

Winter 2009/2010

# Leaders & Learners

The official magazine of the Canadian  
Association of School Administrators

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## Engaging Young Children in Our Schools



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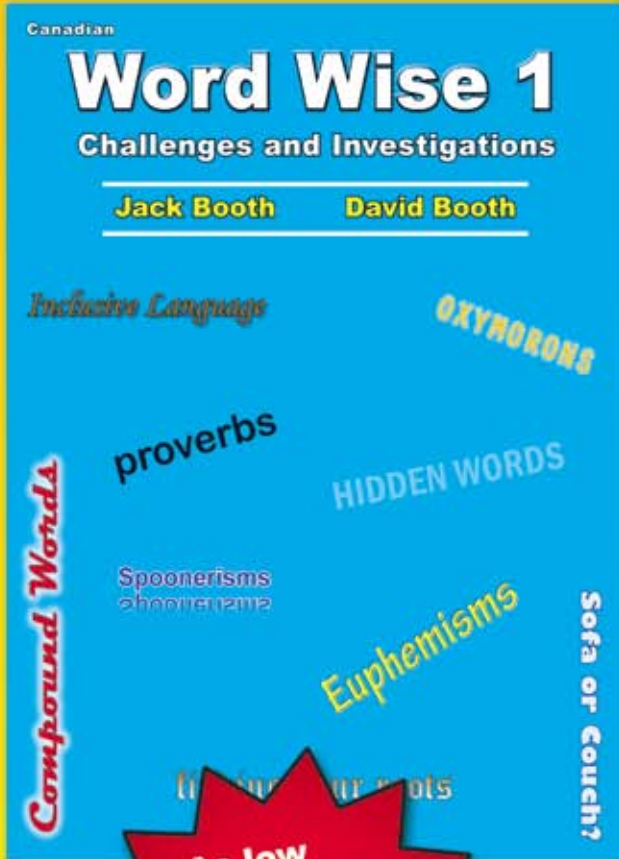
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## FOCUS: ENGAGING YOUNG CHILDREN IN OUR SCHOOLS

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Ontario's 29 Catholic school boards are using creative means to engage their youngest learners. This in-depth collection of articles profiles imaginative initiatives that are going on within seven boards, using everything from technology to tradition, athletics to arts.

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Last summer students in the Montreal area were excited to learn at the Perspectives Prep Camp, designed to give an extra boost of self-confidence and education to those most in-need. Held in August, right before traditional school was about to begin, this camp got kids ready to go back to class, while keeping activities fun and engaging. Did it succeed? Yes, according to this attendee who said, "we did cool messy experiments and even built our own bridge. My mom said my reading and spelling got better too."



### 32 Early Childhood Education, Early Intervention and Parent Education: A Winning Combination

What do you think the ideal setting is for children to begin their school careers? Leaders at Central School - the Brooks Early Childhood Development Centre (BECDC), think they've created the right surroundings, from small handprints that border the hallways, to pint-sized furniture and kid's voices on the intercom. The elements that went into the centre are no accident...they are part of the school's design.

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Nation  
From coast-to-coast Canadians are making a difference in the school system. This regular section will look at what's going on across the country, including awards won, positions filled, innovative ideas and programs, conference highlights, and upcoming events. If you have news you'd like to share, email it to editor@matrixgroupinc.net.
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# 2010

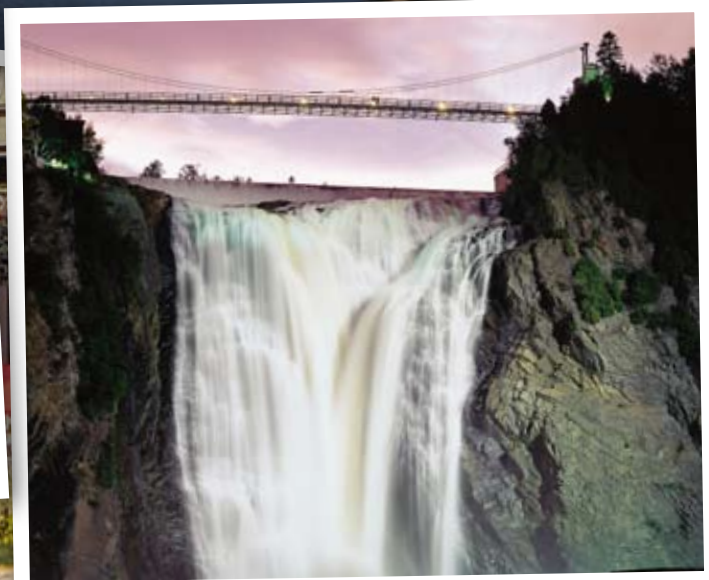
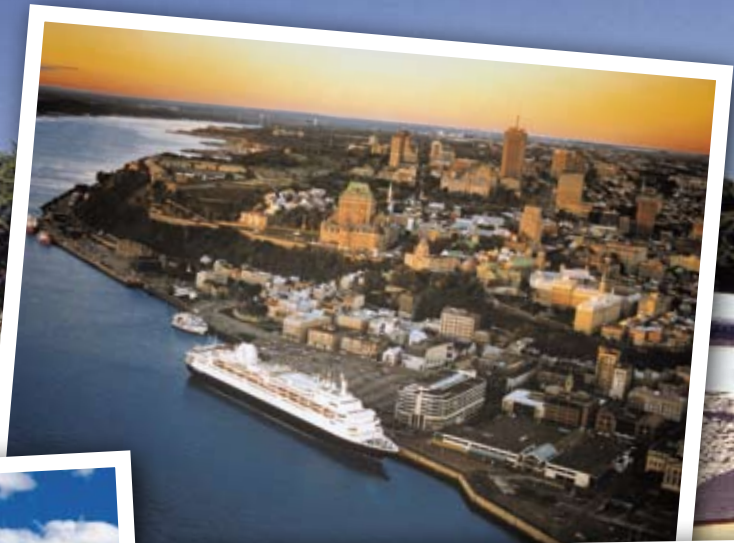
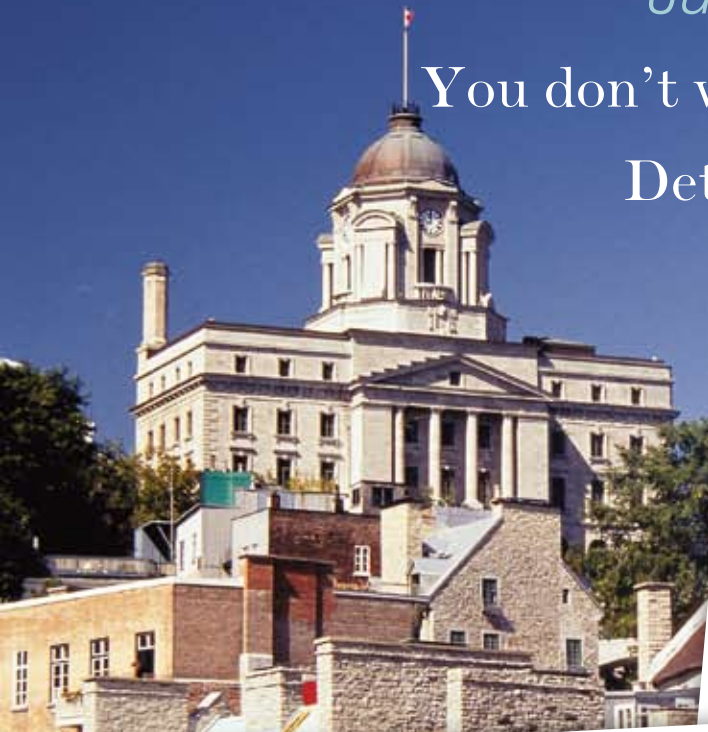
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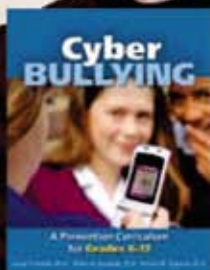
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“Good wishes are not sufficient; we must become actively engaged.”  
- Dalai Lama

**A**n essential component of any organization, business or school board is engagement at all levels. As President of CASA, it is my privilege to welcome all educators to a new year in education and to share with you a pan-Canadian perspective on our “raison d’être”: engaging children in our schools.

One of the phrases that arises in any discussion of the status of public education these days

drop-outs. We know that across the country, more than a quarter of our secondary school students do not graduate, a loss of potential that will have us soon disadvantaged seriously within the global economy.

Significant research points out several pivotal factors that influence greater engagement in learning. We know that student attendance must be maximized and can be most effectively achieved within a school and community culture that demonstrates consistently the value attached to education and learning. The values embodied by the school must be clear to all. All school efforts must be focused on engaging the student in his or her own learning.

There can be no doubt about the impact of leadership in creating a school that engages its learners. As administrators, we must forge strong and participatory relationships with our teachers so they, in turn, will foster such connections with their students. The impact of teachers and staff members who demonstrate their consistent care for the learner can be enormous. We must create in our classrooms learning situations that permit students to support the academic pursuits of their peers and, perhaps most important, set a stage that enables students to see school and their course work as meaningful and relevant to their lives.

You will read in this edition of students actively involved in community service activity, who are making use of the new technologies in their learning and are carrying out projects that are diverse and important to them. It is clear that our role is to lead and that we are capable of meeting this challenge with innovation and enthusiasm.

**Carol Gray**  
CASA/ACAS President  
Director of Secondary Schools  
Lester B. Pearson School Board



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**There can be no doubt about the impact of leadership in creating a school that engages its learners. As administrators, we must forge strong and participatory relationships with our teachers so they, in turn, will foster such connections with their students.**

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is “engaging young learners” or some wording similar in intent. Careful attention is being given by educators at all levels to the critical role of such meaningful involvement on the part of the learner. This issue of *Leaders & Learners* is devoted to the topic and offers a variety of perspectives and approaches that are in place across the country.

Learner engagement is recognized nationally, provincially and locally as a key to retaining our youth in school and to combating what has been referred to as the “silent epidemic” of school



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**The task for senior administrators is to ensure that their schools have inviting and inclusive programs, make certain that staff nurture the involvement of students, measure the provision of engaging program and improve where necessary.**

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e are all convinced that student achievement is the major focus of our work as educators. We all know innately and through massive evidence that student achievement reaches a high level only when students of every age are “engaged” in their learning. It follows that the senior administrators of Canadian school systems must promote constantly appropriate resources and instructional techniques for

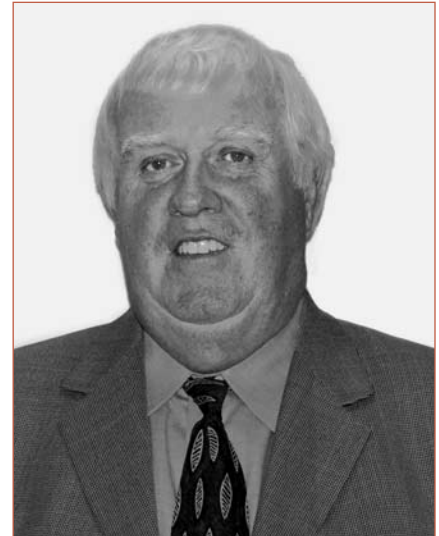
meaningful involvement of students in their learning.

The best indicators of student engagement are found when students reveal an excitement about going to school and about the programs where they are taking part. School life involves not just the classroom but the whole range of student activities. Good schools and good educators ensure that the whole program is inviting and inclusive.

