



Members of the SGDSB Efficacy Review Team; David Tamblyn, Kathleen Schram, Katie Kennedy, Stacey Wallwin, Susanne Eddy, Will Goodman, Nicole Richmond, Nicole Morden Cormier and Jennifer Oussoren

Efficacy Review Board Strategic Plan

by David Tamblyn, Director of Education

Pearson Canada was contracted to conduct research on the Board Strategic Plan. The focus of the research involves meetings with Senior Administration and other Instructional leaders and stakeholders from across the board.

To assist in the research process, Pearson Canada enlisted Dr. Timothy Tatsui, Dr. Doug Paetzell who worked alongside Dr. Tania Sterling, and Dr. Sharon Lee from the Pearson Canada Research and Efficacy team. The Research Team brings extensive qualifications and expertise in change management, assessment, and applied research to the project.

The purpose of the review is to assess and analyse the current state and efficacy of the Superior-Greenstone Strategic Plan. The Efficacy Framework Review process involved (i) workshops and (ii) interviews with staff and key external stakeholders surrounding four key areas of inquiry: clarity of intended outcomes; strengths of evidence based; quality of planning and implementation; and capacity to deliver.

During the week of February 1st, 2016, the Pearson Efficacy Research team conducted a self-assessment workshop with a team of 8-10 educators and leaders from different roles across the system. Following the self-assessment workshop the Pearson Efficacy Review team broke into two teams to travel to Red Rock, Nipigon, Geraldton, Longlac, Terrace Bay and Marathon to meet face-to-face or via telephone with 51 different stakeholder groups including students, teachers, parents, system leaders, school administrators, and trustees.

With all of the qualitative interview data coded, analysed and interpreted alongside the findings from the self-assessment workshop on day one of the review, the SGDSB Efficacy Review team met with Pearson on February 19th to review the report which summarizes all of the findings and makes recommendations for short, medium, and long term activities.

The report contains observations, themes and recommendations stemming from the 5 day Efficacy Framework Review. Generally SGDSB is on the right track but the feedback from the stakeholders indicated there is a need to clarify the outcomes. When considering the design of the strategic plan the report recommends the plan needs to be streamlined with the board learning plan for student achievement and well-being, school learning plans and the theory of action (see page 3). And further to this there needs to be greater awareness, and sensitivity to, the unique contextual concerns of each region within the board. There is a further need to consider how each of these pieces can connect or interconnect for all audiences.

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SGDSB
February 24, 2016
"Small Schools Make a Difference"
Director's Newsletter

The Superior Greenstone District School Board's strategic plan (2012-2017) focuses on fostering learner-centered environments so that learners will possess an increased sense of belonging and be motivated to learn. The purpose of this efficacy review is to pause, reflect and analyze how effectively the district is tracking towards achieving this goal and to inform the 2017-2022 strategic planning process.

The following questions were posed to the 51 stakeholder Feb 2-4, 2016:

1. *What does the board's strategic plan mean to you?*
2. *How important is it to you in your role as a student, educational assistant, teacher, parent or administrator?*
3. *Do you have an idea of how well the board/school is tracking towards achieving its goals of (i) creating learner-centred environments, (ii) a sense of belonging for staff and students, and (iii) a culture of trust? What other data could be used to measure progress or impact?*
4. *Do you have a clear idea of the role that you play as a student, educational assistant, teacher, parent or administrator in the board's strategic planning process?*
5. *What else do you need in your role to create (i) learner-centred environments, (ii) a sense of belonging for staff and students, and (iii) a culture of trust in your school?*

Next Steps

From the feedback we received from the interviews I know we need to do a better job of communicating the goals of the Strategic Plan. I also know we need to do a better job explaining the connection between the strategic plan and the Board Learning Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being. What follows is a start.

The three key priorities in the Board Strategic Plan and the components comprised in those priorities set the goals that we want to collectively achieve over the next few years. The Board Learning Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being and the Theory of Action are the operational blueprints to achieve these goals. What that may look like at the school level may differ from one school to the next. Every school is unique. The School Learning Plan provides staff the opportunity to tailor a plan to suit the needs of their students, the school and the community while still working within the realm of the board's strategic priorities.

The Board Strategic Plan is a document. Each and every one of us has an integral role to play to put the goals of the strategic plan into operation. We all have a responsibility to ensure our schools have student-centered environments where everyone feels a sense of belonging and are motivated to learn.

Our Strategic Priorities

Student Achievement and Well Being

- Quality instruction
- Student engagement
- Authentic, relevant and meaningful learning experiences
- Equity and Inclusive Education
- Student voice
- Raising parental expectations
- Character education
- Global citizenship
- Student supports

Building Relationships

- Creating a culture of trust
- Fostering a climate of respect and transparency
- Celebrating successes
- Modeling a joy of learning
- Strengthening our understanding of the communities we serve
- Strengthening partnerships (parents, community, agencies)
- Developing leaders

Responsible Stewardship of Resources

- Maximizing investment in academic resources,
- Utilization of space, facilities and services
- Consolidating resources
- Optimizing human resources
- Environmental stewardship
- Technology -Providing opportunities for all
- Aligning resources with our priorities

Inquiry question: To what extent do we have a learner-centered environment that results in a sense of belonging for students and staff and a culture of trust?

An Historical Overview of Our SGDSB Theory of Action

by Nicole Morden-Cormier, Superintendent of Education

The goals and strategies contained within our Board Learning Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being are summarized by the SGDSB Theory of Action (pictured below). This document represents our collective work for the past several years; all of which has been leading to our enhanced **culture of learning** whereby we are fostering **learner centered environments and pedagogy**, in order to achieve our urgent need – **improved persistence, engagement, motivation and belonging for all**.

Many voices contributed to this work; this document is an effort to honour our past and to ensure that we all understand how our past learning fits into the broader vision of our future. The strategies are relevant to all learning environments (adult and student alike).

Our Conditions for Learning The four Conditions for Learning were co-constructed by teachers, principals, system leads and senior administration during Leadership Learning Team meetings between 2013 and 2015. They represent the essential conditions that must be in place for learning to occur.

