

WINTER 2016 VOL.18 NO. 1

OPC Register

THE MAGAZINE FOR ONTARIO'S PRINCIPALS & VICE-PRINCIPALS



HIGH YIELD STRATEGIES

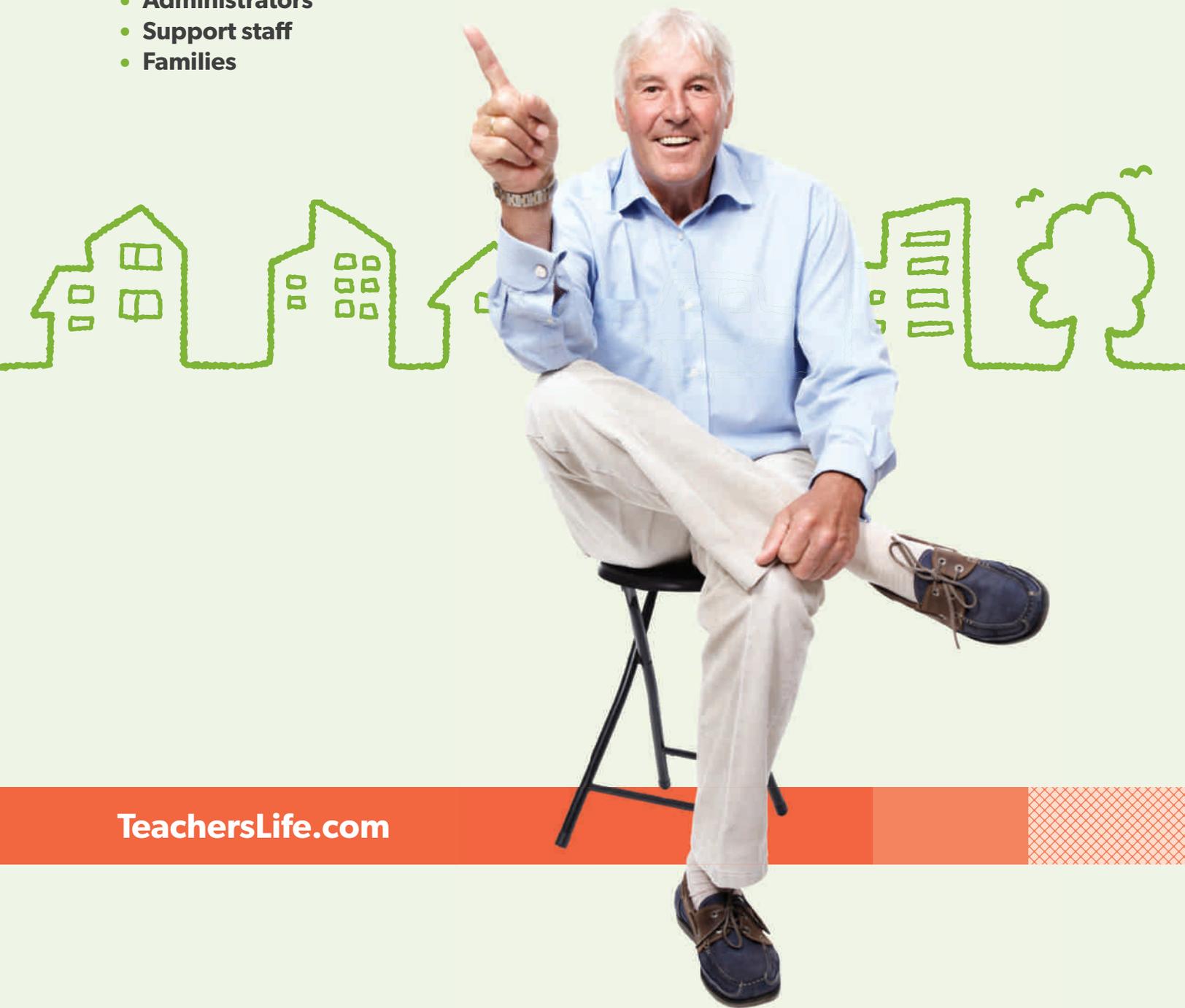
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Equity and Inclusivity

A salad bowl of social justice



During the 2015 International Conference of Principals convention in Helsinki, Finland, Finnish educator, author and scholar Pasi Sahlberg piqued my curiosity when he commenced his keynote address by publically

claiming to the more than 1,000 participants that “Canada is in Heaven.” His proclamation was accompanied by a slide showcasing Canada, Finland, Estonia, South Korea and Japan floating on a cloud above other industrialized nations. Throughout his studies of education systems around the world, Pasi discovered a direct correlation between inclusivity and achievement. In fact, the message in his “Canada is in Heaven” slide was to illustrate that the more inclusive an educational system becomes, the higher the achievement results of its students.

Back in 2009, Ontario’s Ministry of Education launched its *Ontario’s Equity and Inclusivity Education Strategy*, later

updated in 2014. In 2012, the OPC held our first educational summit, with the topic Social Justice: Let’s Get Real. The focus of the two days was best encapsulated by a student panelist who challenged the participants by asserting that the effectiveness of a school or an education system can only be measured by the success of its most marginalized student.

The student panelist later analogized, through his comparison of Ontario’s implementation of the Equity and Inclusivity policy to that of a salad bowl; that equity can no longer just be seen as merely the dressing sprinkled on the salad, but, it must be, in essence, the salad bowl itself. Equity and inclusivity must no longer be the “flavour

of the month, but instead the foundation upon which our education system is built. Issues of equity and inclusivity must be made visible so that the entire school community has the opportunity to acknowledge their existence and understand their significance to the overall success of its marginalized students.

A salad bowl of social justice was initially tossed around for me during my first placement as a principal in the Upper Grand DSB through the establishment of a Social Equity club. Thirty students turned out at the inaugural meeting. These students agreed that equity should be something that is promoted throughout the school, not just something discussed within the four walls of the classroom. To that end, the first task of the club was to organize a Social Equity week. In essence, unbeknownst to the students in the club, they were helping to construct an equity salad bowl in their school. The club devised a number of simple but effective activities to promote equity and inclusivity. Highlights of these activities included: a student-created video involving students and staff sharing a characteristic/experience that made them unique; a cut out of a footprint distributed to each student and staff member in the building on which individuals were to write one unique characteristic on his/her footprint (each footprint then to be displayed throughout the school); and 600 students greeted with a personal, positive and uplifting message, via a post-it

note on their locker, or, a positive message on the sidewalk, entrance, or on windows throughout the school.

On the last day of our Social Equity week, members of the Social Equity club randomly gathered the displayed footprints and brought a collection to each classroom. The purpose was to give each student and staff member the opportunity to “walk in someone else’s shoes.” Statistical data was also amassed from the footprints so that students could visibly see others who shared similar experiences, characteristics, or some unique, individual qualities. Naturally, training of staff prior to this equity week was essential to the overall success of the initiative.

Pasi was accurate in his assertion that “Canada is in Heaven,” based on the work that schools throughout Ontario are doing to build a foundation of equity and inclusivity. Accordingly, as school leaders it is vital we continue to remember, as G. Theoharis concludes in his article *Equity Educational Leaders and Resistance: Toward a Theory of Equity Leadership* that, “leadership that is not focused on and successful at creating more just and equitable schools for marginalized students is indeed not good leadership.” ▲



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Recent Happenings at OPC ...



Dr. Joanne Robinson (left), our Director of Professional Learning, met with Pauline O'Brien (right), Director of Educational Recruitment Services with the Council of International Schools (CIS) to discuss partnership opportunities.



In November, association leads welcomed keynote speakers Steve Munby (above) and Mary Jean Gallagher (below), to our 2015 International Symposium on System Change Through School Leadership.



OPC staff gathered donations in support of the Daily Bread Food Bank this past holiday season.



This past fall we welcomed many international visitors from Germany (above), the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, China and New Zealand for an overview of the structure, services and unique programs that OPC has to offer. We look forward to hosting more global study tour delegations throughout 2016.