The best schools communicate clearly with parents and students and everyone knows what is available and how to get involved. Participation begins with knowing the opportunities, removing the barriers and seeing the rewards of belonging.

Some students are willing participants, filled with energy and keen enthusiasm, willing to be leaders. Other students are reluctant participants, shy to come forward, reluctant to join or to show enthusiasm.

The task for senior administrators is to ensure that their schools have inviting and inclusive programs, make certain that staff nurture the involvement of students, measure the provision of engaging program and improve where necessary. At every level, it is important to praise the efforts of those who work to engage students. The results are shown clearly as effective schools.



**Frank Kelly**  
Executive Director, CASA

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# Engaging Young Children in Our Schools

In the search for opportunities and methodologies to engage students in learning the teachers, school and system leaders in the 29 Catholic school boards in Ontario are continuing to exert their creativity. Following are samples of initiatives ongoing in seven of these boards.

Theresa Harris | Executive-Director  
Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association

## PROVIDING AUTHENTIC ABORIGINAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES SUDBURY CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

*By Dawn Wemigwans, Aboriginal Lead, Sudbury Catholic District School Board, AND Christina Raso, Special Education Consultant, Sudbury Catholic District School Board*

The Sudbury Catholic District School Board proudly offers Aboriginal education within our Catholic schools as a response to the needs and interests of the students we teach. Our hope is that our children gain an understanding and appreciation of the cultures and languages of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. We have established a wide variety of programming and creative partnerships, providing our students with an increasingly culturally relevant education.

Through the implementation of the *Aboriginal Mentorship and Leadership Development Project* we have increased the capacity of Sudbury Catholic Schools to respond to the learning and cultural needs of Aboriginal students. Strategies were developed that facilitated increased participation by Aboriginal parents, students and organizations in working to support First Nation, Métis and Inuit student success.

To begin, we started to create school environments that encourage and support Aboriginal students, parents and community engagement. School atmospheres where First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and community members feel welcomed, respected and valued have been initiated with the understanding that relationship building between community members, students and the schools will translate into life long student

success. Schools have started to recognize and celebrate success in non traditional, non-euro centric ways through cultural identity building experiences.

Next, we brought Aboriginal community leaders together with our Aboriginal students to provide mentorship and support. Guest mentors from diverse backgrounds included local Aboriginal artists, PhD candidates, Native counsellors, professors from Laurentian University, independent film makers, Aboriginal poets, Atikameksheng Anishinabek Elders, traditional pipe carriers, traditional drummers and Aboriginal police officers. Mentoring sessions focused on how to overcome life's obstacles and attain personal success through mental, spiritual and physical esteem building.





*OPPOSITE, BELOW AND ABOVE: Students at the Sudbury Catholic District School Board take part in the Aboriginal Mentorship and Leadership Development Project.*



A gala celebration was hosted to celebrate student success and view student art and other media productions. These mentoring opportunities offered students a sense of community and cultural connection. It allowed our Aboriginal youth the opportunity to develop relationships with adults who have overcome obstacles in their lives and who are committed to the success of our next generation.

The incorporation of technology was essential to promoting student leadership opportunities. Current media technology acted as a youth driven venue for celebrating Aboriginal student success.

Furthermore, the creation and maintenance of a student driven Aboriginal Education web page focused on developing supports for Aboriginal students and their families in the process of transition. Student learners who participated in the development of the site have gained experience working with technology in an exciting and innovative way.

The Sudbury Catholic District School Board started to create strategic partnerships with Aboriginal parents and community organizations to help make a smoother transition from schools in First Nation communities to provincially funded elementary and secondary schools. Sudbury Catholic Schools promoted transparency of policies and programs and is developing a resource that supports transitions for Aboriginal students throughout their education.

This initiative started to create a school board culture that encourages Aboriginal student, parent and community engagement. In doing so, the Sudbury Catholic District School Board consulted on a regular basis with an Aboriginal Advisory Committee. Meetings were held once a month for the entire school year, including a retreat in Killarney with a sweat lodge, pipe ceremony and traditional circle to close the year.

Moreover, Sudbury Catholic Schools created junior grade classroom Aboriginal libraries. Students responded to reading interest surveys to support the Board in selecting appropriate reading texts for reader interest. Books purchases reflected contemporary and traditional Aboriginal society, connected to grade specific curriculums and were selected based on a variety of genres and levels.

Hands on, culturally rich Aboriginal specific outdoor earth related teachings were delivered to the students by traditional Elders on the land. The students had the opportunity to build peer relationships and developed cultural esteem while learning about themselves and building a community of peers. Students proudly and openly recognized their culture, traditions and identity. Students were encouraged to make real world connections to Aboriginal society in a historical context and through contemporary issues. Effective transmission of cultural teachings and a variety of programming styles help all students feel proud, respected and valued.

Finally, students from across the Sudbury region had the opportunity to learn about Aboriginal culture over the summer months. For a two week period students attended “Biindigen (Welcome/Come in) Summer Fun” Program where they established friendships and learned more about

Aboriginal foods, languages and cultures. The students also enjoyed mentorship of respected members of the Sudbury Aboriginal Community who engaged the students with their stories and keen understanding of Aboriginal culture.

In the 2009-10 school year, Sudbury Catholic Schools continues to provide quality programs, services and resources to help create learning opportunities for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students that support improved academic achievement and identity building. ○

### **SELF-IDENTIFICATION PROCESS (SIP) ORAL LANGUAGE PROJECT Northwest Catholic District School Board**

*By Mary-Catherine Kelly, Director of Education. Prepared by Kim Anderson, Curriculum Coordinator*

**T**he Northwest Catholic District School Board continues to be actively involved in the *Northern Ontario Education Leaders (NOEL) Self-Identification Process (SIP) Oral Language Project* for the third year. International Researcher Dr. Carmel Crévola leads this research project that is the first of its kind in North America.

During the 2008-09 school year, all Junior Kindergarten (JK), Senior Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 students in our board, were administered a series of Oral Language assessments several times during the school year. Teachers, school administrators, board-level Literacy Coaches, as well as our Superintendent of Education, participated in regional professional learning sessions where strategies (Read To, Generating a Discussion, and Guided Reading with an Oral Language approach) to reach our youngest “at risk” learners were shared. Classroom teachers return to their schools to apply the newly taught strategies in their own classrooms.

The Board’s Literacy Coaches work in the schools and provide “at the elbow support” for teachers. We have been able to build both lateral and vertical capacity with our colleagues across our own school board. Teacher practices have improved and the data confirms that our youngest

students’ oral language skills show strong improvements over the school year. This project involves all of the Catholic and Public Boards in Northwestern Ontario.

Dr. Peter Hill’s Oral Language report on our students’ achievement in oral language is hot off the press. One of the key goals of the *Oral Language Project* is to better understand the differences between our Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students as they begin school. Some of our Aboriginal students do not score as well as our Non-Aboriginal students on their entry to school in JK; there appears to be a nine month schooling gap between these two groups. We are very confident that the strategies taught to us by Dr. Carmel Crévola have enabled us to help close this gap. According to Dr. Hill, this is not an enormous gap, but one that remains a challenge to those of us involved in the project. The goal is to see the improvement of the oral language skills from JK to Grade 3. We are grateful for the financial support we have received from the Ministry of Education, Literacy & Numeracy Secretariat.

One of our board’s newest initiatives is the *Welcome to Kindergarten* program. We were pleased to partner with The Learning Partnership, a non-profit organization that strengthens public education, in part by delivering such amazing programs as *Welcome to Kindergarten*. All of our schools that offer Junior Kindergarten hosted an evening for parents and children. Families received an early learning resources bag during the orientation session at the school, while learning strategies for using the resources at home were introduced. The orientation session provided opportunity for parents to connect with kindergarten teachers, school resource personnel and staff from community support agencies who provided training on why family planned activities using the resources in the bag will help their children be better prepared for school and learning.

The Northwest Catholic District School Board also prepared and distributed board-wide Kindergarten registration packages to all of the primary schools in our board. These brightly coloured bags included both parent and student handbooks for Junior Kindergarten, tips for parents, bookmarks, activities and games for our newest students, as well as a video entitled, “*I Love When You Read*”.

The staff of the Northwest Catholic District School Board continues to work hard to offer our youngest learners the best possible beginning to their education. We are proud of our staff’s commitment to learning and for continuing to strive to meet the needs of every student who walks through the doors of our Catholic schools. ○

### **TECHNOLOGY IS GOOD, BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH (COMBINING TECHNOLOGY WITH CRITICAL THINKING TO ENGAGE STUDENTS) Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board**

*By Dawne Boersen, Coordinator of Curriculum for the Huron-Perth CDSB, AND JoAnn MacGregor, Superintendent of Education for the Huron-Perth CDSB*

**W**e all know that in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, literacy means something different than it did at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The world we live in is quite different. Yet, we still teach using some of the same strategies as teachers did in the early 1900s. Many classroom environments are the same—students in rows, chalkboard at the front. Some concessions have been made, chairs are no longer bolted to the desks and sometimes it is a whiteboard instead of a chalkboard. And of course, we now have technology in the form of computers, interactive white boards and clickers, an expense justified by the idea that it will ensure our students are engaged in their learning.

Technology has most certainly transformed the way our students think and learn. It has transformed the global economy. Our students do not need to be prepared to work primarily in the manufacturing and service industries, but in the information, technology and communications industries. They need to be able to read fluently at a high level, locate and process information quickly, synthesize and evaluate the tremendous amount of information they come across in a day, and discard any extraneous information.

Using technology will certainly engage our students in something in the classroom, but in order to engage them in their learning, we need to use the

technology not only as a teaching tool, but as a learning tool. Students need challenging activities that allow them to collaborate, create and innovate. Many “educational” computer software programs are simply low level blackline masters on a screen. After the initial interest in using the computer wears off, so does the engagement.

Students are engaged in their learning when it is relevant, purposeful and intellectually challenging. In other words, they learn best when they can use critical thinking skills to discover new information, rework it, and share it with others who have similar interests. Technology can be used to publish their work and share it with authentic audiences, to hook up with other students

around the world who are passionate about the same topics, or to interact and learn with experts. It can be used to incorporate audio, visual and kinesthetic modalities into lessons and shift the wellspring of information from the limits of the teacher in the classroom, to the entire global population.

Many boards around the province have spent a great deal of money on equipping

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classrooms with computers, internet service and all of the paraphernalia associated with it. But on any given day, how often are they used? In an ideal world, it would be 100 percent of the time. In reality, it is far less. Take a walk through your school at different points in the day. Are computers being used in a lab situation, where individual students are doing the same thing at the same time? Or are several students huddled around a computer, collaborating on projects? Are students animated, discussing their ideas, or does every student wear a set of

**Are computers used only as word processors to transcribe written materials? Or, are they being used by students to delve into worlds they didn't know existed?**

headphones, cutting them off from learning what their peers are doing around them? Are computers used only as word processors to transcribe written materials? Or, are they being used by students to delve into worlds they didn't know existed? Are students exploring topics that interest and excite them and are they creating multimedia demonstrations of their learning?

In the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board, we are trying to emphasize the engagement of students through their learning, not just the flashy technology. Teachers are using podcasts to allow students to demonstrate their learning through oral communication. The reading, writing and oral skills needed to create a podcast reflects student research and the ability to synthesize the information they have collected; these skills are far greater than those required to simply write a research report. Some teachers are using wikis and blogs to allow students to answer open-ended questions, before, during and after learning, and to build their learning on the learning of other students. Polls and surveys are used so teachers can get some immediate feedback from students about their learning.