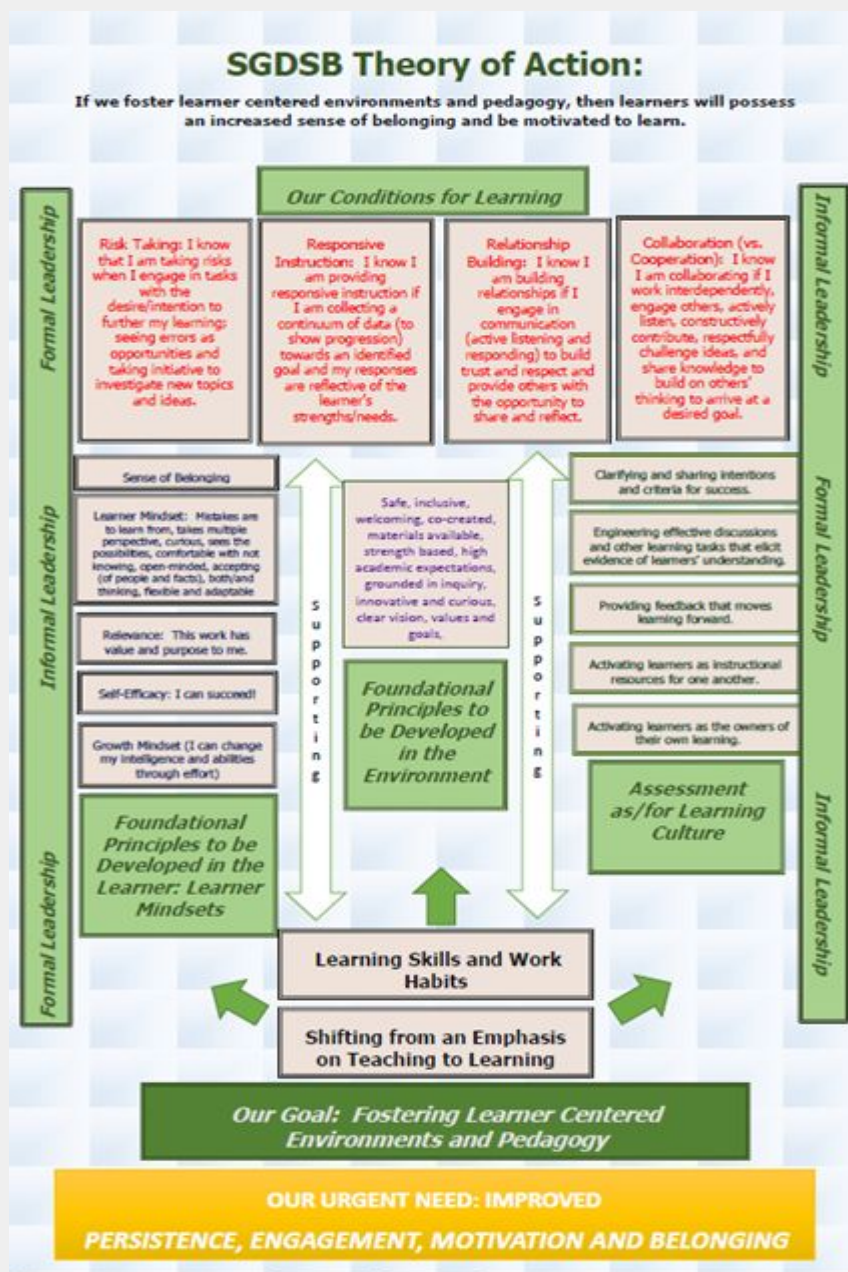
Foundational Principles to be Developed in the Learner: Learner Mindsets- The Learner Mindsets were adopted based upon the work that occurred at the Leadership Learning Team meetings and that schools engaged in specifically around Growth Mindset between 2013 and 2015. The Learner Mindsets represent the essential beliefs about self that stand out in research as influencing learner behaviour and motivation (from Eduardo Briceño, *Mindsets and Student Agency*).

Foundational Principles to be Developed in the Environment - This work was also co-constructed by teachers, principals, system leads and senior administration during Leadership Learning Team meetings between 2013 and 2015. They represent the essential environmental conditions that must be in place in the classroom and throughout the school for learning to occur.

Assessment as/for Learning Culture - This work represents the learning that occurred during the Growing Success Implementation Project (GSIP) that took place between 2011 and 2014. The language contained in this document summarizes the five major strategies that impact the learner, when fully implemented (from Black and Wiliam, 2009).

Formal and Informal Leadership- This represents the ongoing work to inspire instructional leadership in our schools around the learning agenda. **Fostering learner centered pedagogy and environments** is a shift for us; to achieve this goal, we must capitalize on the expertise of our staff collectively. As educators, we are all leaders of the learning agenda and the structures that support this agenda.

This graphic represents our collective work until 2018. Where does your past and current work fit into this plan?



School Visit to DPS and MMPS: Leadership In Action

by Nicole Morden-Cormier, Superintendent of Education

During my recent school visits and the BMS training, I took note of significant evidence that a number of our educators are “leading from the middle”; thus reflecting our BLPSA goal that both formal and informal leadership are essential to optimizing the success of any organization.

I participated in a staff meeting at MMPS whereby educators demonstrated “collaborative instructional leadership” that exemplified their culture of learning as Jason, Tara, Kristan and Katie each led us through some new learning. This is standard practice at this school; staff meetings are focused around the learning that has been taking place in the school. Management issues were addressed briefly as reinforcement of the weekly communication from the principal. At that same school the next day, Lea took the lead in the primary PLC, ensuring that we focused on the evidence of student thinking as obtained through the Cathy Richardson diagnostic assessment. The team took an inquiry stance as we thought about the next instructional moves for the students, and Jason ensured that we increased our level of support (as we moved up the Pyramid of Intervention) for students who possess special needs.

At Dorion Public School I had the privilege of joining a professional learning community whereby the educators were working on a comprehensive needs assessment. I noted that the team was engaging in reflective dialogue of a research based article that had been selected based upon the engagement in learning needs of their students. These conversations were collaborative in nature as the team engaged in inquiry and built their understanding of the most urgent need for their students and thus, for the team. It was incredibly powerful to watch them sort through their thinking and to organize this thinking into a longer term goal, with sub goals and a diagnostic and summative measurement tool. The voices of everyone in the room were heard, and I believe that, as a consequence, the plan will be owned for enacted by all. Both school visits allowed me to collect evidence of the degree of implementation of the success criteria for the Leadership area of our BLPSA:

BLPSA Theory of Action: Leadership (formal and informal) Success Criteria

SEF 2.1 Collaborative instructional leadership builds capacity to strengthen and enhance teaching and learning.