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FUELING THE MIND

Maximizing student learning
and performance

By Jeff Irvine

The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments are a fact of life in Ontario education. Administrators expend a lot of energy each year ensuring that their students learn the curriculum that will be assessed, so they can demonstrate said learning at their highest level. Yet, with all the online access to data today, can studies in the areas of learning and the human brain provide a base of evidence for practices that our schools can then apply towards better supporting students when it comes to learning and assessment? Can research better point us towards other practical applications that we can attempt in order to give our students the best chance of achieving to their full potential?

ILLUSTRATION: © IKON IMAGES / MASTERFILE

COGNITIVE LOAD THEORY

A productive area of study termed *cognitive load theory*, first proposed by John Sweller and subsequently supported by other researchers, is based on the limited capacity of one's working memory. Sweller and other researchers believe that your long-term memory is virtually unlimited, but your working memory is in fact limited in both capacity and duration. The upper limit of what your working memory can hold at any one time is seven items. These items might be facts, procedures, relationships, theories or more complex entities called *schemas*. Schemas are

memory capacity in order to deal with the learning task at hand. Hence, it is central for administrators and teachers to work towards minimizing extraneous cognitive load, so that more cognitive capacity can be focused on the specific learning.

EXTERNAL FACTORS AND EXTRANEOUS COGNITIVE LOAD

External factors in EQAO assessments can be broken down into three areas: instructions, question style and test taking conditions, or environmental factors.

Hence, it is central for administrators and teachers to work towards minimizing extraneous cognitive load, so that more **cognitive capacity can be focused** on the specific learning.

integrated relationships similar to that of mind maps. Cathy Fosnot, in her book *Constructivism: Theory, perspectives, and practice*, claims that learning occurs when students modify or build onto their existing schema on a particular topic. Authors John Hattie and Greg Yates discuss this and implications for teachers in their book *Visible Learning and the Science of How We Learn*, identifying two different "loads" on working memory. The first is *intrinsic cognitive load*, which is a function of the learning task and the second is *extraneous cognitive load*, related to external factors such as instructions, question style, or environmental conditions like room temperature or noise level.

If students are attending to extraneous cognitive load issues, it reduces their working

during the assessment task.

In my own school, we addressed this by having our art department create 13 large posters, one for each instruction word, and had the posters vetted by EQAO. Enough were printed to have a full set in each classroom, as well as every classroom in all our feeder schools. As a result, "justify" was then applied with the same understanding in every classroom starting in grade 6. When our students then faced the EQAO assessments, they did not need to exhaust their working memory capacity to decode or interpret these instructional words. Instead, we observed that they could concentrate their capacity on the assessment task at hand.

Test question style

As teachers and administrators, we do a really good job reducing external cognitive load through items like practice tests, test-taking strategy workshops and the inclusion of EQAO-style questions in regular classroom assessments.

The EQAO website provides a wide variety of supports to help reduce a student's extraneous cognitive load based on test question style. One of the most valuable is the framework document available for each of the EQAO assessments. These provide not only a strand-by-strand breakdown of how many questions will be asked, but also identify the format specifically. For example, in the grade 3 mathematics assessment, expectations 3m24 through 3m28 will have four multiple choice questions and one open response (short answer).

Critical to know is that these questions, question types and question quantities do not change from year to year. Not only does this allow teachers to familiarize students with the style, it also concentrates student preparation on groups of expectations most emphasized by the assessment.

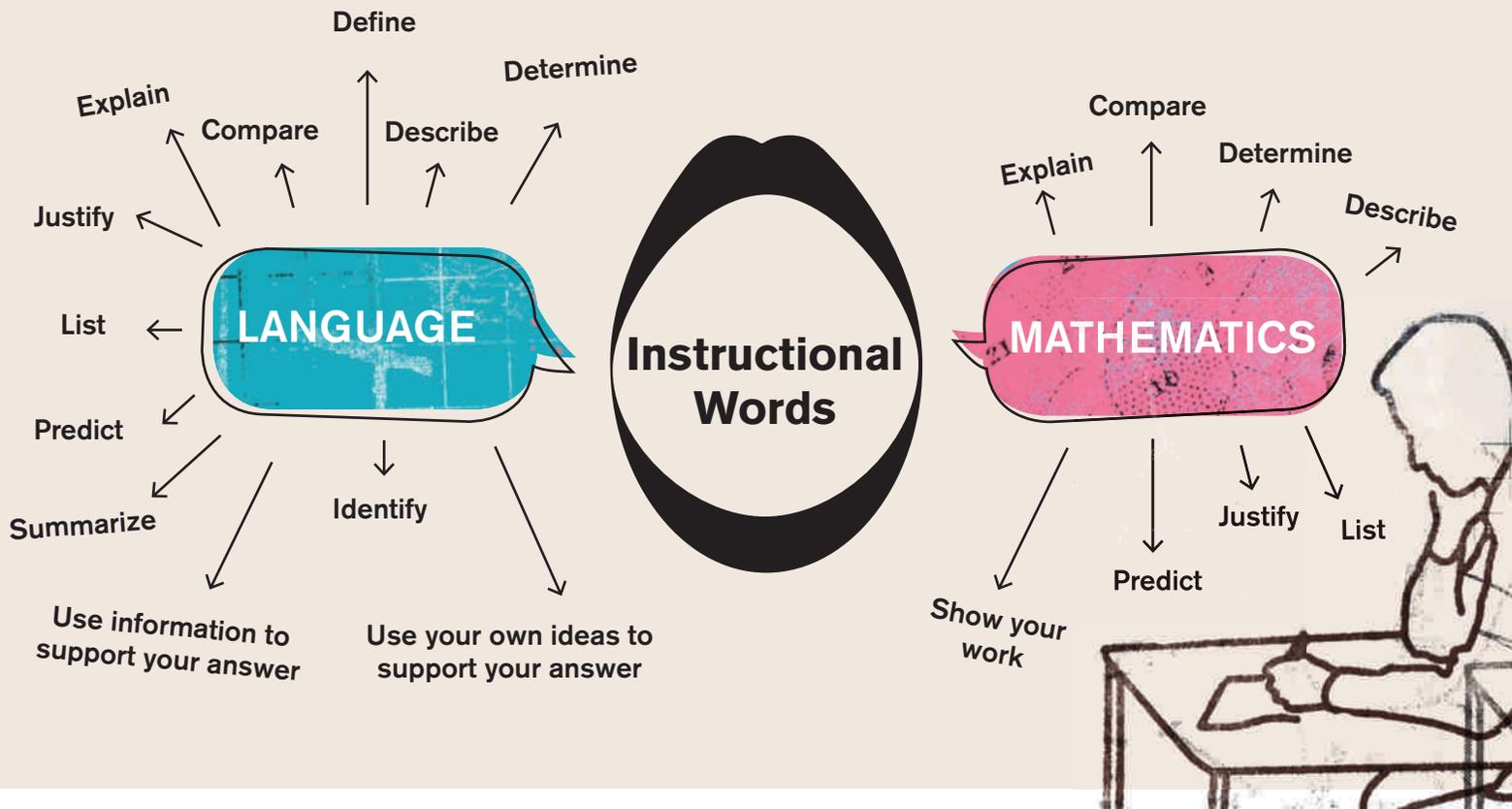
In extreme cases, where teachers may find they have limited time to complete the entire set of expectations for a course, priority can be given to content areas that will receive more emphasis on the assessments. The EQAO website provides a wide variety of sample questions that can be used in advance of assessments to better allow students to become familiar with both the question styles and

Instruction

Across the various EQAO assessments, there are 13 instructional words, such as "explain" or "justify," which our students need to comprehend. A full list of instructional words is shown in Table 1.

It is simply not enough that definitions for these words be made available to our students at the time of assessment, but rather students must be intimately familiar with this instructional language well in advance of the assessment, and these words, meanings and expectations demonstrated by EQAO be integrated into daily teachings. This way, the extraneous cognitive load generated by these instruction words is minimized and the working memory capacity is then accessible for students to utilize

TABLE 1



typical wording, as well as marking schemes (10, 20, 30, 40) and rubrics. Utilizing these resources throughout the year, we found we were able to reduce external cognitive load for our students.