Other teachers are using moodles, or online learning environments, to enable students to collaborate with each other and as a tool to give rich feedback about the work they submit. Interactive white boards are also a feature in many classrooms. They are most successfully used when students have the opportunity to use them to explore and demonstrate their learning, rather than exclusively being used as a teaching tool.

These teachers are using technology with approaches that give students choice and voice, thus making their learning relevant. The learning expectations are clearly articulated which makes student learning purposeful, especially when demonstrations of their learning are connected with authentic audiences. Student learning is intellectually challenging when teachers ask open-ended questions to activate prior learning and ask for opinions that are backed up with evidence; this is enhanced through the medium of technology. Make no mistake though, the technology alone isn't good enough. It is when technology is used as a tool to facilitate, support and engage learning that technology moves from good to "good enough". ○



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## A TRIAL MODEL OF SUPPORT LEADS TO STUDENT SUCCESS IN THE FULL DAY SENIOR KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM AT THE TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

By Colleen Tovey-Shackleton, Superintendent of Education

With the exciting possibility of full day early learning pending in the province of Ontario, the Toronto Catholic District School Board is well poised to apply proven strategies from our *Full Day Senior Kindergarten Program* to a future early learning framework. In September 2004, the Toronto Catholic District School Board implemented full day, everyday *Senior Kindergarten Programs* in seven schools in high needs areas across our system through Learning Opportunities Grant funding. The program has yielded positive outcomes for students and their families. A triad model of support for students, their parents and families, and classroom teachers is foundational to program success.

The importance of a child's early learning experiences on their development and future participation in society is well documented (McCain, Mustard, Shanker 2007). With a view to improving outcomes for young children in priority neighbourhoods, the *Full Day Senior Kindergarten Program* focuses on developmentally appropriate, play-based learning experiences with ample opportunities for oral language, literacy, numeracy and social skills development. The full day provides the time for a deeper exploration of the curriculum as outlined by *The Kindergarten Program* (Ministry of Education, 2006). A Kindergarten support team consisting of speech-language, psychology and social work staff collaborate with classroom teachers to provide a range of prevention and intervention supports for students. A speech-language pathologist supports oral language and literacy development in the classroom and provides a preventive program for students requiring support and reinforcement in grasping basic phonemic awareness

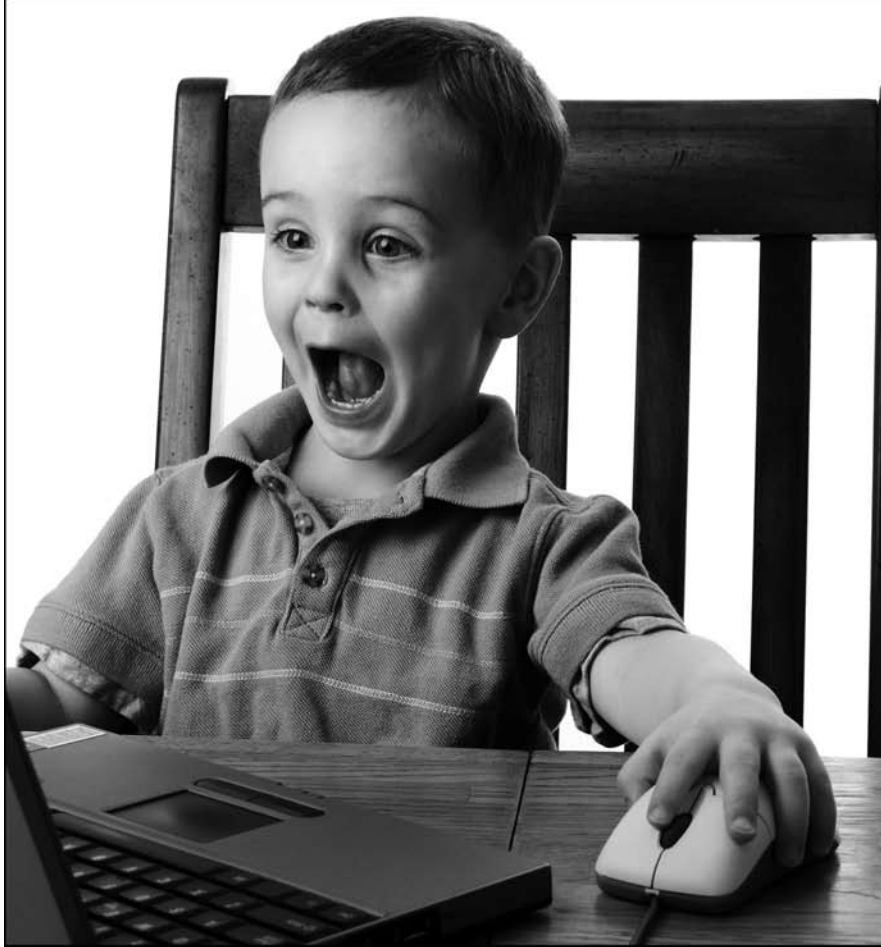
skills. Students also participate in weekly sessions of *The Incredible Years*, a highly successful social skills program, funded in part by Toronto Public Health that is aimed at the prevention and reduction of aggressive behaviours in high-risk, multi-ethnic children.

Parenting is a key element in shaping early experiences and brain development. Research indicates that effective early child development programs involve parents or other primary caregivers of young children (McCain, Mustard 1999). *The Full Day Senior Kindergarten Program*

engages parents and families in the education of their children. Early in the school year, parents are invited to learn more about the program and the role of the Kindergarten Support Team in addressing student and family needs. The team provides a flexible model of service delivery responding to individual needs of students and families (e.g., supporting families in crisis).

The home-school connection is further reinforced through workshops and evening sessions where parents and children learn together. These sessions are tailored

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to meet the needs and requests of the local school community and include topics such as family literacy pyjama nights, healthy eating evenings and playing fair family games night. Parent newsletters are provided in various languages highlighting simple, practical tips about literacy, play, storytelling, nutrition and positive parenting. Links to various community agencies and services (e.g., Ontario Early Years Centres, Toronto Public Library) provide families with further support and options.

According to Clark (2001) and Blades (2002), two determining factors

in the success of North American full day Kindergarten programs are positive teacher attitudes and ongoing professional development opportunities for classroom teachers. With this in mind, the *Full Day Senior Kindergarten* teachers at Toronto Catholic District School Board have participated in regular professional learning opportunities with release time. Mentoring and peer coaching are used to provide job-embedded professional learning. The teachers of the *Full Day Senior Kindergarten Program* are, in essence, a professional learning community focused

on improving student outcomes using classroom assessment data.

A comprehensive research component was integral to the *Full Day Senior Kindergarten Program*. In order to facilitate the research process, seven comparator schools that offered half-day kindergarten programming were selected. These schools shared similar demographics and were in close geographic proximity of the full day schools. Research took place over the course of three years and included focus groups of the Kindergarten support team and grade one teachers, parent and staff surveys and individual student measures. Research findings indicated that students in the full day *Senior Kindergarten Program* made significantly greater gains than students in comparator half-day programs. Grade one teachers indicated that students who attended the full day program came to grade one with advanced literacy and social skills. Both parents and staff expressed extremely positive responses to program goals and outcomes.

The *Full Day Senior Kindergarten Program* in the Toronto Catholic District School Board offers one model of supportive programming for children and families. This support is particularly important in economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods where students may enter school with limited literacy, numeracy and social skills. It offers an opportunity to provide a more favourable beginning to school for young children. With the support of Senior Staff and the Board of Trustees, the *Full Day Senior Kindergarten Program* continues to be implemented in TCDSB. ○

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## LEARNING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY: AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board

By Derek Belanger, MISA Lead & Special Assignment Teacher-Technology, AND Joanne Bérnard, Superintendent of Education

Board data over time as measured through the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessment indicated that student writing scores at both Grade 3 and Grade 6 were below the provincial average, and that scores for male students were significantly lower than female students. Teacher feedback, classroom observations and student work samples indicated a lack of student engagement in writing. Both teachers and students alike struggled with this process.

Looking for answers, we turned to the research which clearly indicated that the use of technology in the classroom enhanced student engagement, improved writing,

developed creativity, increased collaboration and improved results (Booth, D., Green, J. & Booth, J., 2004, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004; MacDonald, B., 2005 ). We recognized that having access to classroom technology alone would not improve teaching and learning. The solution was not about putting more computers and more SMART boards in every school, but rather about how effectively the technology was integrated into successful classroom practice.

Six volunteer Junior teachers (Grades 4 to 6), varying in experience and expertise in the use of technology for learning, representing four schools within the Board embarked on a year-long project to improve their instructional practice using technology in the classroom to enhance student engagement and results in writing. *The Action Research Project* began in March 2008 with two schools involved and continued into the 2008-09 school year with two additional schools joining the project.

Through collaborative discussion, the teachers established common goals based on student results in their respective classrooms. All shared a common vision of increased

student engagement and achievement. At the onset of the project, students completed an attitudinal survey about writing and teachers administered the Ontario Writing Assessment (OWA). Survey and assessment results were analyzed and moderated by the group with the support of the Special Assignment Teacher-Technology and the Catholic Curriculum Coordinators.


Using the "Backward Design Model", the information gathered was then used to plan for focused classroom instruction using the available technology (laptops and SMART boards) and high yield strategies such as, teacher moderation, gradual release of responsibility and a balanced literacy approach to instruction, targeting the areas of greatest student need. Initially the teacher group relied heavily on the Board support team but as their instructional capacity was developed, as well as their confidence in using technology for learning, they soon turned to each other for advice and ideas on how to improve their instructional practice.

Through online collaboration and face-to-face meetings, the teachers came together to reflect on their teaching, student response



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Grade 5  
(February)

### Mother Theresa

Mother Theresa was a very caring person who saved many lives. She was born August 26<sup>th</sup> 1910, and died September 5<sup>th</sup> 1997. She was born in Skopje, Macedonia. When she was only eight years old, her father died, so Mother Theresa lived with her mother and three older siblings until she was eighteen. Then when she was eighteen, she left her home and joined "The Sisters Of Loreto", a group of nuns that originated in Ireland. A couple months after she joined, Mother Theresa was sent to India. That was where she took her vows as a nun on May 24<sup>th</sup> 1931. From 1931 to 1945 she was a teacher at St. Mary's highschool in Calcutta. But in 1945 she contracted tuberculosis so she couldn't teach anymore. She was sent to Darjeeling for rest and recuperation. In 1948 she recieved permission to leave The Sisters Of Loreto and went and worked with the poor and sick in the slums of Calcutta. She started an open-air school for slum children. She was joined by volunteers and financial support was forthcoming.

On October 7<sup>th</sup> 1950, Mother Theresa received permission from The Holy See to start her own order "The Missionaries Of Charity" who cared for people nobody else would look after. And in 1965, the society became an International Family by the decree of Pope Paul VI. The society has spread all over the world. They provide help to the poor in a number of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. They also undertake relief work in the wake of natural catastrophies such as floods, epidemics and famine. The order also has houses in North America, Europe and Australia where they take care of shut-ins, alcoholics, homeless and AID's sufferer's.

Mother Theresa's work has been recognized and acclaimed throughout the world and she has received many awards. Some are the Pope John XXIII Peace Prize, the Nehru Prize, the Bazan Prize and the Templeton and Magsaysay awards.

Mother Theresa was an amazing woman and I think we should continue the work that she started to make the world a better place.

THE END!!!!!!!!!!!!!! :) :D XD o.o

to their instruction and to adjust their practice accordingly. As the project progressed, both student and teacher capacity and confidence increased.