We know we are successful if:

- School Improvement Planning:
 - Involves all staff in planning, implementing, monitoring and refining the School Learning Plan, based on analysis of the current needs assessment that is drawn from a variety of data sources (e.g. perceptual, demographic, program, achievement)
 - Identifies areas requiring an instructional emphasis (e.g. through the development of a small number of goals based on current student achievement data)
 - Communicates progress in improving student achievement and meeting targets to parents and the school community (e.g. newsletters, school council agendas, school website)
 - Informs the school budget (e.g.. resources are purchased to support the achievement of the goal).
 - Is supported by school leaders through “open-to-learning” classroom visits and conversations.
 - Includes the review of student achievement data, including evidence from collaborative inquiries at specific times throughout the year, to ensure that schools can demonstrate progress in meeting the targets and goals in all classrooms for every student.
 - Includes student input/voice.
- A school improvement team supports the principal/staff to collaboratively develop and monitor the goals in the school improvement plan and to complete the School Self-Assessment, based upon the SEF.
- Professional learning priorities are based upon the needs that emerge from the analysis of student work and are aligned with the goals in the School Learning Plan.
- Structures are in place to ensure that school leaders actively co-learn with staff.
- A collaborative learning culture (e.g. a commitment to continuous improvement, a collective focus on student learning for all, de-privatization of practice and reflective dialogue) is evident. (This is about genuine collaborative rather than the culture of “niceness”).

SEF 2.4 Job-embedded and inquiry based professional learning builds capacity, informs instructional practice and contributes to a culture of learning.

We know we are successful if:

- The vision that underlies “a culture of learning” is explored and consensus is built/co-created with staff – what does this vision look like and sound like in our school?
- Professional learning is inquiry-based and responsive to student assessment data (schools utilize the Collaborative Inquiry Continuum to assess the degree of collaboration and to determine next steps).
- School leaders are engaged in professional learning with staff.
- Conditions (e.g. time to meet and talk, common planning time where possible) that promote collaborative cultures are established.
- School leaders regularly visit all classrooms to engage in ongoing inquiry regarding effective instructional practices and how to increase their impact on student learning.
- School leaders seek out relevant professional learning and resources (e.g. curriculum and resource documents, webcasts, monographs, podcasts, ministry websites, community visits, online professional learning networks, etc) to support educators.
- Evidence of student learning (e.g. writing samples, mathematical representations of thinking, running records, class profiles) is shared as a catalyst for professional dialogue.
- Professional dialogue, based on research literature and learning in the field, supports the use of consistent language and practices.



Global School Play Day *Submitted by Kristan McMahon*

“This is the best day ever!” These were the words from a young Grade 2 student at Marjorie Mills Public School on February 3rd, 2016. Students and teachers at Marjorie Mills Public School took a giant risk and gave up their screen time to participate in the “Global School Play Day”! On February 3rd, 2016, this global event had approximately 175,000 participants by the end of the day. Students from K-8 roamed around the school playing in a variety of different games. Teachers pulled out paint, boxes, balloons, board games and puzzles and let the students choose their preferred activities. The day was unstructured but did have a few rules. Students were allowed to play any game they wanted, however they were not allowed to use electronic devices, anything with a screen or anything that required batteries. Board games and toys were set out for the students and they needed to figure it all out on their own! Students were left to figure out the rules on their own and problem solve when issues arose during the game.

Kids everywhere are spending a lot of time using electronic devices and very few children really play anymore without it. Global School Play Day gave students the opportunity to socialize and interact with peers in different grade levels. Everyone in the school was able to find something to do and had someone who wanted to play with them.

“I wish this was every week,” a Grade 8 student said at the end of the day. The environment was relaxed and learning still took place in a non-traditional way. Some students chose to read, do art activities or play games that involved using their math skills. Global School Play Day was originally started in 2015 in order to promote unstructured play. Sometimes all you need to do is play!

School Visit to BAPS and RRPS: Universal Supports in Action

Nicole Morden-Cormier, Superintendent of Education

BAPS and RRPS are both using a strength-based approach for their students and staff by focusing on “kindness”. This is a strong link to our Board Learning Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being as we endeavor to engage in universal supports and expectations for all students to encourage a strong sense of belonging. We know that students need to feel emotionally and socially safe in order to engage in learning.

The staff at BAPS are thinking about universal supports for all through programs such as their “Busted” program, whereby students receive tickets and thus, immediate positive reinforcement for acts of kindness and positive behaviour. Students and staff have developed their matrix of expectations for behaviour so that all everyone knows and can achieve the desired result.

The staff at RRPS are thinking about these same supports through the implementation of their daily morning gathering in the gym which is lead by students, and through the use of a positive reinforcement program called ClassDojo, whereby students and all staff provide virtual reinforcement for positive acts of kindness, as well as two learning skills (independence and responsibility).

Both school visits provided me with an opportunity to see first hand how students are responding to the collaborative work of the educators in the building, as they increasingly focus on the “Foundational Principles to be Developed in the Environment” area of our SGDSB theory of action into practice.

Safe, inclusive,
welcoming, co-created,
materials available,
strength based, high
academic expectations,
grounded in inquiry,
innovative and curious,
clear vision, values and
goals,

***Foundational
Principles to
be Developed
in the
Environment***



Global Dialogue

On February 11th a group of educators comprised of senior administration, principals, and teachers took part in a very unique event. SGDSB was one of only 15 school boards across the province of Ontario invited to take part in a Global Dialogue. The event was in the form of a live webcast and included school clusters from the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States. Key to the event was the opportunity for discussion within hubs and asking questions to the speakers.

Author Michael Fullan and Santiago Rincón-Gallardo partnered with the School Partnership Programme in the UK to organize the Global Dialogue that brought together leading education thinkers Steve Munby, Tony McKay, John Hattie, Phil Brown, Michael Fullan and Viviane Robinson. These international experts discussed three key themes on school networks/clusters:

- outcomes-focused collaboration
- trust based and intelligent accountability
- Improvement through school clusters/networks.

Prior to the event participants were given an article to read entitled “*Inside Out and Downside Up*”, *How leading from the middle has the power to transform education systems* by Michael Fullan and Steve Munby. A follow-up session is planned for the fall.



Our BMS team sporting our “true colours” that represent our different strengths. As individuals we are great, but together as a team we are AWESOME!

BMST - Universal Supports (School and Classroom-wide Interventions)

by Melissa Bianco, Positive Behaviour Support Lead

“Promoting Safe, Caring, and Inclusive Environments for All”

There is no doubt about it! As educators, we all want what’s best for our students. We all want safe, caring and inclusive environments for all individuals within our schools. We want our students to grow into moral citizens, ready to take on anything they put their minds to. We want them running into our schools, ready, prepared and eager to learn. Often though, challenging behaviour interferes with this vision, and at times, takes us off track to achieving our goals. Repeated interferences such as these can leave anyone feeling deflated and defeated.

It is clear that if we’re going to make changes within our system to promote positive student discipline, we need to challenge our thinking on student behaviour, rethink our current approaches and work together as teams to provide consistency for our students. We need to work together in order to enhance our learning environments and maximize our instructional time, supports, and our available resources. There’s no magic cure, or quick-fix, but there is a model backed by research that can help us achieve where we want to go.

