

School Board Action Planning



Students as consultants

Students' grades	1-12
School board	St. Clair Catholic District School Board
Staff contact	Chris Preece, chris.preece@sccdsb.net
Initiative period	September 2022 to June 2023
Caring adults involved	School Board Health Promotion Officer and child and youth workers

OVERVIEW

During school fairs, social emotional learning activities, and “fun days,” board staff had a booth set up in each school to consult students on ways they can improve the following school year. Secondary students were asked questions, such as, “What’s something that you felt worked well to support your mental health and well-being?” and “How can we better support your mental health and well-being at school?” Elementary students were asked, “What is something that made you feel happy and safe?” and “What can we do next year to make you feel happy and safe?” Students in both elementary and secondary schools were informed about how their answers would be used and how they could choose to participate by writing their responses on sticky notes. Responses were collected and analyzed by staff and the results were shared in system-wide and school-specific reports. Students’ responses were used with school climate surveys to shape board action plans surrounding mental health and well-being. Board staff developed student engagement resources based on these results. Through announcements and student councils, child and youth workers shared with students how their feedback was being used and implemented.

As students were asked to share their ideas and perspectives, without having direct control over outcomes, students are considered consultants in this initiative.



STAFF PERSPECTIVE

Students are continuously encouraged to be part of engagement initiatives through experiential learning in classes, councils, and announcements. Leveraging these pathways to share how their feedback is being used, demonstrated alignment in students' priorities along with board and school objectives. This also supports transparency in action planning. Leading with students' perspectives helped to create staff buy-in and shift practice. Often, it was the same staff members connecting with students and leading engagement initiatives. The students at the table often shared one perspective and other students' voices were not heard. Having a large-scale engagement initiative to capture many different perspectives helped to demonstrate students' needs to staff, allowing for small shifts in practice to better support students. Overall, this initiative helped to create smoother partnerships among more staff and students within the classroom and school community.