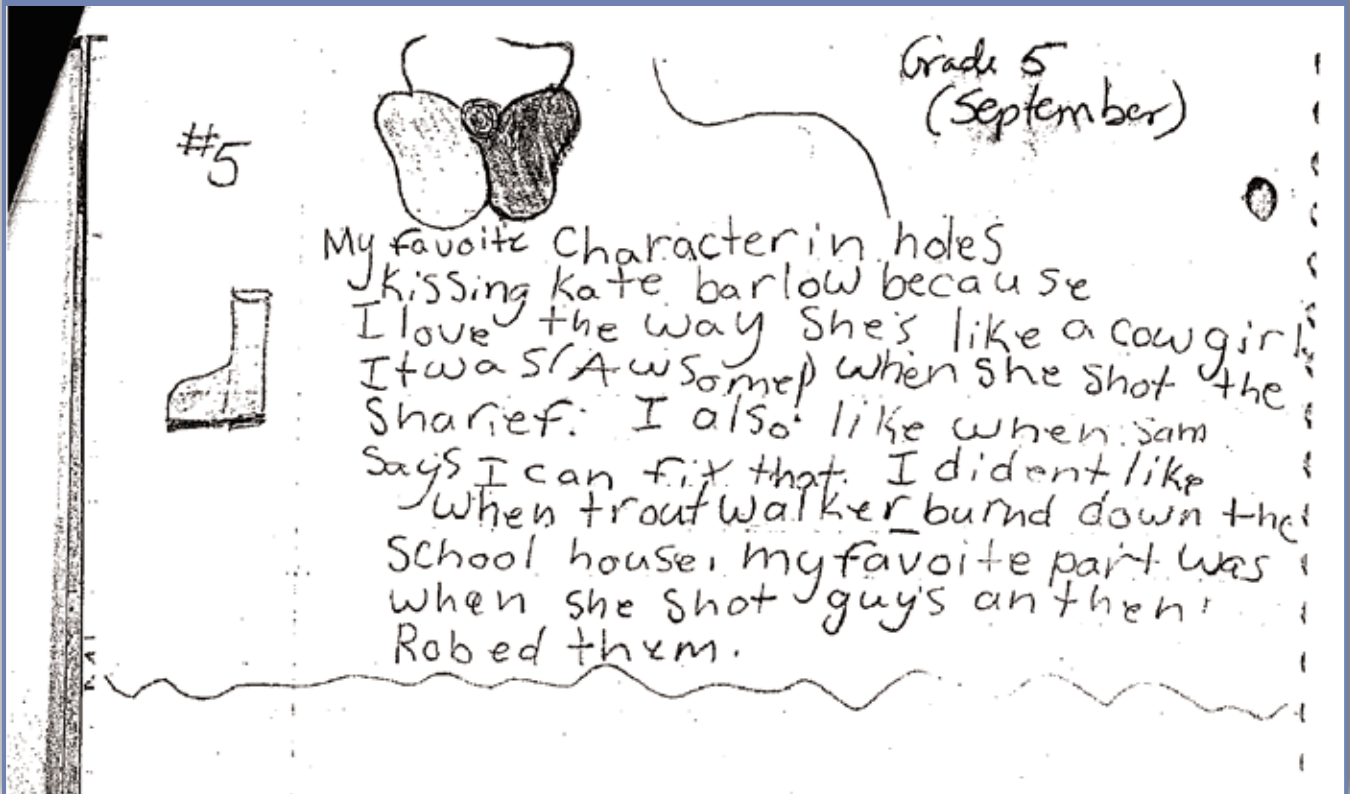
An exit survey completed by teachers indicated the following project outcomes: improvements in student motivation and participation in the writing process; improved teacher confidence using technology within their classroom

practice; improved understanding of how to teach the writing process; the importance of assessment to drive classroom instruction; increased focused teaching and a deeper understanding of high yield classroom strategies.

Student post-project attitudinal results indicated an increase by 20 percent in the number of students who reported being motivated to learn about writing in class

and perceiving themselves as effective writers and 17 percent increase in student responses to whether or not they enjoyed writing at school. OWA results indicate improvements in student writing, ranging from 35 to 83 percent. These results do not tell the whole story. A look at a Grade 6 student's work highlights how the integration of technology engaged the

*Student work without the use of technology.*



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# We are energized by the positive outcomes experienced and the teacher networks being formed within and between schools as more teachers embrace technology for learning within their classrooms.

writer in the writing process and resulted in marked improvements in all of the qualities of writing.

While the sample size for this project is limited, the success of the project is very promising as we move forward in enhancing the effective integration of technology as an instructional tool into our classrooms. Starting small allowed us to support and develop teacher leaders who can now assist other teachers as we endeavour to permeate these effective practices across the system.

We are pleased to report that Board results for 2008-09 as measured through EQAO in Grade 3 writing were 79 percent at or above provincial level, indicating an increase of 33 percent over the past five years and in Grade 6, 66 percent at or above the provincial level, indicating a 24 percent increase over the same period. These results are not attributed solely to the increased availability of technology as the critical importance of increased teacher capacity in the use of high yield strategies within their classrooms cannot be underscored. Data does indicate that the relationship between the integration of technology and increased teacher instructional capacity is very successful in achieving improved results. This process demands resources, commitment and time.

The collaborative model used in this project demonstrates how effectively teachers can change their practice and enhance student results. We are energized by the positive outcomes experienced and the teacher networks being formed within and between schools as more teachers embrace technology for learning within their classrooms.

Special thanks is extended to Emily, Colleen, Tammy, Carolyn, Micheline, Rhonda, Mary Lou and Ginette for their leadership. ○

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## EXCELLENCE THROUGH ATHLETICS Durham Catholic District School Board

By Mariah O'Reilly, Program Consultant

“As they get older, boys increasingly describe themselves as non-readers. Few have this attitude early in their schooling, but, according to some experts, nearly 50 percent describe themselves as non-readers by the time they enter secondary school.” - (*Me Read? No Way! A practical guide to improving boys' literacy skills*. Ontario Ministry of Education.)

In response to a persistent gender gap in the area of boys and reading, the Durham Catholic District School Board utilized *Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP) Tutoring Initiative* funds to initiate the *Excellence through Athletics Pilot Project* to engage boys in becoming better readers.

This project was aimed at motivating and engaging boys in junior and intermediate grades by combining sport and literacy. The recent research by Douglas Reeves linking student engagement in extra-curricular activities to academic success influenced the decision to focus on boys who were not part of school teams or clubs and who were not achieving board standards in reading. The teachers involved in this project were experienced sports coaches and were committed to combining boys' enjoyment of physical activity with authentic and engaging reading activities. To build the capacity of teachers involved, time was scheduled to meet as a team and review *Read Me? No Way!*, discuss high yield instructional strategies and share “out of the box” ideas to motivate these reluctant readers. Teachers developed interest surveys in order to gain insights into attitudes towards reading as well as to ascertain the type of reading these students enjoyed.

This project began in March 2009 and, for the next two and half months, the students met after school for two hours, two nights a week. The sessions began with physical activity in the gym and then, after a hearty snack, the students engaged in a variety of reading experiences such as reading the sports section of the newspaper, assembling their own dream sports team, developing baseball and hockey cards and debating the rules of fair play. An important aspect of this project was helping boys to find text they enjoyed reading. Teacher librarians assisted the efforts and were tremendous supports in helping the students discover books they would love to read.

A preliminary review of the data indicates promising results. Student engagement in both the athletic activities and reading tutorials was characterized as both enthusiastic and committed. Boys involved in the pilot wanted the after school program to extend beyond the scheduled time. For students not involved in after school athletics and identified to be disinterested non-readers such enthusiasm is itself a success story.

Continuing the pilot by inviting participants to re-engage this current school year will yield data that will allow significant comparators to assess improvements in student engagement. It will not be

surprising if the findings confirm that for some boys literacy development may require an additional hook. If athletics can provide that hook we may be well on our way to bridging the literacy gender gap. ○

## KINDERGARTEN TUTORING PROGRAM FOR LITERACY Ottawa Catholic School Board

By Sonja Karsh, Principal of School Effectiveness

In 2007, using funding from the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat's Ontario Focused Intervention Program (OFIP) Tutoring Initiative, the Ottawa Catholic School Board began the Kindergarten Tutoring Program in four of its high needs inner city schools. The program was extended to six schools in 2008 and to eight schools in 2009. The program targets specific students in their Senior Kindergarten year. These students have demonstrated a need for more intensive support in oral language and early literacy development. This need is assessed through several tools administered in Junior Kindergarten: the Board's JK Speech and Language Checklist, and other instruments measuring phonemic awareness, letter/sound recognition, sound/letter relationships, and knowledge of concepts of print. In addition to these, teacher observations inform the decisions of the school team who recommends the students who will take part in the program.

The Kindergarten students in the program who would normally come to school for half a day, every day, now are in school all day, every day. This program, being outside of the regular instructional hours for Kindergarten students in the Ottawa Catholic Board, focuses solely on oral language and early literacy. It is designed not to replicate the Kindergarten program but to enhance it. The number of students in each group is capped at 15 to maximize the opportunities for learning.

Students are regularly engaged in activities devised to build background knowledge, such as purposeful field trips. These occur at the onset of a unit of study to provide the content for discussion rather than occurring at the end of the study. Students learn and practise language through song, rhymes, and

purposeful discussions. Teachers expand students' literacy skills by using the gradual release of responsibility through daily read aloud, modelled writing, shared reading and shared writing, small group guided practice, and independent reading and independent writing activities, with a focus on activities requiring higher-order thinking.

With this funding, the Board hires qualified teachers to lead the half-day tutoring program. Professional learning is a pivotal element of the program. The Kindergarten tutors and regular Kindergarten teachers formally meet monthly to review student work and progress, and to collaboratively plan next steps. The Kindergarten tutors also come together on a regular basis to visit each other's classrooms, engage in collaborative inquiry, and address specific concerns. They have become a professional learning community of their own. In addition, they are members of the larger school professional learning community and attend meetings and job-embedded professional learning activities at the school.

The students' progress is measured on an ongoing basis. Kindergarten tutors and


teachers use the assessment tools mentioned above, as well as others and plan specific responses to the data they gather. The summative data from the first two cohorts show that all but a handful of students have experienced a closing of the achievement gap by the time they enter Grade 1.

In some of the measures, the students in the Kindergarten tutoring program have outperformed the students in the control group. This includes sub-groups showing a greater initial gap namely boys and English language learners. The exciting news is that as the students' achievement is tracked after they leave the program, the data is showing that the gap remains closed to the end of Grade 1 at this time. The first cohort is now entering Grade 2. Their achievement will be monitored until they reach the end of Grade 3.

The success of the Kindergarten tutoring program in the Ottawa Catholic School Board provides undeniable evidence that with targeted and focused intervention the existing conditions of poverty and a myriad of other challenges can be overcome. ○


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# Perspectives Prep Camp: Building Bridges Between School Years

By Marie-France Bordeleau Fitzgerald, Janis Davies, AND Jane Fullerton-Kelly

**T**his past summer the Perspectives Prep Camp was created at Saint Lawrence Academy Senior Campus, an elementary school in the Montreal area composed of Cycle 2 (Grades 3 and 4) and Cycle 3 (Grades 5 and 6). This camp was established by Principal Jane Fullerton-Kelly after having witnessed the success of another camp, the Lester B. Pearson School Board-wide Literacy Camp. The board-wide camp targets students entering Cycle 2, whereas the Perspectives Prep Camp was created to serve students who would be entering either grade level of Cycle 3 at the start of the following school year.