On February 8th and 9th BMST resource staff, as well as principals, system leads, senior administration and other interested staff from throughout our board met at the Nor’Wester Hotel and Conference Centre to begin collaborative discussions surrounding supporting positive behaviour in schools. Particular focus of these sessions pertained to understanding the pyramid of intervention and the key universal components needed within schools to build strong foundations to promote student engagement and reduce challenging behaviour. These key components directly align with our board’s theory of action.

An overall framework was discussed and offered to interested participants. The framework enables schools to design and implement a whole school, proactive approach that focuses on teaching positive behaviour, communicating clear behavioural expectations, and creating a whole school culture which supports responsibility for behavior. The key areas that researchers have found critical for success are: school readiness for implementation, student empowerment, community input/contextual fit, professional learning, and using data to inform practice.

On March 3rd and 4th Steve Johnson will be joining us to discuss focused interventions to support students who require a little more support to meet expectations. We’re looking forward to it!

Playing that involves Mathematics and Playing with Mathematics - What is the Difference?

SWST Reflections - Leslie Blackwood

There is growing evidence that tells us early mathematics plays a significant role in later education. (Capacity Building Series, 2011) We also know that play is an important part of a child's day. The challenge for primary educators is to determine how to integrate play into math class in a meaningful way that engages students and appeals to their natural inquisitiveness.

As a SWS teacher I have been collaborating with teachers at SPS, TBPS and MTPS and together we have been observing, recording and reflecting on student thinking in an effort to understand and determine next steps for learning. Using resources such as the Ontario Curriculum, Developing Number Concepts, The Guides to Instruction and Big Ideas of Early Mathematics we have been carefully planning engaging and purposeful math activities designed for the specific needs of our students. The goal is to create a mathematical environment that enables us to see what the students are "playing" with in order to scaffold the learning and help the students make connections within math and to everyday activities and other subjects. As the students naturally engage in purposeful free play (play that involves math) we observe how they are representing and articulating their math knowledge and use this as a gateway to scaffold specific math concepts. (Playing with Mathematics)

"If children play with mathematical objects before they're asked to solve problems with them, they are more successful and more creative."

Clements 2009.

Our conversations about "play that involves math" and "playing with math" are helping us as educators to understand the characteristics and development of early math learners and to teach for understanding. As we foster these learner centered math environments our teacher efficacy is growing and our students are truly becoming confident little mathematicians.



Composing designs using 2 dimensional shapes. Estimating and comparing length using non-standard units



Play Mathematics
- Sarama and
Clements

Maximizing
Students
Mathematical
Learning in the
Early Years

Play does not guarantee mathematical development but it offers rich possibilities. Significant benefits are more likely when teachers follow-up by engaging children in reflecting and representing the mathematical ideas that have emerged in their play. - Clements7 Sarama

Science and Math - Will it float?

Using Technology to "Bridge" a School Community Together

Teach Ontario Recognizes Teacher Learning and Leaders Project at NRHS

In this installment of TeachOntario Talks, we are profiling and celebrating teachers from Nipigon-Red Rock District High School of the Superior Greenstone DSB and their project: "21st Century Learning & Leading: Using Technology to Reach Every Child and Family."

[Research shows](#) that parents who are engaged in their child's education not only improve student achievement and well-being, but also make good schools even better.

[Nipigon-Red Rock District High School](#) is part of the [Superior Greenstone DSB in Northwestern Ontario](#). The school serves the communities of Red Rock, Nipigon, Dorion, Hurkett, Lake Helen First Nation and Rocky Bay First Nation. There is 115 kilometers between the two furthest communities and most students are bussed in from up to 75 kilometers away.

Given those distances, how can isolated schools encourage and support families to become active members of the school community so that their children can achieve greater success?

Answering that question was the challenge four teachers at Nipigon-Red Rock took on as part of their 2014/ 2015 [Teacher Learning and Leadership Project](#) (TLLP). Teachers Jenni Scott-Marciski, Colleen Rose, Kim Manilla and Erin Langevin thought they could use technology to bring families closer to the school, and so they began their project: "21st Century Learning & Leading: Using Technology to Reach Every Child and Family."

The Use of Digital Tools to Reach Families

"One thing that is apparent now more than ever is that students at our school need strong, direct support from parents to be successful," says Jenni Scott-Marciski. "So, to engage students we need to engage parents first."

To do this, the teachers began by collecting data from students and parents through surveys about their need for, access to, and expertise with, technology. The results of the surveys informed local decisions regarding which digital tools to use to best engage with the school community.

The project team began by starting a school Facebook group. The goal in using Facebook was to engage parents and students through posts about school events, and increase enthusiasm and participation in those events.

The team also used [Remind](#), a free teacher communication platform, to reach families and sent letters home to invite parents to view and comment on student blogs.

In the classroom, teachers began using [Google Apps for Education](#) (GAFE) as a way for students and teachers to collaborate both inside and outside the classroom. The news of the ease of use with these apps began to spread throughout the school, and soon even teachers who were previously hesitant to use technology began collaborating with students and colleagues using digital tools.

The team also made use of [Google+](#) as a way to collaborate with one another online. In this online community, the team was also able to learn how to better serve students by increasing their own understanding of technology-enabled learning.

The Impact of Technology on Community Building for Students and Families:

The impact of using technology as a tool to bring student learning to families across the Nipigon-Red Rock District High School community was fantastic.

One parent shared that when the school started up the Facebook page she couldn't believe all the things happening at the school. She laughed and explained that "every time I asked my kids what was going on at school, they would always say nothing." This was clearly not the case! Another parent, after reviewing her daughter's work online posted this comment, "Good job! It's nice to see the progress of your work." Another stated, "As a parent, I'm loving this blog. It is so nice to be able to follow along and see what you produce."

Students also enjoyed sharing their learning with their families and friends. A Grade 12 student explained: "I have a lot of family that does not live around me. By using technology in my art class, I was able to post it on my Facebook where all my family and friends near and far could see my art. I posted a video I made on YouTube and copied the link to my Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and of course my art blog and had so many people watch it that never thought they could. Having to see the physical copy of artwork is close to nothing now days because people have their art all over the web. Technology has changed so much and I love to share my art online for all my family and friends to see who are not around."

Perhaps the best illustration on how the use of technology brought together a school community separated by vast wilderness played out earlier this year with the Nipigon River Bridge failure.

The [Nipigon River Bridge](#), the only highway link between Eastern and Western Canada, [split in two](#) on January 10, 2016. Not only did this cut off transport of goods across Canada, it also severed the only access to school for students living on two First Nations reserves. It was a critical time to miss school, as students were in the middle of culminating tasks and exam preparation.