Environmental factors

The final aspect affecting a student’s external cognitive load is the surrounding environmental factors such as classroom temperature, lighting, humidity and amount of daylight or even season of the year. Here again, educators do a good job of addressing these elements that can very much influence some student’s performances. As an example, we structure classrooms to provide quiet work areas, attend to room temperature and have appropriate technology available for student use. Some may even provide water for students during the assessment.

Recent research by Natalie Masento and colleagues in the *British Journal of Nutrition*

identifies brain hydration as an important factor in cognitive performance. They exhibited that hydration improved short-term memory, visual sustained attention and reaction time. There are, however, some caveats. They found that intake should be at least 250 mL of water chilled to 5 degrees Celsius, and optimal performance occurs approximately 20 minutes after drinking the water. While it is unlikely that we can attend to all these conditions related to water intake in a classroom, it is nice to know that our attempts are supported by some research.

Providing regular breaks during assessments helps address what is known as *ego depletion*. Described by David Price and Greg Yates, ego depletion results from several minutes of intensive mental concentration on a specific task. As the mental reserves become depleted, some time is required for these reserves to be replenished.

Time of day of the assessments may also

be an issue for some students. It is commonly known that adults function better in the morning, while students do better in the afternoon. In a literature review, Wendy Sjosten-Bell found that time of day for assessment is often less important than the time of day when learning occurs. The research has shown that short-term memory is stronger in the morning and decreases throughout the day, while the opposite is true for long-term memory. A particularly important result found by Sjosten-Bell is that making connections and deeper learning occurs more readily in the afternoon.

INTRINSIC COGNITIVE LOAD

After making efforts to minimize extraneous cognitive load, schools need to address the intrinsic cognitive load. This means that we must teach in a manner that equips our students with the tools and strategies to maximize their learning and thus their performance on



By far the **most important action** that we as administrators can take is to foster a professional teaching community that strives to **teach for deep learning.**

each assessment task. The research area of the EQAO website yet again provides some useful resources to support educators in this area.

At the classroom level, the resources offer item-specific rubrics and annotated sample student responses that allow teachers to modify instruction based on these samples. At a more

strategic school or board level, longitudinal studies follow students from grade 3 through the secondary school assessments, identifying trends and issues. For instance, a *EQAO Research Bulletin* (February 2014) found that students who did not meet the provincial standard in mathematics on any of the assessments

(grades 3, 6 and 9) had less positive attitudes about mathematics, much less positive perceptions of their mathematics ability, liked mathematics much less after grade 3 and were less likely to connect new mathematics concepts to previous knowledge. All of that has major implications for our teachers and administrators.

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Deep learning

Research by John Hattie and Greg Yates shows that the best way to prepare students for assessments, whether EQAO, large scale international assessments, or smaller classroom testing, is to focus on what is known as *deep learning*. According to Corbin Campbell and Alberto Cabrera, deep learning can be contrasted with *surface learning*, which focuses on facts and basic procedures. In deep learning, students make connections and integrate knowledge into internal cognitive networks. There are three dimensions to that: 1) higher order thinking, 2) integrative learning and 3) critical reflection. Teachers can address this concept of higher order thinking through a focus on big ideas and taxonomies of learning. *Revised Bloom's Taxonomy* is a helpful resource that can be found online. Additionally *Marzano's New Taxonomy*,

Designing Effective Projects: Thinking skills frameworks can also be consulted for insight into this concept. Marzano's taxonomy includes a metacognitive dimension that also addresses critical reflection.

Some curriculum policy documents, such as science, explicitly identify the big ideas within the subject. In fact, the science curriculum policy documents identify fundamental concepts, big ideas and goals, and link them to both the overall and specific expectations.

A study by Douglas Clark and Marcia Linn acknowledges that instructional time is a significant factor in teaching for integrated learning, showing that this time is definitely well spent. Recognizing the trade-off between curriculum coverage and knowledge integration, they identified substantial gains in student knowledge and understanding through teaching for integration. Something else to consider is that according to research by Stephanie Foote and Andy Dyer, deep learning also requires a rethinking of assessment strategies, with greater emphasis on portfolios, journals and other assessments not bound by time and traditional formats.

As educators, we are already addressing many of the factors research identifies as important in maximizing student learning and performance. However, there is more that can be done. Some fairly simple structural changes can significantly reduce extraneous cognitive load in our students. By far the most important action that we as administrators can take is to foster a professional teaching community that strives to teach for deep learning. Not only should this improve our students' performance on assessments, it will enhance student understanding and have important impacts on their motivation and engagement as well. It has always been our duty to teach for understanding, to maximize the learning of our students. ▲

Jeff Irvine has been a teacher, department head, secondary vice-principal, and Education Officer for the Ontario Ministry of Education. He is currently a PhD student and sessional instructor at Brock University. ✉ jirvine2@brocku.ca

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High Yield Strategies

Making the Student Success Initiative
experience work for you

By Kelly Kempel and Stephan Reist

Illustration by Sebastien Thibault

IT can be somewhat overwhelming when your school is initially identified for participation in the Student Success Initiative (SSI). It may appear to be yet one more demand on school improvement planning with a high degree of accountability. We felt the same when we were first invited to a meeting to outline the expectations for our school team in 2012. However, after three successful and professionally rewarding years of involvement, we have utilized the required elements of the SSI to the benefit of the staff and students at Glenview Park Secondary School (GPSS).



The focus of our SSI efforts continues to be **student achievement and success**, not an exercise in data collection and reporting.

The implementation process has evolved during our involvement with SSI. Through reflection, collaboration and continual improvement, we have landed on a successful structure and philosophy that has led to measurable differences in student achievement. Our best suggestions for organization and implementation are outlined below.

Be Deliberate in the Selection of the Learning Team

The direction from the Ministry regarding team focus has evolved. As a result, we have engaged all teachers in the math department for the full three years, whether or not their teaching assignment included grade 9 or 10 applied classes. While the principal is responsible for selecting the team, we reminded our teachers that the initiative was intended to collaboratively learn and practice effective instruction. We learned early that the teachers involved in the learning team benefit from full-year involvement without a change and without appraisal. After initial fears were alleviated, teachers actually asked to have everyone participate. Our team of seven teachers in addition to administration may be somewhat larger than other sites, but it works for us. Principals have and should exercise the flexibility to make the team selection work for their own school. As a result of the success in math, we initiated a second learning team with all members of the science department during the 2014–15 school year, and found this extension to be equally successful.

Involve Your Vice-Principal(s)

There are countless benefits to extending the leadership of the SSI to include a vice-principal. During planning of the learning team meetings, we are able to engage in rich discussion

regarding the goals and progress. The collaboration with a persistent focus on teaching and learning provides for a truly reflective process, aligned with the learning cycle format. In addition, we are able to draw on individual strengths and experiences to benefit our learning team. The opportunity for vice-principal(s) to model personal growth and be directly involved in the professional learning of teachers is essential to establishing effective working relationships that sustain beyond SSI. Teachers and administrators working together created a positive and productive team culture.

Identify What SSI is Not

It became important for us to differentiate for our teachers what SSI is intended to be, but also what it is not. It was initially a challenge encouraging teachers to trust that it was beneficial and to take a risk. We consistently reinforced the message that it is an opportunity to have the time to discuss, assess and collaborate on effective teaching practice. It is not intended to be evaluative, or judgmental. The focus of our SSI efforts continues to be student achievement and success, not an exercise in data collection and reporting. While the Ministry submitted data does assist in tracking progress, it does not drive the process or the progress. The data is one source of information used to provoke thinking and dialogue. Initial concerns were voiced regarding the use of data in a small school with year-over-year comparisons. We persisted in maintaining the data submission as a data point, not the driving force behind the initiative.

Be Resourceful

As the lead learners involved in the learning team, we modeled professional growth by

accessing a wide variety of resources to support the overall goals, and in response to questions that developed throughout the school year. It is not expected that the principal or vice-principal possess all the answers, all the time. We utilized the EduGains videos and worksheets, YouTube videos, print resources, as well as examples of effective teaching practice from teachers in other departments to introduce theoretical and practical examples of best practice. We co-created an anchor chart identifying the characteristics of effective feedback with the learning team as a model for creating anchor charts in the classroom. Several teachers identified the need to expand their technological skill in order to use these tools for student engagement. As a result, we invited the Learning Support Teacher to work with some teachers during and after the regularly scheduled meetings. By engaging the teachers in the direction-setting process and being responsive to their needs, we were able to include professional resources as a component of the learning teams.