The rationale for this camp was to prepare students for the upcoming school year by increasing their self-confidence and by counteracting the often-observed decline in both reading and math skills over the summer. The camp was, therefore, held in mid-August, just before the start of the school year, and was designed to maintain and strengthen literacy and numeracy skills through stimulating project-based learning.

As stated by Miriam Trehearne (2006)<sup>1</sup>, students, "...in the upper elementary grades still have much to learn about reading and writing." Enhancing preparedness for this learning was the underlying goal of this special camp.

The overall theme was to explore architecture and structures, as this reflected student interest observed during the previous year within the





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**“It was so much fun! We did cool messy experiments and even built our own bridge! My mom said my reading and spelling got better too. I’m really happy about that.”**

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Visual Arts program. The theme readily lent itself to the meaningful integration of activities involving important mathematical concepts and literacy skills in both English and French. Hands-on projects—such as constructing realistic model bridges and illustrating students’ dream homes—required creative thinking and self-expression in visual design. The use of geometry, measurement, and writing skills, for recording the construction process and writing imaginative stories, were also needed. Multiple links were also established with the afternoon Visual Arts program, such as having students create watercolour landscapes portraying bridges in nature. Teamwork, cooperative learning and peer support were imbedded in all activities.

An important factor was the favourable ratio of 1:5, so that there was always one teacher for five students. The camp team was composed of four experienced teachers: Jeff Haynes, Cycle 3 English teacher; Julie Rousselle, Cycle 3 French teacher; Janis Davies, Resource teacher; and Marie-France Bordeleau Fitzgerald, teacher of Les Arts plastiques (Visual Arts). The support of one integration aide, Angela Robert, was also an essential component.

### **The program**

The camp began every morning at 9 a.m. and ended at 2:30 p.m., and it included a 30-minute lunch period. The morning program was comprised of combinations of either French and English literacy activities or numeracy and French literacy activities, depending on the individual needs of the students.

#### ***The Daily 5***

A combination of various teaching methods and programs was used. One of the

approaches used to structure the days at camp was the “Daily 5”; a structure for literacy created by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser: “The Daily 5 is a student-driven management structure designed to fully engage students in reading and writing” (Boushey & Moser, 2006).<sup>2</sup>

The framework of this approach is composed of five elements: students reading to themselves, reading to someone, working on writing, listening to another student reading, and practicing spelling and word work. Three of these elements were selected for implementation at the Perspectives Prep Camp. Students had time to read to themselves and learned how to select a book independently at their individual level. Students also enjoyed listening to storybooks read aloud by the teachers in both French and English.

The books were democratically selected by the students and were related to the themed activities of the week. Teachers also conveyed their passion for reading by sharing personal favourites such as *Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch (1998).<sup>3</sup> Each student was given a personal copy of this book in their surprise gift kit on the last day of camp.

Finally, students were given many opportunities throughout the daily activities to work on words and writing. Each student kept a personal journal as well as recorded the progress and elements of his/ her bridge and dream house design.

#### ***Guided reading***

Guided reading was also a key element in this camp. Once a day, the students in the camp would separate into groups of various levels and complete a guided reading session supported by a teacher. Each group

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## **“The camp has provided the students with an opportunity to review strategies and skills they learned the previous year, as well as giving them a head start for the year to come. They will start the year with enthusiasm and confidence, and we all know how much of a difference that can make!”**

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was comprised of an average of five students in order to counterbalance some of the difficulties associated with large heterogeneous classroom groupings, as explained by Lou et al. (1996)<sup>4</sup>: “whole group instruction, while critical for presenting particular kinds of concepts, does not provide the needed support for struggling readers to negotiate difficult text that leads to growth in reading.”

Different reading strategies were explored with the students depending on their personal need. “Guided reading enables children to practice strategies with the teacher’s support, and leads to independent silent reading” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).<sup>5</sup>

### **Projects**

During the morning sessions, continuous research-based projects were designed to revolve around students’ interests, motivating them to tailor their projects to their personalities while integrating research and self-expression. By working on an architectural project designing and building a bridge capable of supporting some weight or conceiving of their dream house through art and research, the students were engaged and found they were looking forward to the next day at camp so they could see the progress in their individual or team projects.

As one parent summarized: “I would highly recommend this camp. My daughter had lots of fun and compared it to going to Walt Disney World every day, and even said it was like a vacation.”

Clearly this student was learning in a situation in which she was deeply involved, but which she also considered “fun”.

### **Afternoons**

In the afternoon the students were divided into two larger groups which alternated daily between a visual arts session and a sports session. The sports sessions were led by Gillian Laberge, an Integration Aide who regularly organizes sports activities at the school. Team sports were played and water games were included to combat the hot, humid weather. While many aspects of visual arts were integrated throughout the morning literacy projects, the afternoon was another opportunity for students to explore in greater depth various materials and techniques, both in conjunction with the camp theme and as free personal artistic exploration.

The importance of self-expression through artistic dimensions cannot be overemphasized as an essential component of self-confidence, motivation and

personal enrichment at this age. According to Smithrim and Upitis (2005),<sup>6</sup> arts in education include multiple benefits such as increased creativity, higher academic achievement, attention to detail, experiencing the joy of creating and expressing emotions, thoughts and knowledge without words.

### **Outcomes**

All of the participating students were selected because they were struggling academically. A basic evaluation and running records were done at the beginning of the camp using the PM Benchmarks Kits (Nelley & Smith, 2003)<sup>7</sup> in order to compare them to both their previous scores from the end of the school year and the new scores recorded at the end of the camp. By using the PM Benchmark Kit to administer running records, the teachers were able to determine both the students’ ability to read and comprehend texts, and in particular how they integrated “...meaning, structural and visual cues”.<sup>7</sup>

As described by Mary M. Clay, a teacher can use running records to “...check on whether students are working on material of appropriate difficulty, neither too difficult nor too easy but offering a suitable level of challenge to the learner” (Clay, 2000).<sup>8</sup> At the start of this summer camp, virtually all of the students’ reading PM Benchmarks had decreased since the end of the school year.

When reevaluated at the end of the camp, the majority of the students surpassed their April scores in English as a first language. Therefore, the weeks of intensive prep camp helped the students return to their initial achievement level and helped prepare them to start the new school year on track. As for French as a second language, some students made small but significant gains, although these were less noticeable than the English language gains and may be a consideration in the organization of the camp next year.

Informal testing in math indicated that the students made some gains in their ability to apply mathematical concepts, especially observed in an increased capacity to think critically and problem-solve. Furthermore, the students’ self-confidence levels changed remarkably.

This aspect was greatly noticed by the parents, as stated repeatedly in submitted

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parent commentaries: "I felt that this camp was beneficial for his self-esteem. He developed a more positive attitude towards math. I feel the two week camp was able to put him ahead of the game and was a great way for him to make a connection with his new teachers. He was able to start off the school year feeling more sure of himself and not as overwhelmed as previous years."

### Funding

There were two sources of funding for the camp. Monies from the school's special poverty budget covered the majority of the costs. In addition, parents were asked to contribute a small amount, if they were able, to cover the cost of supplies, snacks, etc.

### Evaluation

Overall, feedback indicated that the camp was a great success for the students, parents and teachers. In planning for next year's camp, we are considering organizing a solo French program, rather than combining it with mathematics, in order to see a greater improvement in this aspect of second language literacy. We also hope to fund the program through grant monies.

We will definitely continue to base the camp on specific themes that easily lend themselves to both languages and numeracy activities, as well as catering to project-based learning approaches and the learning styles of the students, who tend to be mostly tactile or kinesthetic learners who are helped by multisensory projects. As one student said, "It was so much fun! We did cool messy experiments and even built our own bridge! My mom said my reading and spelling got better too. I'm really happy about that."

This same student even begged one day to bring his older brother, a former student in our school. This has inspired us to consider including some high school students or recent graduates from our school to help out at the camp.

Our goal of bridging the gap between the end of the regular school year and the beginning of the following year through enjoyable learning experiences in the summer Perspectives Prep camp has been achieved at Saint Lawrence Academy Senior Campus. As summarized by teacher Julie Rousselle: "The camp has provided the students with an opportunity to review strategies and skills they learned the previous year, as well as giving them a head start for the year to come.

They will start the year with enthusiasm and confidence, and we all know how much of a difference that can make!" ○

*Both Marie-France B. Fitzgerald and Janis Davies are McGill University graduates in Education and are presently teachers at Saint Lawrence Academy Senior Campus, of the Lester B. Pearson School Board in LaSalle. Last year, they both attended a two-day workshop with the Daily 5 "sisters", and have extensive experience applying this approach within summer literacy camps.*

*Marie-France has previous experience as a resource teacher and, with her background in Visual*

*Arts, has been the Art Teacher at Saint Lawrence for the past few years. Both teachers have been inspired by their participation in conferences and school visits led by Calgary-based Miriam Trehearne and are looking forward to perfecting and enlarging the camp next year. Janis Davies first began her teaching career in England where she was inspired by current trends in literacy. She has been a classroom teacher and is now a resource teacher. Jane Fullerton-Kelly is Principal of Saint Lawrence Academy Senior Campus. She has been an elementary classroom teacher, a teacher of students with special needs, and a resource teacher. She has led many initiatives designed to support struggling students.*

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# Early Childhood Education, Early Intervention and Parent Education: A Winning Combination

By Jody Rutherford and Art Aitken

**Our Mission:** Every child has the early literacy, numeracy and citizenship skills needed for success. We provide ongoing assessment and intervention to support continuous learning for all students.

**A** brief walk through the hallways of Central School in Brooks is all that you need to realize that there is something very special happening. Children’s voices in song and laughter resonate throughout the building and adults bustle around the children as they conduct various learning activities.

Have you ever pondered the ideal setting for children to begin their school careers? Imagine the energy level found in a building that is “home” to close to 400 students from ages three to six. From the handprints that border the hallways, to the pint-sized furniture and children’s voices on the intercom, Central School—the Brooks Early Childhood Development Centre (BECDC)—is a special educational setting for the youngest of students, not by accident, but by intentional design!

BECDC was an idea that originated with the Grasslands’ Restructuring Committee in 2003. After several months of research and studying the demographics of the community, the committee acknowledged that given a teaching staff with passion, dedication and commitment to early childhood ideals, a Kindergarten-Grade One configuration could provide an exciting forum for youngsters in the Brooks community. With this in mind, and with the support of the board and community, BECDC was “born.”

## What does it look like?

BECDC is designed with small students in mind. It is “home” to 8 Grade One classes, a Pre-1st Grade transition class, 10 Kindergarten classes and 45 pre-Kindergarten students aged three and four who receive early intervention. Recognizing that the essence of early childhood programming is early intervention, the school provides several support programs to address the needs of their students: Early English Language Learners, Early Literacy, Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, and English as a Second Language for 20 percent of the school enrolment.

Teacher, Ruth Tkachyk echoes the staff’s sentiments regarding meeting children’s needs, “one of the best things about our school, for student learning, is the commitment to early intervention.”

With a student population of 386 and a professional staff of 19, both students and teachers are supported by a dedicated group of 52 paraprofessionals.