Due to the implementation of the TLLP project, teachers had embedded the use of technology in many Nipigon-Red Rock classrooms, and the students had become very comfortable accessing information and projects online. Teachers were able to communicate with the band offices at both First Nations reserves and direct students to blog posts, Facebook posts, and links to Google Docs so they could access their assignments, receive feedback and complete culminating tasks. As a result, the bridge closure that wreaked havoc upon the rest of Canada, barely impacted students' access to their learning at the school.

Regardless of the Nipigon River Bridge failure, technology has been a wonderful way to bridge the school community together in a climate that can sometimes be challenging! Students from Rocky Bay First Nation, who are located in a snow belt and are 75 kilometers from Nipigon-Red Rock, often miss school because of bad weather. Today they are tethered to the school and their learning all year, regardless of the weather.

The Impact of Technology on Community Building for Teachers:

There has also been an increase in out-of-box thinking among staff members who are now more willing to try new digital tools. For instance, the Grade 9 class has 47 students. Based on EQAO data and diagnostic testing, only a handful have reading comprehension skills at grade level. Seventeen of the 47 students have Individual Education Plans and require extra support. In response to this, a team of teachers who previously may not have considered using technology to support learning, are now doing an inquiry about the use of text-to-speech and speech-to-text tools to see how these tools can be used to help improve students' literacy skills and to assess learning in a variety of subject areas.

Just the TLLP process itself also helped bring together colleagues in a shared learning environment. "Our TLLP encouraged us to communicate more with staff members," says Colleen Rose. The team facilitated 4 different learning sessions and staff participation was enthusiastic.

Happy Surprises along the Way:

Although the team set out to reach families through digital tools, what they achieved turned out to be so much more.

The Facebook group increased engagement with school alumni, which was a surprise to the team. Bringing back former students is a great way to encourage community engagement! Parents of students currently attending the school continue to join the group today and the reach is increasing.

Through the data collection from families, the team increased their own knowledge and understanding of tools and how to use them share and support student learning. As new technology emerges, the team feels much more confident in their own understanding of how these tools can be used to bring the community into the classroom, as well as bring learning beyond the walls of the classroom.

Staff enthusiasm was another happy surprise. One teacher was so inspired by what was being done at the school as a result of the TLLP work, that she applied to lead another TLLP next year.

That good start continues to grow, not only at Nipigon-Red Rock, but throughout the district and beyond.

"Now if only we had more bandwidth and better information technology infrastructure in the vast northwest..." quips Rose.



Mishipeshu is the great water spirit who lives in Lake Superior. He is very important in Ojibway oral tradition and spirituality. Nicole Richmond got to see some beautiful hand weaving featuring Mishipeshu, created by Rene Dillard, at the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation Conference in Sudbury.

You can also see pictographs featuring Mishipeshu at Agawa in the Lake Superior Provincial Park.

Boozhoo! We are the Native Second Language class from George O'Neill Public School. We wanted to tell you about a guest who taught us how to clean and fillet a fish. Allen (Muzzy) Odawa is from Lake Helen and is the Liaison Officer for the Red Rock Indian Band. Muzzy is an avid outdoorsman and is a guide for people who fish and hunt in the Nipigon area.

Muzzy taught us to respect the environment, how to properly fillet a fish and most importantly to always have fun outdoors. We see Muzzy around town and he always waves to us! We can't wait until he comes back again and teaches us how to pluck feathers from geese and how to make goose stew.

Miigwech (Thank you) Muzzy!!



Margaret Twomey Public School Grade 1s had a special treat on Wednesday - they learned how to make Bannock! Danya Skworchinski invited in elders Diane and Reg Richmond. Diane calls herself the "Bannock Queen". Mrs. Skworchinski used the bannock making lesson to teach about math, including measurement. Mrs. Skworchinski tells us she loved hearing her students say, "Wow! Math is Everywhere!". Niishin! Awesome!





L-R: Peter Rasevych, Maurice Waboose, Lisa Echum, Krista Young, Sheri Taylor, Andrew McFarlane, Nicole Richmond and Cecil Mendowegan.

We are pleased to be working on an First Nations, Metis and Inuit Collaborative Inquiry. Teachers, students, community members and SGDSB leads are working together to think about how we can improve First Nation student well-being, engagement and success at Geraldton Composite High School.

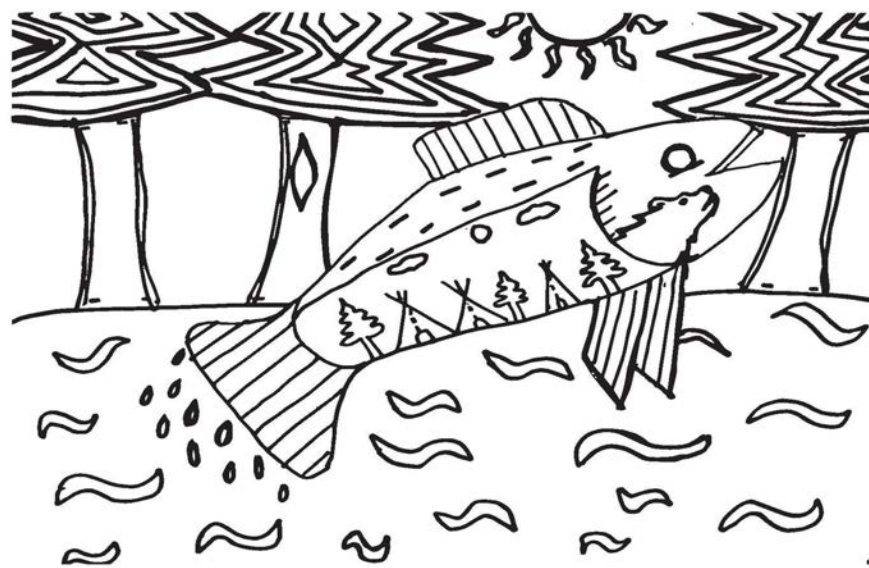
We are working closely on this project with community members from Ginoogaming First Nation. On February 16th, GCHS teachers Krista Young and Andrew McFarlane, together with Aboriginal Liaison Nicole Richmond, were invited to Ginoogaming First Nation to talk with students, parents, elders and community members. We had a huge turn out.

Students and parents told us about how important having a strong sense of belonging was. We discussed supports that can be implemented to ensure students are receiving a balanced education that is responsive and innovative.

Our next meeting will be at GCHS on March 1 over lunch. If you're interested in becoming involved, please email Nicole at nrichmond@sgdsb.on.ca

We received 240++ submissions to the SGDSB Woodland Style colouring book project. We have chosen approximately 120 dynamic pieces for inclusion in our colouring book, which will be produced in two volumes. All artists chosen for publication have been contacted. Miigwetch you for your support and amazing contributions!

