 10% this year from last year.

Priority Area 4: Partnerships, Student Leadership & Strategic Planning

belonging for All

GOAL	STRATEGIES IN ACTION	OUTCOMES & MONITORING
<p>Strengthen collaboration with community mental health partners to enhance the current coordinated system of care.</p>	<p>Increase understanding and utilization of Right time, Right Care (smho-smso.ca) at community planning tables to ensure most effective usage of Mental Health resources.</p> <p>Work with community mental health providers to create a well-articulated resource that reflects the process for students, staff, and families to access board and/or community/hospital mental health services</p> <p>Engage key community partners in Mental Health and Addictions Strategy development.</p> <p>Engage in the Planet Youth (Icelandic model of substance prevention) with public health and community partners.</p>	<p>Community mental health agencies and Student Support Services will explore and attempt to minimize gaps or overlaps in service-delivery.</p> <p>Every student will receive a ‘roadmap of service’ resource, outlining service options in schools and the community.</p> <p>Mental Health Strategy will reflect an integrated system of care across the tiers of intervention for Child and Youth Mental Health.</p> <p>Survey data from Grade 10 students in Haldimand and Norfolk Schools (both boards) will be utilized to inform district and community planning regarding substance use prevention.</p>
<p>Enhance opportunities for student leadership and voice in mental health initiatives and services.</p>	<p>Jack Chapters and Wellness and/or ACE groups to be established in each school. Public Health and Student Support Services to assist where possible.</p> <p>Student focus groups and Student Climate Survey to be utilized to assist in the development of the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and other Board and school plans.</p> <p>Students receiving school-based mental health services to complete service exit survey.</p> <p>Playground Activity Leaders in Schools (PALS) to be facilitated at participating elementary schools in partnership with school staff, CYW and Public Health partners where appropriate.</p>	<p>85% of schools will have Jack Chapters/Wellness and/or ACE groups with 75% of participants reporting an increased sense of wellness, social connectedness and inclusion with peers and adult allies/mentors.</p> <p>School Climate Survey data to reflect increased sense of belonging since last administered.</p> <p>75% of students who complete the service exit survey will report satisfaction in progressing towards their mental health goals.</p> <p>50% of schools will participate in PALS.</p>

Contributing members of the 2025-26 Mental Health & Well-being action plan

Mental Health Advisory Committee

John Della Fortuna, Superintendent of Education
Dianne Wdowczyk-Meade, Mental Health Lead
April Taylor, Safe, Inclusive and Equitable Schools Lead
Carol Luciani, Trustee
Lori Skye-LaForme, Indigenous Education Advisor
Sandra DeDominicis, Vice-Principal of Inclusive Learning & Special Education
Tracie Witteveen, System Special Education Consultant
Jennifer Rudyk & Giovanna Oviedo, Elementary Principal
Amy Pimentel, Principal of Continuing Education
Darren Duff & Tania Flynn, Secondary Principals
Chandra Portelli, System Vice-Principal: Curriculum, Instruction, and
Assessment
Keri Calvesbert, Student Achievement Consultant: Religion and Family Life
Andrea Perras, Early Years
Diane Bowie & Rita Martini, System Teachers - ESL
Jillian Marranca, Department Head of Student Services
Razak Aziz, Social Worker
Cindy Miller & Meghan Adams, Child and Youth Workers
Thanh-Thanh Tieu, Research Associate
Christina Farrell, Woodview Mental Health & Autism Services
Irene Perro, Haldimand Norfolk REACH

The Board Mental Health Advisory Committee exists to develop, implement, assist in monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the achievement of the Board Mental Health Strategy and its annual action plans.