Thanks to the dedicated commitment and collaboration of community partners and the skilful leadership of school principal Jody Rutherford and superintendent Susan Chomistek, the students are the direct beneficiaries of The Innovations Project, a partnership between the Alberta Mental Health Board, Alberta Education, and Grasslands Public Schools and other community partners in Brooks. This project

funds a Child and Family Therapist, Family Resource Coordinator, Family School Liaison Counsellors, and a School Nurse on site, all of which support the promotion, prevention, and intervention portion of the school’s mission. These support services help the school cope with its very high transiency rates, a large multicultural demographic, and families in need of support (see Grasslands website for information about this project at [www.grasslands.ab.ca](http://www.grasslands.ab.ca)). The success of this project is a guiding light for early childhood programs across the province. The Grasslands Innovations project is one of 32 Mental Health Capacity Building Projects funded by Alberta Health Services-Alberta Mental Health Board through funds from Alberta Health and Wellness. The intention of these projects is to improve the provision of mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention services to children, youth, and their families by having integrated multi-sectoral teams provide services at school based sites. The leadership for these projects is provided through a collaborative arrangement between Alberta Health Services, Alberta Mental Health Board, and Alberta Education.

BECDC support staff member Celina Everett sees the structure and grade configuration of the school lending itself ideally to the importance of getting children’s education jump-started. She says, “having only the two grade levels allows us to





really concentrate on early literacy and early speech intervention which improves student learning in higher grades.”

Realizing that parent partnerships are paramount, the school-based parent supports include: Literacy Back Packs, Home Reading Programs, Math Packs, a parent resource library, parenting workshops, information sessions, and a home visitation program for children birth to age six, through the Parents As Teachers group. The teachers enthusiastically back these initiatives and provide the necessary support to make them happen.

### Life long learning

Life-long learning is a core value at BECDC. Professional Learning Communities and a strong belief in Professional Development (PD) have professional and paraprofessional staff participating in frequent and regular meetings. The K-1 structure provides real opportunities for staff to confer and collaborate about curriculum matters.

Grade one teacher, Thea Fraser remarked, “one of the best things about our school for student learning is that students benefit from the ideas and experiences of up to eight different teachers who teach the same grade.”

Teachers meet weekly in Kindergarten or Grade 1 focus groups to research best practices and work on curricular and assessment goals. Teachers also participate in the jurisdiction AISI project focus groups with goals that focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. BECDC paraprofessional staff is also actively involved in PD—attending workshops, and focusing their growth plans and skills to support their current assignments.

Character education is firmly embedded within the culture of this school. Weekly assemblies teach virtue lessons, recognize the efforts of the children to develop the virtues, and celebrate children’s learning. The virtues are also reflected in staff and students’ projects—including Caring Kids

Backpacks (care packages for children staying at the Women’s Shelter) and Pennies for Pets. Staff and students are organized in 25 Caring Kids Mentor groups that meet once a month, participating in activities designed to further enhance the virtues lessons.

The leadership team is squarely focused on supporting teaching and learning and has created an expectation throughout the school that data to support the literacy, numeracy and assessment goals are fundamental to making instructional decisions.

“Longitudinal data to track student progress after children leave BECEC constantly reaffirms and informs how we are teaching,” says Rutherford. “Over 80 percent of our graduating students reach acceptable standards at the grade three level in both language arts and math, and many of our at-risk students are comfortably working in the regular stream by the time they reach grade three.”

Instructional support in the school is played out in a variety of formats—district



office staff, the school administrators and teacher colleagues each have a role to play in the instructional improvement process.

### What have we learned?

True to the research, this venture into early childhood education has been successful largely due to the dedication and determination of the staff to do what is best for the children's learning. The vision—families and staff working together for the learning success of all children—is taken seriously and guides all of internal and external relationships. The unequivocal support of the

parents and the community is a key part of the school's criteria for success.

Teacher Mona Harris says, "one of the best things about our school, for student learning, is the combined efforts of the staff, parents and community to maximize this."

Around two-dozen business and organizational partnerships are testaments to the school's community partnership. The annual Recognition Assembly in June 2008 honoured 247 volunteers! It's no surprise that BECDC also boasts the most active school council in the district. These parents have worked to provide such services as monthly hot lunches—available

for 100 percent of the students, subsidized swimming lessons for all grade one students, support for visiting fine arts productions, and sponsored family swimming. Parent Council has also fundraised to support technology in our school and to purchase plants and equipment for our beautification project. A parent's recent nomination resulted in the school being selected as one of *Today's Parent—Canadian*, "Top 25 Schools in Canada."

The BECDC school community acknowledges that school staffs, parents and community need to come together in a spirit of collaboration and determination to do whatever it takes to ensure the success for all of our children. Mustard (2007) states, "what teachers can do is advocate for the establishment of universally available early childhood development centres. Parents must also be involved in the centres." Mustard estimates it would cost the federal and provincial governments, which currently spend \$4 billion to \$5 billion a year on early childhood development, \$18 billion to establish early childhood development and parenting centers country-wide. In contrast, crime and violence, which some claim are the consequences of poor early childhood development, cost society more than \$100 billion a year, and mental health and addictions problems cost an additional \$100 billion.

"If you are concerned about the quality of your society for the future, \$18 billion is peanuts," says Mustard.

"In this school, we recognize the need Dr. Mustard describes, and our hope is the belief that all students can learn and that school staffs with the support and involvement of parents and community, are capable of turning that belief into reality," says Rutherford.

Central School—the Brooks Early Childhood Development Centre—continues to evolve, as staff, parents and community share a determination that all students will succeed, and a belief that working together and supporting each other's efforts if vision is to become a reality. ○

*Jody Rutherford is Principal of Brooks Early Childhood Development Centre in Brooks, Alberta, and recently completed her Masters degree in the Educational Leadership Program at the University of Lethbridge.*

*Dr. Art Aitken teaches at the University of Lethbridge in the Educational Leadership Program. He is a former K-12 teacher, principal, and school superintendent.*



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ABOVE: Alberta team members with Ministers Horner and Hancock.

RIGHT: Prime Minister Stephen Harper speaking at the Opening Ceremonies.



### Record Medal Count for Canada as 40th WorldSkills Competition Closes

The world's largest demonstration of trade and technology talent was on display September 1st through 7th, 2009 at Stampede Park in Calgary, as Alberta hosted the 40<sup>th</sup> WorldSkills Competition. More than 150,000 spectators including students from across Alberta attended the important event.

"Alberta is proud to be the leading sponsor for this exciting skills competition," said Doug Horner, Minister of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. "Talented young people play a key role in building our next generation economy and these competitors, along with their trainers and employers, inspire and encourage others to pursue careers in the skilled trades and technologies."

WorldSkills Calgary 2009 represents Skills Canada's tenth participation in WorldSkills, an international Competition that takes place every two years and brings together the world's brightest in skilled trades and technology. This year's competition featured 900 competitors from 50 countries/regions who participated in team and individual competitions. Team Canada, one of the largest delegations Canada has ever sent to WorldSkills, competed in 35 of the 45 skills categories.

"Bringing WorldSkills Calgary 2009 to Alberta was the result of a seven year partnership with our government, industry, labour and education partners," said Chris Browton, Executive Director of Skills Canada Alberta. "The 38 members of Team Canada have been on an impressive two-year journey that began at their Provincial and Territorial Skills Competitions. These students represent the thousands of students from across Canada that have pursued their personal best through our Competitions and gained tremendous life experiences in the process."

Team Canada Competitors took home eight medals, topping their previous record of six medals in 2007 in Shizuoka, Japan. The Canadian gold medal winners were Jonathan Arbour in Cabinetmaking, Pierre-Luc Coté in Restaurant Service, and David Boivin in Graphic Design Technology. All three gold medalists are from Quebec.

Winning silver medals were Jason Valdrón of New Brunswick in Web Design, Brian Everts of British Columbia in Aircraft Maintenance, and Isabelle Collin of New Brunswick in Beauty Therapy. The bronze medalists were Simon Beauchamp of Quebec in Offset Printing and Daisy Liang of British Columbia in Fashion Technology.

As well as the eight medals, Canadians also won 13 Medallions of Excellence, awarded to Competitors who scored 500 or more points (out of a total possible 600). Two of these Medallions were awarded to Alberta's Matthew Chadder in IT/Network Support and Craig Spady in Electrical Installations.

Alberta students under 22 years of age will vie for a position on the next Team Canada at Skills Canada Alberta's upcoming Provincial Skills Competition on May 12 to 13, 2010. Additional Information is available at [www.skillsalberta.com](http://www.skillsalberta.com). London, UK will host the next WorldSkills in 2011.

### Bishop's University Honours Cindy Finn as one of Their TOP 10 Grads from 1988 to 1998

Cindy Finn has worked as a school psychologist in both Canada and the United States. She is now Director of Student Services at the Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB), Quebec's largest English School Board, where her leadership and youthful vitality help guide teams of professionals who work with students of all ages with special needs. She aims to see schools continue to move forward in their journey to be fully inclusive and to promote success for all.

Finn is also actively involved with Montreal Universities where she lectures frequently as well as engages in research. Her research interests include home-school collaboration, children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and treatment acceptability.

Her work is widely recognized; she has published articles in peer-reviewed journals and has presented at local, national and international conferences. Last year, for example, she attended the International School Psychology Association Colloquium in the Netherlands to report on a pilot project in Montreal. Acknowledging that one in five children in North America has a significant degree of impairment related to emotional and or behavioural functioning, Finn addressed the changing role of schools in meeting children's mental health needs. Specifically she talked about the Family and School Support Treatment Team (FSSTT) that operates officially in 20 schools in her board.

Finn is also a committed volunteer in the West Island Community of Montreal, where she sits on the board of directors as Vice President of a Foundation that supports young adults with developmental disabilities. She also sits on the manuscript review board of Exceptionality Education Canada, is co-editor of *Connections*, the newsletter of the FSSTT, and is Project Manager for the newly developed West Island Cancer Wellness Centre.

One of the youngest to attain a high level of leadership in the LBPSB, Cindy Finn is regarded by many as a "star" in the Board.

*This is reprinted with permission from Bishop's University News, No. 29, Fall 2009. It is available at [www.mygazines.com/issue/2629/0](http://www.mygazines.com/issue/2629/0).*

Johanne Messner



### EXL Award Winner Announced

On Thursday, July 9, delegates at the CASA Annual Conference came together during the opening ceremonies at the Blackfoot Inn in Calgary to honour CASA colleagues nominated for the EXL Award. This award recognizes Excellence in Leadership in Public Education among superintendents for dedication and enthusiasm for guiding children's education experiences. Xerox representatives Randy Brydges and Rick Brunt presented the 2009 EXL Award to Johanne Messner. Johanne is the superintendent for the NE6 region of the Toronto District School Board and the OPSOA nominee.

Johanne will be presented this award in February 2010, at the American Association School Administrators conference. "This is really an award for the TDSB," says Johanne. I'd like to thank my colleagues for the original nomination."

When asked what makes a good superintendent, Johanne said, "leading from the heart, leading with care and compassion, leading every decision you make with a focus on student success, and making your main purpose to serve the needs of staff so students receive the best education possible that meets the individual needs of all students."

### Dartmouth School Wins National Award for Innovation

Students choosing where they should sit in the classroom may not seem like a big deal, but it was a crucial stepping stone for a group of 35 students from Sir Robert Borden Junior High School.

As one student put it, "we truly felt like our opinions mattered. This was something new for us." Little did they know that a process had begun where they were taking ownership for their own learning. Students were challenged to analyze their own answers from a survey aimed at capturing their experience in the classroom, and they shared their findings with teachers and administrators, who responded by forming a Student Leadership Team. The program flourished. Students began organizing monthly assemblies that celebrated student success, they made decisions on how best to spend funds raised by their activities, and on behalf of their peers, and as a result, they became more interested learners.