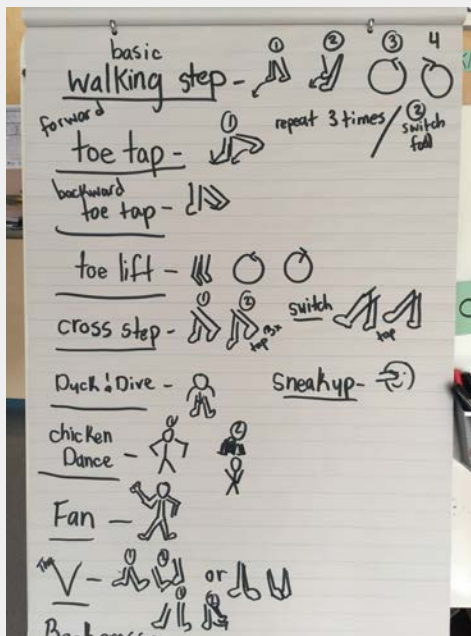
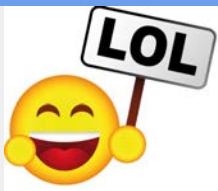
Thank you especially to the students at Beardmore Public School, Lake Superior High School and St. Edward Catholic School for your contributions. It's great to be featuring student art. Miigwetch.



Check out the hilarious video from GCHS students Alexander Fortier, Dallas Fisher and Sylvain Goulet. This multi-media project was supervised by Rob Haslam. It was awarded one the Regional Award in the Multimedia Category for the OSSTF Student Achievement Awards in Honour of Marion Drysdale.

RIP Survivorman, you put up a good fight.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WizCwnrA_oA



Want to learn to powwow dance? Check out the "StyleHorse Collective" series on YouTube called "Powwow Sweat". Several classes around the board are using this resource to get fit and to get ready for powwow season. MTPS students are keeping track of powwow steps they learn -- check out the diagram to the left.

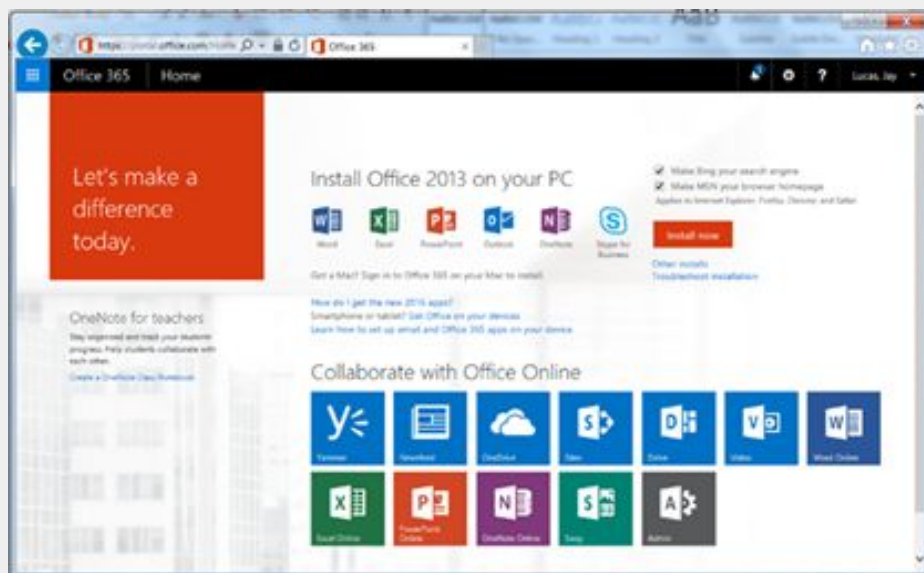
From the IT Desk: Launch of Office 365 Pro Plus

by Jay Lucas IT Services Coordinator



Office 2016 is now available to be installed on your board computer. You can do this yourself through the “new software” icon at the bottom right of your toolbar or ask an IT Tech for assistance. Note: this installation will result in both the new and old versions being installed, except for the desktop Outlook application which will only be the new version.

For home or when you’re travelling, you can use Office 365 Pro Plus. Just log into <http://portal.office.com> using your work (or student) email account information. Some PD will be coming down the road, but this is very similar to the desktop software and also has all the features you may know of from Google Apps. If you can’t find a particular feature, ask your IT Tech and we’ll assist.



Please note: you should skip the “install now” button unless you wish to install the desktop version **at home**. The square icons under the “Collaborate with Office Online” will launch web based versions of the apps directly. **At work you should be installing Office 2016 as first mentioned.**

This is available to all students and staff at Superior-Greenstone, however the focus at the moment is to simply get this in the hands of staff to start exploring the software and gain familiarity. You can use the web based versions while away from your devices, or do a free installation of the desktop version on up to 5 devices per account. All the apps are also available for Apple and Android phones and tablets. A quick reference chart will be distributed later this week giving a little more explanation of each of the Apps. These tools form the foundational core of communication for future of our board, but at the moment it’s your choice to use them if you wish. Please report any issues or errors you encounter, as there may still be security settings to adjust. Note: at the time of writing this, we are currently resolving an issue with Student accounts that is expected to be resolved very shortly.

Google Apps for Education will also be made available once the core of the Microsoft system is stabilized. The systems share the same authentication mechanism. This environment provides better security than personal accounts for your class activity. Log-in information will be provided as the system is made available. Testing is currently underway.

You may notice under “Sites” (SharePoint) that some development is underway on a Board-wide Intranet which will link up sites for Departments, Committees, Schools, Projects and such as expertise is gained in utilizing the features. These are not so much “web pages” as collections of documents and discussions, with various utilities for workflow, almost like an internal Facebook for business. If your group is keen to get started, please contact Jay Lucas, IT Services Coordinator jlucas@sgdsb.on.ca to discuss plans. These tools have many advanced features, so there will be a process of learning together about what works and what doesn’t, but I’m very confident that we’re on the cusp of greatly improved communication in our board.



I am happy to announce that with the support of the CODE funding, Superior-Greenstone is able to provide further opportunities for supporting technology enabled learning and teaching in our schools with the formation of school based Technology Champions. The Technology Champions will have opportunities for ongoing learning around the use of technology to support student learning. In turn, these individuals will be able to provide “at the elbow” support for educators and students in their home schools. These individuals are driven by a passion to enhance their teaching practice, a commitment for a lifelong learning and a curiosity to see how embedding technology can help us support student learning.