Learn with other School Leaders

In the Waterloo Region DSB, two other high schools were also identified for participation in the initiative. The school administration teams from each of the sites met two to three times each year to review progress and share best practices. We alternated locations to give the host school the opportunity to bring artifacts and evidence of the learning and collaborative activities. Each school had established different learning teams and had different focused strategies, yet the dialogue proved to be beneficial in developing strategies for the team relationships, for reporting and for articulating next steps. The conversations with colleagues managing

similar issues and the same reporting expectations are extremely helpful in reducing the potential isolation of the project.

Align the Required Evidence Based Focus with Broader School Improvement Plans

When involved in SSI, schools must identify two instructional practices that become a focus of the learning cycle. The evidence-based choices provided are extensive and allow flexibility. It became important for us *not* to introduce additional or too widely varied teaching and learning expectations of the teachers involved in the learning teams. All teachers at our school are engaged in professional learning, and while we were definitely adding focus and commitment to the math teachers, we felt that alignment with current school improvement goals would support, rather than overwhelm them. As a result, we worked with the teachers to select instructional strategies for the learning teams that would be connected to staff meetings, professional development days and other school improvement activities in which all teachers are involved. Alex Michaelides, science teacher, states, “the science department has focused on the effective use of feedback. This provided students with positive reinforcement and an improvement in student learning has been noted.”

Engage your Coach

Each principal involved in the SSI initiative is assigned an experienced, recently retired principal as coach. Our coach has been a positive influence on the implementation by actively listening to our progress, in addition to providing suggestions and reflections. We asked our coach for specific support and have been happy to receive templates and drafts of feedback tools, potential resources and other materials that provoke reflection. Involvement of the vice-principal with the coach is also important to discuss the bigger picture, and provides an opportunity to check for alignment of observations and thinking. While the coach is intended to meet only with the principal, our coach was happy to observe a learning team meeting in order to offer objective feedback.

Be Present

The mandatory involvement of the principal in the learning teams is a significant time commitment. However, the growth in teaching practice, in addition to the opportunity to be directly connected to classroom learning, makes the time something that we value and have found to be incredibly rewarding. It is only fair and respectful to expect administrators to commit time for the preparation, engagement and leadership during these learning team meetings, as we are also asking so much of the teachers who are involved. We communicated meeting dates at the start of

each semester for the entire team. Teachers can better plan with the dates identified, and for the administrators, it necessitates that the SSI learning team meetings take precedence over other emerging obligations. For example, when the teachers engaged in collaborative planning and teaching of specific lessons, they commented on how important it was to have the administrators involved in the classroom, so we ensured that was consistently possible.

Use Data to Identify Next Steps

Ideally, we would like to see continuous growth with our teachers and success with our students. When examining pre- and post-assessment data, we noticed significant growth across grade 9 and 10 applied level math and science students. For instance, many students jumped a level as indicated by tracking student data. We also saw increases in course pass rates for grade 9 applied level students. However, our grade 10 pass rates decreased. This prompted a discussion regarding possible reasons for this outcome. We identified that more appropriate course pathways may be necessary for some students. We engaged our guidance department to ensure that common messaging and suggestions are being provided to students and parents regarding the most appropriate course pathways to optimize success for students.

“... the SSI Ministry initiative has had success over the years with a formula that includes superintendent commitment, principal co-learning alongside teachers and the **effective use of student data to inform next steps within the classroom ...**”



Celebrate Success!

It is important to take time to celebrate the gains made in the SSI initiative. It is also imperative to recognize the time, effort and risks that teachers are making. We want to maintain momentum and continue to foster creative collaboration with our learning teams and still maintain the philosophy of doing what's best for kids. Scott Lomax, Superintendent of Achievement and Well-Being for our board, notes, "the SSI Ministry initiative has had success over the years with a formula that includes superintendent commitment, principal co-learning alongside teachers and the effective use of student data to inform next steps within the classroom ... successful implementation and commitment to the SSI initiative can make a difference for student achievement. The SSI implementation process outlined in this article demonstrates a very effective way

to employ the learning cycle in an authentic and successful way."

The team is extremely proud to celebrate the improvements in student learning and achievement. The EQAO math results reflect the commitment to teaching practice with an increase from 41 to 62 per cent from 2011/12 to 2014/15 for applied students at Levels 3 and 4. We are committed to sharing the achievement and the learning with the entire staff team who are supportive of the efforts of their colleagues.

Our own experience with SSI has been extremely professionally rewarding and has generated measurable, successful outcomes in student achievement, in addition to augmenting teacher practice. The frequent meetings resulted in building genuine trusting relationships with the classroom teachers. Teachers took risks in the classroom with anchor charts, student collaboration,

co-planning lessons and observing colleagues teaching. As stated by math teacher Krista DeMerchant, "as a department, we have been able to explore and challenge our own pedagogy; not only with colleagues, but administrators and other guests. We have explored high yield strategies and learning cycles with detail, purpose and meaning, recognizing that teaching and learning is fluid and evolves from class to class, year to year, etc. We have been able to explore our understanding of our specific students/classes and personalize learning needs for individual students and/or groups of students. Analyzing data combined with the addition of colleagues in the classroom has allowed for more accurate observations of specific students' learning needs (yet not evaluation). Though somewhat skeptical at first as to how more time out of the classroom would impact my student's learning and my time needed to prepare, etc., our SSI time is relevant and tailored to our needs, which leads to authentic professional development."

The SSI model also allows teachers to observe the principal and vice-principal as the lead learners, as well as capable teachers. We have had the opportunity to observe many positive attributes of the teachers that we may otherwise have been unaware. SSI necessitates deeper conversation and creativity in all the participants, and several teachers demonstrated unique strengths and talents that were not generally observed in traditional professional development. Lastly, the most positive indication of the value to the teachers was the response to a *Stop/Start/Continue* activity completed at the end of the school year. The learning team members identified a greater number of suggestions to *Start* than *Stop*. They are eager to continue to be committed to collaborative professional growth, and we will continue to make that happen. ▲

Kelly Kempel is the principal at Glenview Park Secondary School in Cambridge and has been a secondary principal in the WRDSB for over 12 years. She is also the current OPC President-Elect. Stephan Reist is the vice-principal at Glenview Park Secondary School and been a vice-principal at three secondary schools in the WRDSB.