"By focusing on student engagement and really paying attention to what students have to say, we've become much more comfortable asking questions of our students, and of ourselves," says Darlene Fitzgerald, Principal of Sir Robert Borden.

And the school is experiencing some significant changes: relationships among staff and students are more positive, and they share responsibility for setting expectations for a positive learning environment. Over the last two years, Fitzgerald has seen a dramatic decline in student office referrals and suspensions, along with increases in literacy achievement and progress in mathematics.

"This is precisely the kind of program we want to draw attention to on the national stage through our new Ken Spencer Award for Innovation in Teaching and Learning," says Penny Milton, CEO of CEA. "Students are telling us that school work must be real; it should make a difference, and be linked to their lives beyond school."

### New Initiative to Bring Literacy Program to Atlantic Learners Online

An innovative approach to literacy programming was introduced in Newfoundland and Labrador in fall with the pilot of online delivery of Level I of the provincial Adult Basic Education (ABE) program. The ABE program, which contains three levels, is designed to give adults an opportunity to achieve high school equivalency.

"ABE is an important resource for individuals wishing to improve their literacy skills and can prove to be a critical stepping-stone to post-secondary education," said the Honourable Darin King, Minister of Education. "Delivering the program online will make it more accessible to more people. It has the potential to provide individuals with greater flexibility to help accommodate their family lives and possible work schedules, and is another option for those interested in improving their literacy skills to explore."

The pilot will initially be tested with the assistance of the Twillingate-New World Island Development Association and the Carbonear location of Women Interested in Successful Employment (WISE). These non-profit, community-based organizations are located in two areas of the province that currently do not have ABE Level I programming available. Delivery will be expanded to two more sites in September 2010.

"The Government of Canada is proud to work with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to help people prepare for, obtain and maintain employment, and be productive members of the labour force," said the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. "We are proud to support this project as it is aligned with the Government of Canada's vision to foster a strong and competitive country that enables individuals to make choices that help them live rewarding lives."

The pilot will include two to four weeks of in-class training to introduce participants to the eLearning technology and how to use the online curriculum. An ABE instructor will be available online and mentors will also be sought in the students' home community to provide additional assistance.



### Niagara Catholic District School Board Launches Arts Program

Niagara Catholic launched its fifth Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Program, Niagara Catholic Arts and Culture, at the Shaw Festival Theatre on Tuesday, November 3rd, 2009.

Niagara Catholic Arts and Culture offers Niagara Catholic secondary school students the opportunity to gain valuable on-stage and backstage experience in the theatre while earning high school credits. Students who enrol in the Niagara Catholic Arts and Culture SHSM will learn about makeup, costuming, sound, lighting and acting from professionals working in the industry. The Niagara Catholic Arts and Culture SHSM will begin at Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School in St. Catharines at the start of the second semester, February 1, 2010. Classes will be taught by Niagara Catholic teachers. Shaw Festival performers and backstage staff from the sound, lighting, hair and makeup and costuming departments will be guest instructors throughout the semester.

“The addition of this newest Specialist High Skills Major, Niagara Catholic Arts and Culture, is evidence of Niagara Catholic’s commitment to offering students practical educational experiences tailored to their individual career paths,” said Niagara Catholic Director of Education John Crocco. “This new Specialist High Skills Major, which gives our students the opportunity to work with and learn from some of the most talented actors, actresses, directors and backstage personnel, will produce a new generation of creative and talented young Canadian artists to share their gifts with the world.”

### HWDSB Names New Director of Education

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) Trustees announced the selection of a new Director of Education at a special board meeting in June 2009. John Malloy, a Superintendent of Education at York Region District School Board, was selected after a thorough search to replace Dr. Chris Spence, who left to take the lead role at Toronto District School Board. Malloy assumed his new position on July 2nd.

“The Board of Trustees is extremely excited to welcome John Malloy to HWDSB. We believe his strong focus on student achievement, commitment to equity and his breadth of experience will help continue moving our organization forward,” says Chair Jessica Brennan. “John’s contagious

enthusiasm and his belief that each student deserves an equitable opportunity to succeed are in line with our Board’s direction.” Malloy brings more than 23 years of teaching and senior administrative experience to his new role, as well as strong academic credentials and a commitment to equity within schools. Over the course of his career, Malloy has held supervisory roles at both the separate and public boards.

“HWDSB is a leader in innovative programming and I am honoured to be chosen as the next Director of Education to continue building the momentum. I hope to build a truly collaborative vision by listening to all voices and empowering staff and students,” says Director-Designate John Malloy.

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**Calgary Board of Education Announces Canada’s First International Spanish Academy High School**

The Calgary Board of Education is pleased to celebrate the opening of Canada’s first International Spanish Academy at the high school level. The Grade 10 students at William Aberhart High School have the honour of being the first Canadian students to enroll in an internationally-recognized high school Spanish academy.

William Aberhart is one of seven CBE schools offering Spanish Bilingual instruction. All of the Spanish Bilingual schools in the CBE participate in the International Spanish Academy (ISA) network, which under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Spanish Ministry of Education, establishes high academic standards and makes students eligible for Spanish language credentials from the Ministry at the end of Grade 6 and Grade 12. Through the ISA, the CBE co-operates with Spanish educators on providing scholarships and professional development to teachers, offering twinned exchange programs, cultural events well as numerous other supports.

The CBE is committed to second language instruction and language instructors agree speaking a second language enriches a young person’s life in numerous ways. The establishment of numerous Spanish academies at the elementary and middle school division and underscores our commitment to strong language instruction.



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### Inspiring Education Inspires Albertans

In October 2009 approximately 1,000 Albertans wrapped up the Inspiring Education fall forum with a commitment to preparing now for students of the future and a renewed vision for education to support a diversified knowledge economy in 2029.

“Throughout the process, we heard that people were excited to be involved and have an impact on the future of education in this province,” said Education Minister Dave Hancock. “Albertans truly value their education system and they clearly realize that education is the key to our future prosperity.”

At the October 18 -20 forum, inspirational speakers Daniel Pink, Dr. Mark Milliron, Dr. Jennifer James and Dr. Indira Samarasekera shared their perspectives on education and the future. A panel discussion on education and the economy also took place. In a roundtable setting, participants discussed the qualities and abilities needed by an educated Albertan in 2029 and provided input to policy and governance themes.

Daniel Pink, author of a trio of best-selling books on the changing world of work, including *A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers Will Rule the Future* stated in his Oct. 18 presentation, “This conversation is truly not taking place in many places in the world. And I think that the mere fact of having these sets of conversations shows a level of vision and possibility that is really unique in North America.”

*Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans* is led by a Steering Committee, co-chaired by Athabasca-Redwater MLA Jeff Johnson and Edmonton teacher Brent McDonough. The project is also supported by a Working Committee, with membership from education stakeholder groups and representatives from several provincial government departments.

Outcomes from the forum and spring community engagement activities will help to inform development of a policy and governance framework and revisions to the School Act. The framework, being developed by the Steering Committee, is scheduled to be presented to Hancock early in the new year.

More information on the dialogue is available at [www.inspiringeducation.alberta.ca](http://www.inspiringeducation.alberta.ca).

### Ontario Putting Kids And Parents First

Ontario will start phasing in full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds next fall as part of the province’s plan to build a well-educated workforce. Up to 35,000 kindergarten students across Ontario will be enrolled in full-day learning in September, 2010. The goal is to have the program for four- and five-year-olds fully implemented in all schools by 2015-16. Four- and five-year-olds will learn under the guidance of a teacher and an early childhood educator. Parents may also enrol their child for extended hours for a reasonable fee, before and after regular school hours. This will make it easier for parents to get to and from work and will ensure their children have an integrated learning program for the whole day.

This is part of the government’s ongoing plan to strengthen education that began with smaller class sizes, higher test scores, an improved graduation rate and Reaching Higher. Building the skills and education of Ontario’s workforce is a key part of the government’s plan to create a stronger economy.

Quick facts:

- Ontario is the only place in North America that will offer full-day learning for all four- and five-year-olds.
- This year, school boards will recommend sites. In the new year, school boards will know which schools will start the early learning program in September 2010.
- Subsidies will be available, based on need, for families who need help with the cost of extended day programming, before and after school hours.
- There will be approximately 26 kids in a class with one teacher and one early childhood educator under the new program. That means more individual attention over a full day than students get now over a half day.

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### Trillium Lakelands District School Board Names Interim Director

As reported in the Lindsay Post, Trillium Lakelands District School Board Trustees named Dr. Warren Rosborough to the position of interim director of education. Rosborough replaced Kathy Verduyn, who retired from the board of directors to take an appointment with the Ministry of Education, effective September 28.

"I am very pleased to offer this service to Trillium Lakelands District School Board as they move ahead with determining who will lead them into the future," Rosborough stated in a release.

Rosborough is a former teacher, principal, and administrator from the Peterborough area. He was also superintendent of program and special education for six years with the former Victoria County Board of Education, and subsequently superintendent of student services for another five years following the creation of the board.

### New Director of Education Hired to Lead Board Toward Future Success

William (Rusty) Hick, formerly Superintendent of Education: Operations, with the Kawartha Pine Ridge (KPR) District School Board, has been hired by the board as its new Director of Education.

"We had a number of excellent candidates from both outside and within our Board, but Rusty's depth of professional skills, knowledge and expertise, combined with his collaborative and empathetic leadership style, were unmatched," says Diane Lloyd, Chairperson of the Board. "We are truly fortunate to be able to find within our school district an educator of his calibre and experience."

Hick replaced current Director of Education Sylvia Terpstra, who retired in September.

"In the various supervisory officer roles Rusty has had within our board, we have been impressed by his strong commitment to and focus on the most important factor in all our activities, and that is: what is best for our students?" says Lloyd.

A skilled administrator, Hick has served KPR in a variety of roles since 1999. He was appointed as Superintendent of Education: Operations, in April 2008, with responsibility for all school operations, and the Safe, Caring and Restorative schools portfolio. He has also served as Superintendent of Student Achievement for both the Municipality of Clarington and City of Peterborough/Peterborough County areas.

"Rusty is an exemplary supervisory officer who is highly regarded by his peers, staff and the communities he has served. He is a positive and tireless advocate for public education and we expect him to lead us towards even greater success for our students," says Lloyd.

"I am humbled, honoured and energized by the opportunity to build upon the great successes of the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board," says Hick. "The dedicated and conscientious efforts of our Trustees, staff and volunteers to nurture and improve the lives of our students are what makes public education so great."

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### Boards Showcase Health Promoting Ideas for Schools

A high school cooking club, a student lounge that is a “friendly” place for students to hangout, and traditional playground games that inspire students to have fun getting fit are among the innovative activities being used to improve student health in Nova Scotia. The Health Promoting Schools Showcase, which began in Dartmouth in October, highlights the work across the province to help schools incorporate healthy, active living into everyday school life.

“One of our key goals in education is to improve learning conditions so that students can meet their full potential,” said Education Minister Marilyn More. “We know that a child’s overall health is a key determinant of their ability to learn, and that the habits they form early in life can last a lifetime.

“That’s why I want to congratulate our Health Promoting Schools teams for their leadership in supporting students to become better, more engaged learners and healthier Nova Scotians for life.”

Health Promoting Schools is a province-wide approach that draws together school boards, district health authorities, community members, and other health and education partners to ensure key school health programs are available to students.