The Technology Champions are:

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------|---------------|
| Beardmore Public School: | Karen Enders | | |
| Dorion Public School: | Dave Binette | GCHS: | Steve Wilson |
| George O'Neill Public School: | Amanda Paakkunainen | LSHS: | Lindsay Costa |
| Margaret Twomey Public School: | Karrie Cavner | MNHS: | Jamie Mallais |
| Marjorie Mills Public School: | Kristan McMahon | NRHS: | Colleen Rose |
| Nakina Public School: | Krysten Evoy | MRHS: | |
| Red Rock Public School: | Linda Stansell | | |
| Schreiber Public School: | Amy Buchan | | |
| Terrace Bay Public School: | Chelsey Tegel | | |
| B.A. Parker: | | | |

Congratulations to all the Technology Champions! I am excited to see where our learning as a team takes us!



NRHS student Howard Bird Potan, created this “jelly roll” quilt in fashion class this semester. He is pictured with Judy Cain, Educational Support Staff at NRHS. Nice work Howard!



RRPS Creates a New Morning Routine!

To successfully transition into RRPS has changed the way we start the day! All students and staff meet in the gym where we all sing O' Canada, listen to the morning announcements and participate in MeMoves. MeMoves is an activity where we do specific arm movements that will help up be calm, focused and full of joy. The response has been very positive for all learners in our building. It truly has been a great way to start our day!

Manitouwadge High School tackles Student attitudes about Drugs and Alcohol

by Annick Brewster & Gord Martin

Changing student attitudes and thinking about drinking and drugs
The Grade 12 students of Manitouwadge High School have taken up a huge challenge. They have begun a campaign for an alcohol and drug-free prom. This year the idea of hosting prom in our school became an item of concern for Manitouwadge High School after unfortunate circumstances related to drinking at previous proms. Thus, we could no longer run a prom at the high school knowing that the possibility of students drinking at prom existed. After lengthy discussions with staff, students and parents, it was agreed that a change needed to happen if prom were to remain part of our school tradition.



Grade 12 Students used the Cardboard box Race as an opportunity to get the message out

Students have taken up the challenge to make the necessary changes by committing to developing a campaign to change student attitudes around drinking and drugs and to promote an alcohol-free prom.

The campaign is two-fold;

1. Change the culture where under-age drinking is acceptable, to one that promotes a healthy, alcohol and drug free lifestyle;
2. Host a successful drug and alcohol-free prom.

This is an enormous undertaking for our graduating students to take on. It will ask them to rethink what they have grown to accept as normal behaviour, to take risks in establishing new norms amongst themselves and their peers, as well as challenging their peers to make the same commitment. Manitouwadge High School staff recognize the challenge this campaign poses to this group of students. Ultimately it is changing the way we, including much of society, thinks about drinking – especially in terms of under-aged drinking.

This challenge also extends beyond the walls of the high school. It will not only take the cooperation and collaboration of staff and students, but also of parents and community partners. Throughout this campaign, students will be building relationships with various groups such as the OPP, MADD, OSAID, the Manitouwadge Family Health Team, and parents. They will be collaborating with their peers and community groups to create experiences, educate and initiate discussions in order to make this change a reality and sustainable. We recognize the magnitude of this undertaking and also acknowledge that a shift in the way our community thinks about the teenage drinking will not happen overnight. Our hopes are that these students begin the process by creating changes that will continue in years to come. We are hopeful that future students continue the movement and that we will eventually begin to see a change in how teens view the use of alcohol and drugs.

The lead teacher who is helping this group of students has been very inspirational and key to involving these grads in leading their campaign. When Mr. Martin presented the challenge to the graduating class, he said “they didn’t automatically say yes. They took the time to think about it.” Ultimately the grads unanimously decided to accept the challenge.

We feel this is a tremendous opportunity for our students to develop their 21st Century skills. They will learn to collaborate, lead, challenge accepted ideas and engage their community. This group also understands the necessity of having goals and criteria that will help them achieve those goals. In order for students to know if they are ‘hitting the target’, they will be having checkpoints along the way, to receive feedback on the success of their efforts and what they could do to improve. This is a real-life application of problem-solving and using goal-setting, creating measurable criteria, setting checkpoints and opportunities for feedback that will enable students to teach and learn with/from others in order to create change – as an answer to a problem.

Students will be developing their leadership skills, learning how to work with each other as well as members of the community. They will also be demonstrating responsibility, perseverance and commitment. Students will be using social media in order to promote their campaign. Being able to maintain positive profiles and

conversations on social media is something that we are all trying to learn. This is a fairly new form of communication that we are able to use to share many aspects of our lives. Being able to use this technology responsibly will be an important asset to many of these students, which could also potentially extend into the wider community. Students know that there are not always positive aspects to social media. Learning to navigate through the negative components and how to respond when faced with these will also be an important learning opportunity.

I have recently began reading the *Innovator's Mindset*, and staff and students are taking up the exact change that George Couros describes is needed in education. By taking up this challenge, our students are changing the world they live in, and the world for others; and our staff have opened up the first door for them to do so.



The Healthy Kids Community Challenge

We are excited to announce the start of the Healthy Kids Community Challenge (HKCC) in our region! Our region is 1 of 45 communities across Ontario to receive the HKCC grant. The region for our HKCC community spans from as far East as Pic Mobert First Nation and Manitouwadge, across the North shore of Lake Superior, as far West as Dorion and North to the Greenstone Area.

The HKCC is a three year project that is a key part of Ontario's Healthy Kids Strategy. The first theme for the HKCC is "Run. Jump. Play. Every day." and focuses on physical activity. The goal of the Healthy Kids Community Challenge is to support the well-being of our children. It will help create communities where it is easy for children to lead healthier lives. The HKCC is an opportunity to improve support and access to health for the children in our region. The benefits of the HKCC for children and families include: skills for staying active and eating well; support with making healthy choices; close links to supports within the community; and more chances to be involved and included.