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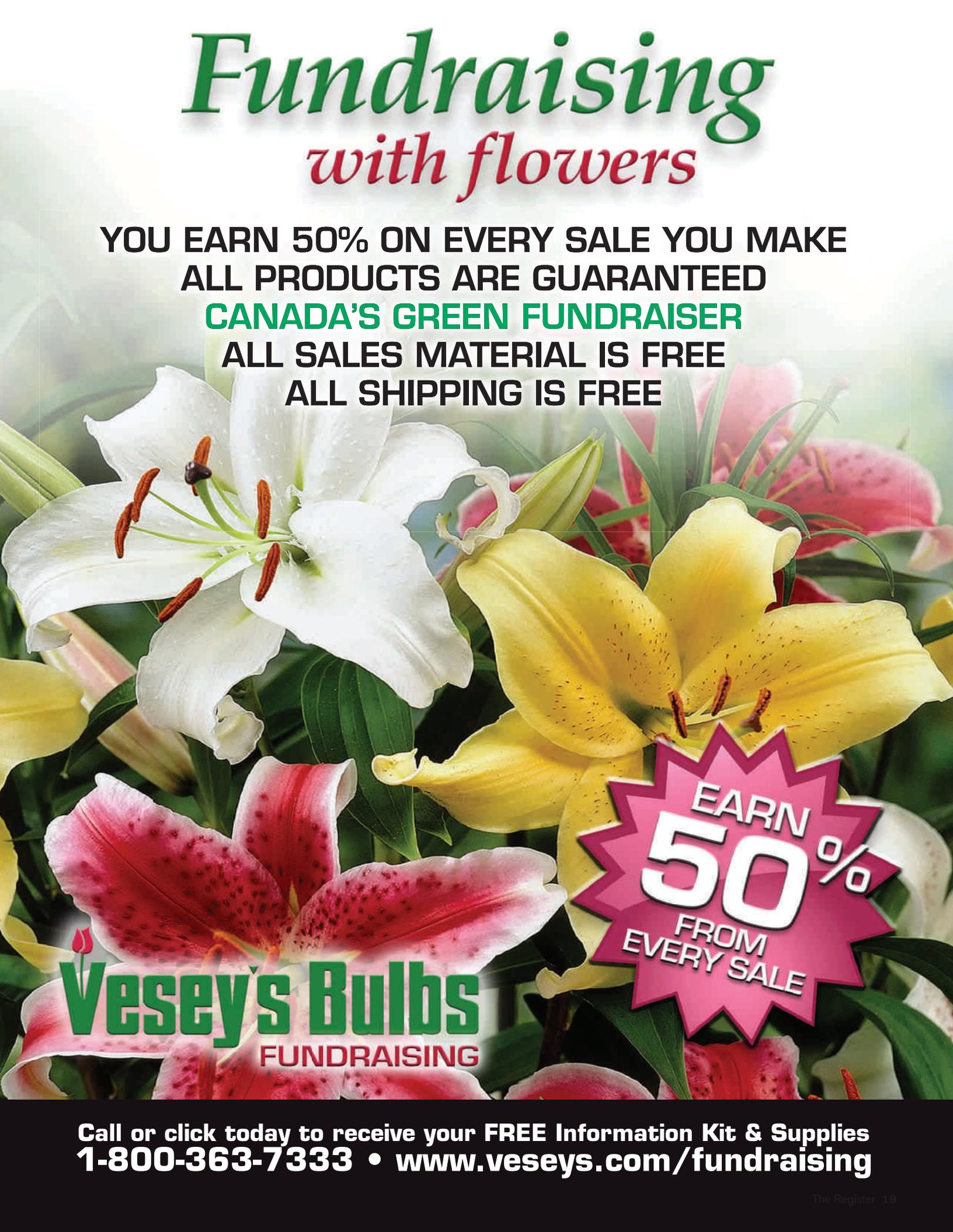
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Engaging Student Voices

A case study on effective ways to access students' voices through the Student Voice Initiative

By Anna Meliksetyan

Since the launch of the Ontario Student Voice Initiative in 2008, the Ministry of Education (the “Ministry”) strategy known as the Student Voice Initiative (SVI) aiming to strengthen student engagement in their learning. Through the SVI, the Ministry developed tools and resources to access student voice, promote student-led opportunities and enable student-teacher collaborative efforts. There are four student engagement tools currently available through the SVI, namely

- *SpeakUp* in a Box
- Students as Researchers (StAR)
- *SpeakUp* Projects and
- the Ministry Student Advisory Council (MSAC).

Each tool empowers students to become active citizens and offers opportunities for them to shape their learning environment by connecting what is happening in the classroom to their real-life experiences outside of school. These initiatives also offer ways for educators to access student voice while working in partnerships and building on 21st century skills such as entrepreneurship, collaboration, communication and character.

The term “student voice” is often used as a “metaphor for student engagement and participation in issues that matter in learning” (The Education Alliance, 2004, p.3) and “has been used in reference to various types of student input, ranging from personal expression in classroom assignments, [...] to involvement in school governance.” (Student Achievement, 2013, p.2). Scholars Adam Fletcher (2003) and Michael Fielding (2001) cite various examples across the United States, Chile and the United Kingdom of classrooms in elementary and secondary schools using student voice to improve student engagement. Examples include students receiving a credit for helping educators learn to use technology in the classroom (Fletcher, 2003, p.19) and students in second grade developing

a curriculum for their teachers to use in the classroom (Fletcher, 2003, p.18). Despite the growing attention to student voice in education reform literature, scholars such as Michael Fielding argue that one of the key issues faced by the student voice movement is that “for many [...] student voice, is at best, something a small number of other students, often not like them, do with a small number of teachers, often not like other teachers, to no good effect.” (2001, p.105). In other words, although students and teachers are demonstrating great interest and ways to incorporate student voice in their classrooms, not enough legitimacy is afforded at the system-level for the student voice initiative to become a social movement. To date, very few studies have offered empirical evidence of system wide implementation of student voice (The Education Alliance, Spring 2004, p.3; Fielding, 2001, p.104).

According to the Student Achievement Division at the Ministry “in order for student voice to become an inherent process in the school system, principals [must] play a key role in honoring student voice and developing a school culture that promotes it.” (Student Achievement, September 2013, p.3). As such, through the Student Engagement/ Student Voice Modules project, the research study set out to capture and report on the lived experiences and recommendations of Ontario students, teachers and principals who participated in and implemented the SVI in their schools in order to demonstrate ways to access the voice of all students and meaningfully involve all students in decisions that impact them directly.

In order to capture the diversity and contextual elements in experiences and implementation of the SVI across Ontario, the study took a descriptive approach to demonstrating ways to access the voice of all students and meaningfully involve all students in decisions that impact them directly. Based on input from principals, teachers and students who have participated in their schools’ SVI, the following key concepts were measured:

- Participants’ experiences participating in and implementing student voice initiatives in their schools.
- Participants’ recommendations regarding effective practices on student-teacher partnerships.
- Successful practices and examples of using the tools available through student voice initiatives to support the Ontario Educational Leadership Framework (OELF),

School Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (SIPSA), Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA), and Ontario’s four renewed vision goals. The study focused on constructing a patchwork case study by looking at different typologies at different points in time. The questions took on a descriptive approach to asking questions and communicating the results in an effort to learn about the diversity of participants’ experiences. The case

A total of 49 students, seven principals and 13 teachers from 11 different schools participated in the study. One of the schools was an Urban Priority High School (UPHS) and two schools had a large First Nations, Metis and Inuit population of students and staff.

study was conducted between September and October 2014 in seven Ontario school boards through focus groups, and one-on-one interviews. A mix of Catholic, public, French, English, elementary and secondary schools were chosen based on a variety of Student Voice project types. A total of 49 students, seven principals and 13 teachers from 11 different schools participated in the study. One of the schools was an Urban Priority High School (UPHS) and two schools had a large First Nations, Metis and Inuit population of students and staff.

CONSTRUCTING KEY MESSAGES

Prior to constructing the study, a group of principals were asked to serve as a think tank to consult on the type of information that would be important for school leaders to know when considering implementing the SVI in their schools. The consensus was that it is important to understand the main reasons why student voice is, and continues to be, an initiative that schools use to engage students’

TABLE 1



voices and include them in decisions that impact them directly – the *compelling why*. The first key message was that **SVI projects help uncover school climates**. Student voice projects can reveal covert issues such as bullying and they can also be used as a tool to create a sense of pride and belonging in the school and broader community.

The second message was that the **student voice goes beyond the physical element of a voice**. Participating in the SVI means that students have the opportunity to contribute what they feel comfortable sharing, and build on new or existing skills. Students spoke of gaining confidence in pursuing their ideas, fortified by gaining the trust of their peers and teachers who believed in their abilities to initiate change, or plant the seed of change, in their school. Students who participated in projects that involved further opportunities to share their work with their school and external community felt most confident to identify as change initiators.

The third message was that **student voice projects create opportunities for reciprocal learning through collaboration**. The SVI overtly articulates the need to intentionally seek out and listen to students' voices. It provides an opportunity for principals and teachers to work shoulder-to-shoulder with students to achieve common goals, while addressing their SIPSA, BIPSA, OELF and Ontario's four renewed vision goals. Implementing a student voice project in a school also creates an opportunity for a mind

shift, where students can create and share knowledge with their peers and teachers on issues that matter most to them, while principals and teachers can harness those skills to improve their schools.