“The health challenges facing young people are often complex and cannot be solved by the school system alone or one department acting on its own,” said Health Promotion and Protection Minister Maureen MacDonald. “It is important that we all work together. I think the initiatives showcased today clearly show that our partnerships are paying off.”

Health Promoting Schools addresses issues such as healthy eating, physical activity, youth sexual health, tobacco reduction, addiction and injury prevention.

To learn more about Health Promoting Schools, visit [www.nshealthpromotingschools.ca](http://www.nshealthpromotingschools.ca).



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### **École Olds Elementary Teacher Short-listed for Governor General's Award**

Helene Fisher, Grade 2 teacher from Olds (part of Chinook's Edge School Division in Alberta), has been selected as one of 25 finalists from across the country for the 2009 Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History.

Over the last two years, Fisher has created an extensive body of work that involves seven classes in three schools and bridges two distinct cultures. Students at Olds Elementary, along with their project partners, became linked with First Nations students at Ermineskin Elementary School. Students shared traditional celebrations such as a Pow Wow, a Feast, Ceremonies, Storytelling and Artifact studies. They also employed technology to meet and learn through videoconference, hosted guests from the Glenbow Museum Outreach Program, and took a field trip to Dry Island Buffalo Jump to learn about the traditional First Nations way of life.

"We all have roots in Alberta's history and through an inquiry based approach and artifact study we have guided students in making connections," said Fisher. "There are so many cross curricular components—from Art and Science to History and Language Arts—and it has involved numerous people. Our local museum has participated, Elders have guided us, and teachers from all the schools have jumped along enthusiastically. Most importantly, the students were engaged, motivated and focused on "creating the present" by working together to understand the past and its connections to us as Alberta's people.

"I feel this project has influenced many of our students, as they begin to understand our similarities and feel comfortable with our differences. They have come to appreciate the rich culture and important history of Alberta and Canada. I feel as though we looked past the small box of artifacts that we had previously used for teaching these curriculum outcomes, and walked through a whole different culture. It took me to the next level of my own learning. By walking alongside my own mentor, Iris Loewen, the FNMI coordinator for Chinook's Edge, I have encouraged my students to ask questions and learn how to seek answers."

A panel of judges will select six recipients from the group, by looking at innovations and achievements in the field of teaching Canadian History or Social Studies. The six recipients will be awarded a gold medal and a trip to the awards ceremony in Ottawa with the Governor General on November 20<sup>th</sup>. For Helene Fisher, who just finished presenting the project at the provincial Social Studies conference, it has already been rewarding to be included on the shortlist.

"It is very gratifying to be recognized at this level, and it is because of the contribution of many people along the way. I have learned from every one of the people who are involved in this project, and I am continually learning from every one of my students. This is about experiencing that we all have a "story" and to recognize how special each of our stories are," said Fisher.

"I guess as a teacher, we all touch on our curriculum the best way we can and hope the important messages live on. We hope that through what we teach today we will slowly see benefit over the years to come."

### **Jim Gibbons Retires, Joins Alberta Ministry**

Chinook's Edge School Division Superintendent Jim Gibbons announced his retirement, which will take effect in June 2010. The decision was "a tough one," said Jim Gibbons. "I'm ready to spend more time with my family and wanted the Board to have ample time to begin their search to find the very best Superintendent. When I retire next year, I will have had 34 years in education—and never a bad one. It has been a remarkable career and this division is in a great position to be able to move to the next stage."

Board Chair Ian Taylor said, "in the 10 years since he became Superintendent of Schools for Chinook's Edge, Jim has created a culture that is recognized across the province as a jurisdiction that puts its students front and centre and welcomes innovative ways of serving them. During his tenure, we have also benefited from an extensive building program of new schools and school modernizations across the division. One major thing that has defined Jim's leadership is his emphasis on the importance of professional development. By continually upgrading his own education, teaching Master's courses and making all kinds of professional development opportunities available for teachers, Jim has always led by example."

Jim Gibbons will join the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) as senior education advisor on a full-time basis in June 2010. He replaces Leroy Sloan who is retiring. In the interim—the 2009 school year—Terry Gunderson, currently a consultant with the association, will assume leadership of the education services branch of the ASBA. Gibbons holds a B.Sc. and Ed. Dip. from the University of Calgary, an M.A. from San Diego State and is a trainer/facilitator for several of Frank Covey's management training programs.



## FIRST-EVER WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR THE KEN SPENCER AWARD FOR INNOVATION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Sir Robert Borden Junior High School (Dartmouth, NS) asked students to define how they learn best, and inspired a whole school transformation program; with the help of local scientists, Brunskill School (Saskatoon, SK) engrosses six-year-olds in science; a medical internship program at Children of the Earth High School (Winnipeg, MB) raises the career aspirations and opportunities of urban aboriginal students. All 141 schools participating in CEA's research and development initiative, *What did you do in school today?*, were eligible for nomination.

To learn more, please visit <http://cea-ace.ca/res.cfm?subsection=ken>.



### FIRST PLACE

**Sir Robert Borden Junior High School  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia  
Halifax Regional School Board  
Student Leadership Team**

In an attempt to incorporate student voice in their decision making process, administrators created a 35-member Student Leadership Team to develop and implement ideas that raise student interest and commitment to quality school work. Throughout this process they develop learning activities that are meaningful to their students and connected to their lives and communities outside of school. Throughout the school year, this group of 35 students was integral in the development, organization, and promotion of student activities – which involved local leaders from the cultural community – for the entire student body. They have made decisions, for example, on how best to spend funds raised by their activities, and have been a voice for students' concerns. This program gives students a say in what they learn, and some responsibility for creating their own learning environments, which makes them more interested learners.



### SECOND PLACE

**Brunskill School  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon Public School Division  
The Junior Scientist Club**

This program was designed to captivate Grade 1 students' curiosity in science and put them in charge of deciding on the topics they want to explore, which has a positive impact on their level of engagement. Field trips organized in collaboration with the University of Saskatchewan, families, and scientists in the community have resulted in a low-cost extracurricular activity that can function much like choirs and sports teams do in most schools. This program also demonstrates a deep regard for six-year-olds as fully capable learners and inquirers; a true innovation that required a 'leap of faith', as well as a commitment to engage community members and experts into the process.



### THIRD PLACE

**Children of the Earth High School  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Winnipeg School Division  
Medical Careers Exploration Program**

This is a four-year program for students to discover, through internships at local health clinics, various career options within the medical field such as: physicians, MRI technologists, nursing, health information clerks, orthopaedic technologists, and many more. The program provides these opportunities for inner city students, many of whom are Aboriginal, who would otherwise not consider a career in any aspect of medicine, or even post-secondary education. This program is significant in that it not only raises the expectations of students about future possibilities, but also provides them with a deep exposure to and involvement in real work contexts. In addition, the extensive involvement of partners; and the four-year duration of the program is more likely to generate a durable impact on students.

Full stories for each of the award winners can be found at  
<http://cea-ace.ca/res.cfm?subsection=ken>



### Quebec Ministry of Education Provides Funding to Lester B. Pearson School Board to Research Best Practices for Students with Special Needs

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Leisure in Quebec has provided over \$112 000 in action research funding to support the development of two projects. These projects are being carried out by professionals in the Student Services Department of the Lester B. Pearson School Board in Dorval, Quebec.

One project, *Fitting In: Social Skills in Secondary Schools through Teamwork* is a collaboration between two high schools and a local readaptation centre to establish a social skills program for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The second study, *Enhancing Teacher-Student Relationships for Students with Learning Difficulties or Behavioural Disorders* will explore the role of the teacher-student relationship and ways to foster positive outcomes for elementary students with special needs.

This project will be carried out in collaboration with researchers from McGill University. Both projects are in the development phase and funding is provided over two academic years, from 2009 to 2011.

### Peel Board Director, Associate Director to Retire

Peel District School Board Director of Education Jim Grieve is retiring from the board. Grieve began his 30-year teaching career at Agnes Taylor Public School in Brampton. He then moved to the North York Board of Education working as a teacher, vice-principal and principal. Grieve became a superintendent in the North York Board of Education. In 1998 he was appointed director of the Ottawa-Carleton board. Grieve joined the Peel board as director in 2002 and will retire effective Oct. 30, 2009. The board will now commence a search process for director of education.

Janet McDougald, Chair of the Board, noted in September 2009, “last night the board accepted the retirement of Jim Grieve. The Ministry of Education has offered Jim a unique opportunity—the chance to have a major leadership role in creating all day learning for four and five year olds in Ontario. We all know of Jim’s personal and professional passion for early learning. Obviously, while this is a great opportunity for Jim—and a huge asset for the Ministry—as a board we regret losing a director who has brought such personal commitment to the role. Jim has always identified himself first and foremost as a teacher—and that is evident in his focus on supporting schools and students. From his weekly visits to schools and hosting staff focus groups, Jim has stayed closely connected to the people in our schools and centres. At the same time, his work with community organizations such as Success by Six and his commitment to building links with our faith and culture communities has left a legacy of success. We thank him for his energy, positive attitude and contributions to the children of Peel.”

The Peel board serves more than 150,000 students in kindergarten to grade 12. Operating 236 schools in the municipalities of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga, the Peel board is the largest employer in Peel. The board’s annual budget is \$1.2 billion. For more information, visit the board’s website at [www.peelschools.org](http://www.peelschools.org).

### Lester B. Pearson School Board Provides Students With Meaningful Global Opportunities

The Lester B. Pearson School Board of Dorval (Montreal), Quebec, Canada and the Haikou Jingshan School of Haikou, Hainan today announce the signing of a Letter of Agreement for a partnership in education.

The agreement is the result of several months of discussions between officials and representatives of both parties. The agreement is for a partnership in the establishment of a Canada Class to be held at the Haikou Jingshan School beginning in the 2010/2011 school year. The Canada Class will be offered at the senior secondary level and will consist of a two year program with the first year of study at Haikou Jingshan School and the second year at the Lester B. Pearson School Board in Canada.

Lester B. Pearson School Board Chairman Marcus Tabachnick, who was in Haikou to participate in the signing of the agreement, said “this is an important step in the ongoing development of our School Board’s mission of providing students with meaningful global opportunities.” He went on to say that “we are proud and excited to be partnering with a school of the quality and reputation of the Haikou Jingshan School. This agreement becomes the fourth joint partnership agreement that our Board has in China.”

Recruitment of students will begin in early 2010 with the first Canada Class opening in September of the same year. It is expected that 20 students will be accepted into the first class of this exclusive new program. The Lester B. Pearson School Board is the largest English School Board in Quebec.

Send your school board’s news to  
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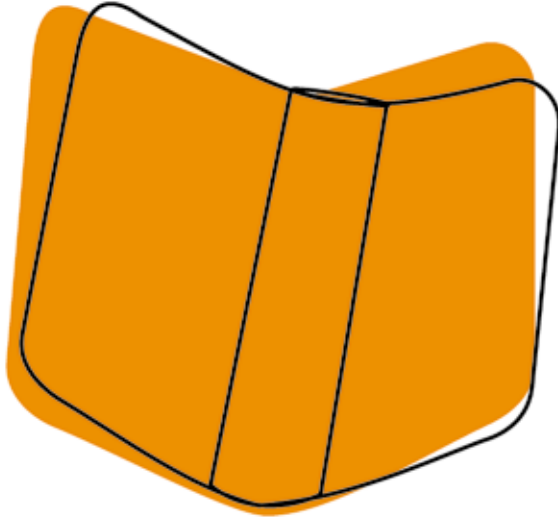
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