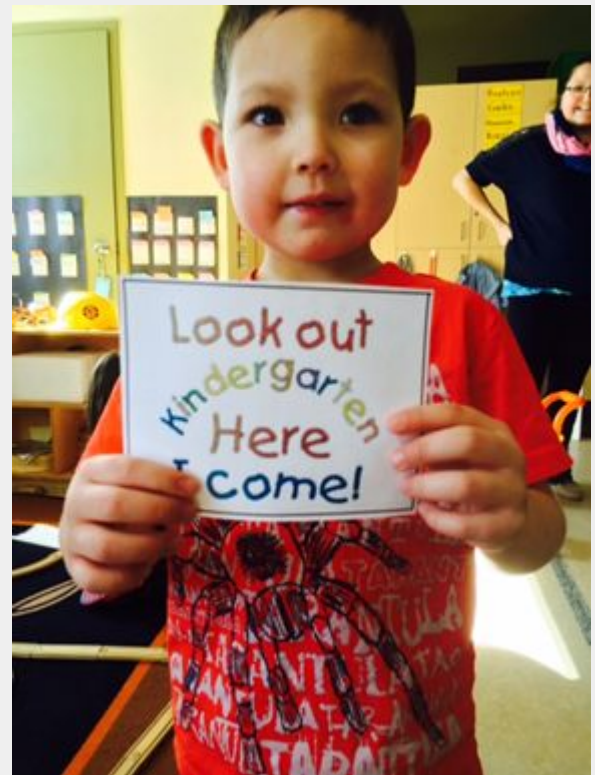
Keep an eye out for upcoming events in your community! And get started today by encouraging your child(ren) to "Run. Jump. Play. Every day."

If you have any questions regarding the Healthy Kids Community Challenge or would like to get involved in your community please contact Naomi Giuliano, local project manager, at healthykids@marathon.ca or (807) 229-1340 ext 2238. We are excited to be moving forward together as a region to improve the health and opportunities for our children.



Sydney and Lucy enjoy a book together during Books and Breakfast

Small
Schools
Make a
Difference
at
GOPS!



Wyatt Belisle-Harvey, seen here in the Kindergarten classroom at GOPS, can't wait to come to Kindergarten!!

The Kindergarten Registration Season at GOPS

by Kellie Wrigley, Principal George O'Neill Public School

I think most parents would agree that registering your child for school is one of those events that elicits a variety of emotions. There is excitement at the idea of your child entering a place where he or she will have fun, learn, and create life-long friendships. But with that excitement comes, that overwhelming sense of sadness that your child is growing up, and nervousness around how they will adapt to the place they will spend 6 hours of everyday. Not only do we as parents feel these emotions but so do our children. It is for this very reason that the staff at GOPS have made the Kindergarten Season a priority. We believe that the transition to school/school readiness is one of tremendous importance for children and families, so in partnership with our Best Start center, we have developed a plan that allows for the gradual entry to school for both children and families. Along with Fair Start and Welcome to Kindergarten which have been programs offered for a number of years, we now also hold, Books and Breakfast and a Preschool Program. These programs are available to all registrants of GOPS as well as, all school age children who attend the Daycare.

The Books and Breakfast program provides school age children with the opportunity to become familiar with some of the routines (breakfast program, library, gym), as well as, the other students in the school. The children are partnered with an older student from the school, with whom they eat breakfast and then go to the library to read books. Following this, the students join the Kindergarten class in the gym for some activity time. This allows them to interact with the classroom educators as well as with their classmates for the upcoming school year.

The purpose of the Preschool Program is to have children become more familiar with their classmates, educators, and other staff members. It is also an opportunity for them to become familiar with their new surroundings and the routines of the classroom. The program is led by Ms. Chaboyer and Mrs. Desjardins, and will take place on 4 Wednesdays during the month of June.

Marathon Welcomes Syrian Refugees

Have you been wondering about how we, way up here on the North Shore of Superior, can be of help to some of the many Syrian refugees that find themselves in horrific circumstances? Some SGDSB staff members are involved in a committee that is working to bring a family of Syrian refugees to Marathon. The committee has completed a thorough self-assessment tool that helps the Federal Department of Immigration uses to match refugees with the appropriate host community. In addition, the group has accessed many federal and provincial tools designed to support potential sponsors.

The local sponsors are raising funds to completely support a family in Marathon for one year. The refugees will **not** need to access any other form of assistance (for example, the food bank). The focus of the year will be to help the refugees to acclimatize to Canadian life and to learn English. Employment is not a priority for the first year. After one year, the refugees may continue to live in Marathon or may move elsewhere in Canada.

Duncan Michano, Chief of Biigtigong (formerly Pic River) First Nation, has demonstrated his support for the project by offering to invite drummer to the welcoming ceremony and offering to welcome the newcomers by name at the pow wow.

The Town of Marathon has demonstrated its support by offering to donate Active Living Passes to the newcomers.

David Tamblyn has expressed his personal support and has indicated that the board will be able to offer English Language Learning assistance to local refugee children.

An additional group of concerned citizens has formed in Manitouwadge. This group is also exploring ways to support refugees. The refugees are in need of affordable housing. Homeowners who rent to the refugees at a reduced rate can claim any reduction made in rent as a charitable donation. If you have suitable accommodation in Marathon, please contact Teri burgess at mburgess@sgdsb.on.ca or Brett Redden at 229-8784.

In addition, the project needs financial donations. Donations can be made directly at the local ScotiaBank. If you would like a tax receipt, donations can be made online at stjohnsmarathon.ca. For updates, check out the Marathon Refugee Group on Facebook.



MANITOUWADGE PUBLIC SCHOOL NEWSFLASH!

This week two ladies from the Best Start program came to our JK/SK class to help them make the ever favourite 'Belly Button Soup'. Everybody knows that tortellini is a dead ringer for belly buttons so into the pot they went – along with an array of other delicious, healthy ingredients. Our little chefs were delighted to be part this perfect opportunity to eat healthy, have fun and learn about the gratification that comes with doing it yourself! MPS is thrilled to work in conjunction with the Best Start program to promote a balanced education during the early years. Of course we all know that the best part of any cooking venture is the eating, which the whole class got to do afterwards! Thank you to these two ladies and of course our little kitchen helpers for another job well done at MPS!!!!

SGDSB Teams are headed for NWOSSAA



Sports Check
Submitted by Wayne Pittman

We have a number of teams who will be representing NSSAA and Superior Greenstone DSB at NWOSSAA Championships this week. Both the boy's and girl's teams from Lake Superior High School will compete in the NWOSSAA Curling taking place in Thunder Bay. The boys Senior Basketball from Nipigon Red Rock District High School will be travelling to Sioux Lookout for the NWOSSAA Boys "A" Basketball. Also the Senior Girls Volleyball team who will be hosting NWOSSAA Girls "A" Volleyball at Marathon High School.

Thanks to coaches Ken Blackwood, Frank Brooker and Bonnie Roen.

Up Coming Events

- February 22- Board Meeting
- February 23 - SERT Meeting
- February 24 - Pink Shirt Day - Primary Math
- February 24-26 NWOSSAA Boys BB in Sioux Lookout
- February 25 -Junior Math
- February 26th - NTIP Orientation
- February 29th - Professional Development Day
- March 2nd - SIM
- March 3-4 - BMS Training
- March 8-9th - LLI Training 7-12
- March Break - 14-18
- March 25 - Good Friday – no school
- March 28 - Easter Monday – no school



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