

Welcome to new and returning students and staff of the Renfrew County District School Board for the 2019-2020 school year!

I hope that you have all had a terrific summer with family and friends... and that you have thoroughly enjoyed the beautiful weather we have had throughout the months of July and August.

As the start of a new school year is upon us, I would like to highlight important accomplishments of the past school year, and, share key foci for the school year ahead.

Last school year, the District continued the implementation of the second year of its current [strategic plan](#). Key actions for each guiding principle that “brought the plan to life” include:

- the establishment of a five-year plan for the expansion of programs and/or services at the elementary level, specifically French Immersion programming, as well as a [guideline](#) for the allocation of instructional time (by subject area and language of instruction) in elementary classrooms
- the release of our '[Pathways to Thrive](#)' Framework, as a strength-based relationship approach, that complements our tiered system of supports for mental health and well-being for students and staff;
- the completion of a series of renovations and/or upgrades to a number of our schools and central facilities that are aligned with the 'school design standards' currently being developed in order to guide new builds and major renovations for the future; and,
- an ongoing commitment to measurement that ensures the District continues to monitor its progress over time in both achievement and well-being.



During the past school year, we also built upon the employee engagement survey, Guarding Minds @ Work, through focus group sessions in order to elicit additional feedback and perspectives from our staff regarding ways to improve their workplaces.

This school year, we are looking forward to the implementation of actions for the third and final year of the strategic plan, including:

- the continued development of a system-wide 'Framework for Learning' that supports the enhancement of global competencies (e.g., critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, collaboration, communication, character development and citizenship), as well as the research-based foundational skills established in literacy and numeracy;
- the evolution of the [tiered system](#) of support for mental health and well-being which will enhance site-based practices related to all aspects of the well-being strategy (including safe

- and accepting schools, healthy schools, positive mental health, and equity and inclusive education);
- the launch of a interactive, web-based tool created by Baragar Systems, District Intelligence, that provides [School Information Profiles](#) regarding each and every one of our schools (including information related to enrolment, facilities, transportation, and the broader community); and,
  - a start to our initiatives in International Education as the District welcomes ten students from countries including France, Italy and Japan.

As always, we are continuing to elicit student voice through the Student Senate, parent/guardian perspectives through the Parent Involvement Committee, and feedback from other key stakeholders through our Indigenous Education Advisory Council and Special Education Advisory Committee, for instance, in order to reflect and refine our practices and processes as an organization focused on learning.

Of particular note, I would also like to emphasize that the 2019 calendar year represents the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of public education in the county. As was the case during this past school year, the upcoming school year will continue to mark celebrations of this important milestone.

As always, my office door is open to hearing your ideas, perspectives, suggestions and thoughts. Please don't hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Wishing you all the best for an enjoyable, successful school year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pino Buffone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Pino Buffone  
Director of Education