The final message was that **student voice projects reflect the diversity of schools, student populations and cultural contexts**. For example, students in an Indigenous school used the *SpeakUp* grant to find their voice and reclaim their identities and their cultures while addressing the traditional worldview that we are all related and interconnected. Students in a UPHS school used StAR to learn about the attitudes of their community towards their school, and shared their research results with other UPHS schools in their board.

RECORDED PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES

Students, teachers and principals who participated in and implemented a student voice project in their school were asked to reflect on their individual experiences, as well as on the entire process of participation, from project ideation to implementation. Students were also asked to discuss any auxiliary opportunities or new skills gained while leading and implementing their school's student voice project. The answers of all the participants were aggregated during the analysis process and were represented as a group through four broad themes

- successful processes and challenges faced in implementing the SVI
- skills students gained or honed as a result of participating in the SVI
- auxiliary opportunities that resulted from participating in the SVI and
- recommendations for schools considering implementing the SVI.

SUCCESSFUL PROCESSES AND CHALLENGES

When asked to identify successful processes for implementing the SVI in a school, it was clear that there were multiple ways to begin, facilitate and implement a student voice project. Such a project usually begins with either a principal or a "champion teacher" learning of the opportunity through various forms of communication. Next, a group of students are chosen as the founding members and those students, with support from the "champion teacher,"

FIGURE 1



proceed to implement the student voice project based on their goals and topic. After a project is completed, some schools choose to participate in other SVIs.

Since a project like this requires students, teachers and principals to collaborate, some adjustments in roles must be made to reflect the group dynamics and project goals. As such, participants cited communication and time management skills as the main challenges of implementing the SVI in a school. Students found that learning to manage and allocate their time between attending class and conferences, doing homework and working on the student voice project, along with keeping up with their familial responsibilities, was both a challenge and a learning opportunity, mitigated by learning to ask for help from their teachers and family.

GAINED SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Despite some challenges faced by participants in implementing the SVI, those experiences were outweighed by the skills and opportunities gained from their involvement. Students offered examples such as flying in an airplane for the first time, and presenting the results of their work at university lectures and school board meetings. Participants also reflected on the opportunities to learn new tangible skills such as research methodology, leadership skills and money management. Opportunities were made available for the students to take leadership roles and see themselves succeed. Table 1 represents the skills students gained.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When participants reflected on things they would do differently

or offer advice to schools considering student voice, all were unanimous in that the SVI should be a part of every school. The first recommendation was to designate one person at each board to serve as a student voice officer to be responsible for all the SVI related work, including communicating new opportunities to the schools and creating a sense of community between all the schools participating in the SVI. Building on the first recommendation, the second piece of advice was to create a space for students from different schools within one board to share their work with each other, specifically with *SpeakUp* grant projects. When students have the opportunity to share their work with their school board community, at board meetings and at conferences (the way students who participate in StAR do), their sense of belonging and their leadership skills improve, and they feel greater achievement in their work when they know people outside of their school are aware of their achievements.

EFFECTIVE STUDENT TEACHER PARTNERSHIPS

Students, teachers and principals all agreed that there must be a clear division of roles when implementing a student voice project. Students should be responsible for all stages of the project – ideation, planning and implementation (see Figure 1). They serve as the change initiators and advocates for the collective voice of students in their schools. Meanwhile, teachers should serve as the liaison between the students and school administration, while providing support and guidance and connecting students to the resources they need to implement the student voice project in their school. Finally, the principals should play a dual role of support and acting as a soundboard, for both the teachers and the students.

MAKING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SVI AND OELF, SIPSA, BIPSA AND NEW VISION GOALS

The goal of asking principals to draw connections between the SVI and the SIPSA, BIPSA, OELF and new visions' goal was to demonstrate examples of successful practices using the tools available through the SVI to support their existing work. Principals explained that SVI lends itself to building relationships and

learning experiences that spark learners' curiosity and inspire them to follow their passions." (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p.4) For example, a teacher in a French elementary Catholic school used money from the *SpeakUp* grant to fund a robotics club. This created experiential learning opportunities for the students to practice basic computer programming and to learn more about Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

CONCLUSION

Despite the differences in approaches and variations in implementations (e.g. buying a mascot or interviewing students and parents from feeder schools) the experiences recorded in the study of students, teachers and principals echoed the benefits of the SVI to a school's culture of co-creating, where "students are using their knowledge of the self to make decisions that are healthy and beneficial to them, empowering them to make decisions and are involving [them] in their own learning," said one principal participant. The study demonstrates empirical evidence of partnerships between youth and adults, where teachers guide students in the direction they choose to go, and principals understand the importance of allowing students to take ownership in co-constructing their learning space and obtaining opportunities outside of the school. ▲

For more information about the project and to access the full research report visit <http://www.engagingstudentvoices.ca>

Anna Meliksetyan served as the principal researcher on the Student Engagement/Student Voice Modules project team, a collaborative effort between the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC), Catholic Principals' Council | Ontario (CPCO), and Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO).

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“... educators create more relevant, applied and innovative learning experiences that spark learners' curiosity and inspire them to follow their passions.”

developing people by maintaining a safe and healthy environment (The Institute for Education Leadership, 2013, p.12), as well as developing people and community (The Institute for Education Leadership, 2013, p.12). For example, one Toronto elementary school with a predominately Indigenous student population used the *SpeakUp* grant to create healthy snacks for all students in the school by growing their own plants. Older students taught younger students healthy eating habits and made their own soil using compost garbage from all the classes in the school.

Principals also found that student voice projects address the renewed vision, specifically goals such as ensuring equity by “increasing knowledge and understanding of First Nations, Metis and Inuit cultures and histories” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p.9) and achieving excellence by having “educators create more relevant, applied and innovative

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Mentally Healthy Schools

Supporting your work with School Mental Health Assist

Representatives from School Mental Health Assist (SMHA), the OPC, CPCO and ADFO convened in August 2015 in Toronto to further the capacity of public school administrators to lead mentally healthy schools. The enthusiasm and

commitment of all participants was incredibly high, with the acknowledgment that there is much work to do on this topic. This work must move the public education agenda to a point where mental health and well-being for all are given the priority they require to become embedded pillars for determining how schools in Ontario support the whole child.

Through research gathered provincially, nationally and internationally, school leaders around the world have identified mental health as a critical issue in their schools. We are compelled to support the needs of all with whom we work including students, parents, the school staff, the community and ourselves. Common sense, professional judgment and experience also tell us that students who feel safe, welcome and have a balanced degree of mental health and well-being will perform better in school. The challenge we face lies in creating the conditions necessary in which the student achievement agenda and the lessons of good mental health and well-being can be woven together in a meaningful and authentic way.

As defined by the World Health Organization, **mental health** is “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses

of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.” As education leaders, we understand that overall well-being will support overall student achievement, but what are the best practices and strategies that can be employed at the school level to maximize the well-being of students, staff and community?

There is an abundance of resources related to mental health and well-being. So much so that unpacking those resources and finding the ones that will apply to an individual school can be overwhelming. Where to begin? Familiarizing yourself with the document *Leading Mentally Healthy Schools* is a great place to start (available at <http://smh-assist.ca/blog/2015/10/22/leading-mentally-healthy-schools/>).

Published with the leadership of School Mental Health Assist and through consultation with education stakeholders across Ontario, this resource provides the information necessary for school leaders to begin the journey towards greater well-being for all members of our communities.

Within this document, school leaders will find the resources needed to identify school readiness for furthering its commitment to mental health, how to identify and address identified school-based mental health needs and strategies

for embedding social/emotional programming into the classroom.

Schools are the ideal place to further a proactive approach to deepening the conversation and commitment to mental health and well-being that will hopefully inform how society reacts and responds to this important issue. As we have learned from our work in the areas of equity, diversity and gender identification schools are well positioned to

- reduce the stigma related to mental health
- promote positive mental health
- build student social/emotional learning skills
- prevent mental health problems in high risk groups
- identify students in need and
- build pathways to care (SMHA, 2015).

As part of our work moving forward, and under the leadership of SMAH, tools will be developed that will allow school leaders to better navigate the abundance of resources available that can be employed to promote, build and maintain positive mental health in our schools. Our work in this area is critical as we strive to meet the increasing needs of our students and communities. By working thoughtfully and carefully, we can seamlessly align the elements of this important work with our current professional practice and change the conversation related to mental health and well-being for the better. ▲

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Author John Hamilton, OPC Past President, is the OPC Leading Mentally Healthy Schools lead.



SEARCHING STUDENTS

Quebec high school criticized for student search

By Andrew Baker and Kate Dearden

Illustration by Agent Illustrateur

In February 2015, a Quebec City secondary school attracted national attention after a 15-year-old female student was strip-searched by a female principal and female staff member at Neufchâtel High School within the De la Capitale School Board (the “board”). After reports about the strip search began to circulate, the board released a statement saying that the school had reason to believe the student had been trafficking drugs for months.¹

SUPREME COURT



GENERAL PRINCIPLES ABOUT SEARCHES:

1

A warrant is not essential in order to conduct a search of a student by a school authority.

The school authority must have reasonable grounds to believe that there has been a breach of school regulations or discipline and that a search of a student would reveal evidence of that breach.

2

3

School authorities will be in the best position to assess information given to them and relate it to the situation existing in their school. Courts should recognize the preferred position of school authorities to determine if reasonable grounds existed for the search. [This includes the student's age and gender.]

The following may constitute reasonable grounds in this context: information received from one student considered to be credible, information received from more than one student, a teacher's or principal's own observations, or any combination of these pieces of information which the relevant authority considers to be credible. The compelling nature of the information and the credibility of these or other sources must be assessed by the school authority in the context of the circumstances existing at the particular school.

4

Overview

After the incident, the student reported to the media that the female principal and a female staff member took her to a separate room and asked her to remove all her clothing, including her underwear.² The staff member held a blanket in front of the student while the principal searched the student's clothing. The board stated that there was no "visual or physical contact with the student" during the search.³ The student alleged that she was denied a request to contact her mother before the search was conducted, although the board said the girl refused to call her mother when given the chance. No drugs were found during the search.

The student was suspended and transferred to a different school. The student challenged the suspension in a request to the Quebec

Superior Court. The board opposed the request, stating that it had reason to believe she had been selling drugs on school property for several months. Further, the board's lawyer stated that the school had "serious reasons for expelling the student" that could not be reported in the media.⁴ The Quebec Superior Court Judge rejected the student's request.

School Authority for Searching Students

Section 8 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* provides that: "Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure." The extent of a student's right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures in the school context has been widely explored by Canadian courts.

On November 26, 1998, the Supreme Court

of Canada released written reasons in the case of *R. v. M. (M.R.)*.⁵ The decision marked the first time that the Supreme Court had directly considered the scope of a student's constitutional right, within a school context, to be free from unreasonable searches and, conversely, the extent of a school's interest in searching students.

In determining when and in what circumstances a search by a school official should be considered unreasonable and therefore in violation of the student's rights under the *Charter*, the Supreme Court emphasized that the duties and obligations entrusted to schools are fundamentally important.⁶ At the same time, the Supreme Court recognized that these duties and obligations cannot be separated from the practical responsibilities and challenges of running a school. The Supreme Court affirmed that, in light of the contemporary challenges faced by school officials in teaching and caring for students, school officials must be provided with flexibility in addressing discipline problems. This flexibility, in the view of the Supreme Court, includes a broad right to search a student where that student is reasonably suspected of being in possession of a prohibited weapon or an illicit drug.

In *M. (M.R.)*, the Supreme Court laid out some general principles about searches:

1. A warrant is not essential in order to conduct a search of a student by a school authority.

2. The school authority must have reasonable grounds to believe that there has been a breach of school regulations or discipline and that a search of a student would reveal evidence of that breach.

3. School authorities will be in the best position to assess information given to them and relate it to the situation existing in their school. Courts should recognize the preferred position of school authorities to

SUPREME COURT

LIST OF FACTORS TO DETERMINE IF A SEARCH WAS REASONABLE:

1

The first step is to determine whether it can be inferred from the provisions of the relevant *Education Act* that teachers and principals are authorized to conduct searches of their students in appropriate circumstances. In the school environment such a statutory authorization would be reasonable.

2

The search itself must be carried out in a reasonable manner. It should be conducted in a sensitive manner and be minimally intrusive.

3

In order to determine whether a search was reasonable, all the surrounding circumstances will have to be considered.

determine if reasonable grounds existed for the search. [This includes the student's age and gender.]

4. The following may constitute reasonable grounds in this context: information received from one student considered to be credible, information received from more than one student, a teacher's or principal's own observations, or any combination of these pieces of information which the relevant authority considers to be credible. The compelling nature of the information and the credibility of these or other sources must be assessed by the school authority in the context of the circumstances existing at the particular school.⁷

While the Supreme Court in *M. (M.R.)* did not specifically address whether, or when, a school could conduct a strip search of a student, it provided a list of factors to consider in determining whether a search was reasonable:⁸

1. The first step is to determine whether it can be inferred from the provisions of the relevant *Education Act* that teachers and principals are authorized to conduct searches of their students in appropriate circumstances. In the school environment such a statutory authorization would be reasonable.
2. The search itself must be carried out in a reasonable manner. It should be conducted in a sensitive manner and be minimally intrusive.
3. In order to determine whether a search was reasonable, all the surrounding circumstances will have to be considered.

In a 2001 decision, *R. v. Golden*, the Supreme Court of Canada provided guidelines for how police should conduct strip searches in accordance with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.⁹ While that case was in the context of police operating in the field, the Court stated that it was best to conduct searches at a police station except in the most exigent circumstances.

Board's Justification for Strip Search

In the Neufchâtel case, the board released a statement clarifying that the school's actions conformed to a Quebec education policy report, *Présence policière dans les établissements*

d'enseignement (the "Policy"), and occurred in the context of the school administration's responsibility to ensure a safe and secure environment for students.¹⁰

The Policy serves as a guide for relations between the police authorities and educational institutions. It refers to *M. (M.R.)* as establishing the basis for school authorities to conduct searches.

The board further stated that searches of students and their personal effects are permitted if there are reasonable grounds to believe that a rule has been violated and evidence can be found on the student's person. The board relied on the following guidelines in the Policy for conducting a strip search:

- A screen is used,
- The clothing is searched, not the individual,
- The search is done under the supervision of two persons, preferably with another staff member of the same sex as the student and
- There is no contact with the student.

The board also relied on *M. (M.R.)* in its justification for the strip search of the Neufchâtel student. The board concluded its statement by saying that the situation at Neufchâtel was exceptional, but nonetheless was conducted under established guidelines. The board, however, undertook to review its policies in order to make any necessary changes.

Quebec Government Changes Position on Strip Searches

Quebec's then Minister of Education, Yves Bolduc, commented on the incident. Mr. Bolduc initially defended the search, saying that school staff are permitted to strip search students as long as the search is done in accordance with the law and school policy, and conducted in a "respectful fashion."¹¹ Mr. Bolduc subsequently said that an independent person from outside the board would look into the incident.

Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard stated that there would be no more strip searches in schools, except in extreme cases where police deem it necessary.¹² This was confirmed in a May 13, 2015 report prepared by Fabienne Bouchard, a former prosecutor and retired

lawyer. Mr. Bouchard confirmed that school officials should call police where they have serious grounds to believe a student is involved in drug trafficking. Newly appointed Education Minister Francois Blais said the practice was not acceptable "because it's a kind of humiliation for people," and also because "it's not really efficient."¹³

Lesson for Educators

It is difficult to argue that the Supreme Court of Canada's reasons in *M. (M.R.)* provide schools with blanket authority to conduct strip searches. The list of factors *M. (M.R.)* in determining whether a search is reasonable includes whether the search was done in a minimally intrusive manner. In the Neufchâtel case, the student was asked to remove all of her clothes, which is significantly more invasive than the search in *M. (M.R.)* where the student was asked to pull up his pant leg. It is arguable that a less intrusive search might have been done in the course of investigating suspected drug trafficking. It is also likely

that the Neufchâtel situation required police intervention, before any strip searches.

Given the principles articulated by the Supreme Court of Canada in *M. (M.R.)* and *Golden*, personal searches of students, but not strip searches, likely continue to be appropriate where reasonable grounds exist. However, police should be contacted where a strip search is believed to be necessary, particularly in the context of a student suspected of trafficking drugs or possessing weapons.

For specific questions we recommend you call PST at OPC. Access is available to OPC Members for support and assistance should concerns of this nature arise. ▲

THE DE LA CAPITALE SCHOOL BOARD GUIDELINES IN THE POLICY FOR CONDUCTING A STRIP SEARCH:

A screen is used

The clothing is searched,
not the individual

The search is done under the supervision of two persons, preferably with another staff member of the same sex as the student

There is no contact with
the student

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NOTES

The board's statement and the Policy are paraphrased from the original French-language sources and should not be relied upon as a translation of the content of either document.

FOOTNOTES

1. De la Capitale School Board Press Release: http://www.cscapitale.qc.ca/documents/17-02-15-CS_interventions_fouilles.pdf
2. CBC, "Strip-searched girl suspended by Quebec City school", *CBC News*, February 19: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/strip-searched-girl-suspended-by-quebec-city-school-1.2963032>
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5. *R. v. M. (M.R.)*, 1998 CanLII 700 (SCC).
6. *Supra*, at para. 35.
7. *Supra*, at para. 50.
8. *Supra*, at para. 54.
9. *R. v. Golden*, 2001 SCC 83.
10. Government of Quebec, *Présence policière dans les établissements d'enseignement* <http://www.sq.gouv.qc.ca/parent-et-enseignants/cadre-de-reference/cadre-de-reference.pdf>
11. Steve Rukavina, "Yves Bolduc says teen strip search allowed in high schools", *CBC News*, February 17, 2015: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/yves-bolduc-says-teen-strip-search-allowed-in-high-schools-1.2960521>
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13. Jocelyne Richer, "Quebec school officials no longer allowed to strip search students", *Toronto Star*, May 14, 2015: " <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/05/13/quebec-school-officials-no-longer-allowed-to-strip-search-students.html>



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ADDITIONAL BASIC QUALIFICATIONS

Primary	CONT 563	•	•	•
Junior	CONT 564	•	•	•

ABQ INTERMEDIATE

Business Studies	CONT 652	•	•	•
Computer Studies	CONT 758	•	•	•
English	CONT 770	•	•	•
Family Studies	CONT 687	•	•	•
French	CONT 769	•	•	•
Geography	CONT 795	•	•	•
Health & Physical Education	CONT 606	•	•	•
History	CONT 789	•	•	•
Mathematics	CONT 573	•	•	•
Native Studies	CONT 638	•	•	•
Science - General	CONT 609	•	•	•

ABQ SENIOR

Biology	CONT 773	•	•	•
Chemistry	CONT 605	•	•	•
English	CONT 771	•	•	•
Geography	CONT 772	•	•	•
History	CONT 794	•	•	•
Law	CONT 637	•	•	•
Mathematics	CONT 574	•	•	•
Physics	CONT 608	•	•	•
Social Sciences	CONT 635	•	•	•
Science - General	CONT 610	•	•	•
Visual Arts	CONT 614	•	•	•

HONOUR SPECIALIST

Biology	CONT 586	•	•	•
Business Studies	CONT 640	•	•	•
Chemistry	CONT 587	•	•	•
Dramatic Arts	CONT 588	•	•	•
English	CONT 590	•	•	•
Family Studies	CONT 688	•	•	•
French	CONT 591	•	•	•
Geography	CONT 592	•	•	•
Health & Physical Education	CONT 596	•	•	•
History	CONT 593	•	•	•
Mathematics	CONT 594	•	•	•
Music	CONT 582	•	•	•
Physics	CONT 595	•	•	•
Science - General	CONT 602	•	•	•
Social Sciences	CONT 636	•	•	•
Technological Education	CONT 598	•	•	•
Visual Arts	CONT 599	•	•	•

THREE-PART ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Cooperative Education Part 1	CONT 681	•	•	•
Cooperative Education Part 2	CONT 682	•	•	•
Cooperative Education Specialist	CONT 683	•	•	•
English as a Second Language Part 1	CONT 539	•	•	•
English as a Second Language Part 2	CONT 540	•	•	•
English as a Second Language Specialist	CONT 541	•	•	•
Family Studies Part 1	CONT 677	•	•	•
Family Studies Part 2	CONT 678	•	•	•
Family Studies Specialist	CONT 679	•	•	•
French as a Second Language Part 1	CONT 536	•	•	•
French as a Second Language Part 2	CONT 537	•	•	•
French as a Second Language Specialist	CONT 538	•	•	•
Guidance & Career Ed Part 1	CONT 611	•	•	•
Guidance & Career Ed Part 2	CONT 612	•	•	•
Guidance & Career Ed Specialist	CONT 613	•	•	•
Health & Physical Ed (P/J) Part 1	CONT 510	•	•	•
Health & Physical Ed (P/J) Part 2	CONT 511	•	•	•
Health & Physical Ed Specialist	CONT 512	•	•	•
Integration of Information & Computer Technology in Instruction Part 1	CONT 701	•	•	•
Integration of Information & Computer Technology in Instruction Part 2	CONT 702	•	•	•
Integration of Information & Computer Technology in Instruction Specialist	CONT 703	•	•	•
Kindergarten Part 1	CONT 801	•	•	•
Kindergarten Part 2	CONT 802	•	•	•
Kindergarten Part 3	CONT 803	•	•	•
Librarianship Part 1	CONT 797	•	•	•
Librarianship Part 2	CONT 798	•	•	•
Librarianship Specialist	CONT 799	•	•	•
Mathematics, Primary & Junior Part 1	CONT 542	•	•	•
Mathematics, Primary & Junior Part 2	CONT 543	•	•	•
Mathematics, Primary & Junior Specialist	CONT 544	•	•	•
Reading Part 1	CONT 533	•	•	•
Reading Part 2	CONT 534	•	•	•
Reading Specialist	CONT 535	•	•	•
Religious Education Part 1	CONT 624	•	•	•

THREE-PART ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS - cont'd.

Religious Education Part 2	CONT 625	•	•	•
Religious Education Part 3	CONT 626	•	•	•
Special Education Part 1	CONT 504	•	•	•
Special Education Part 2	CONT 505	•	•	•
Special Education Specialist	CONT 506	•	•	•

ONE SESSION QUALIFICATIONS

Adult Education	CONT 860	•	•	•
Occasional Teaching	CONT 825	•	•	•
Special Ed - Behaviour	CONT 810	•	•	•
Special Ed - Communication - Autism	CONT 812	•	•	•
Special Ed - Communication - Learning Disability	CONT 816	•	•	•
Student Assessment & Evaluation	CONT 811	•	•	•
Teaching and Learning Through e-Learning	CONT 815	•	•	•
Use and Knowledge of Assistive Technology	CONT 820	•	•	•

TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Communications Technology Grades 9/10	CONT 403	•	•	•
Communications Technology Grades 11/12	CONT 404	•	•	•
Computer Technology Grades 9/10	CONT 490	•	•	•
Green Industries Grades 9/10	CONT 492	•	•	•
Technological Design Grades 9/10	CONT 487	•	•	•
Technological Design Grades 11/12	CONT 488	•	•	•

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COURSES

Effectively Integrating iPads and Tablets in Teaching and Learning	INTR 400	•	•	•
Gamification in the Classroom	INTR 500	•	•	•
Teaching the Digital Learner	INTR 410	•	•	•

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- One Session AQ
- Three Session AQ (excluding French as a Second Language Part 1)

\$735

- ABQ Intermediate
- ABQ Senior
- ABQ Technological Ed
- Honour Specialist
- French as a Second Language Part 1

SESSION DATES:

Spring 2016: April 11, 2016 - June 10, 2016
 Intercession 2016: May 2, 2016 - June 24, 2016
 Summer 2016: June 27, 2016 - August 12, 2016
 Professional Learning Summer 2016: July 4, 2016 - August 12, 2016

REGISTRATION DEADLINES:

Spring 2016: March 25, 2016
 Intercession 2016: April 15, 2016
 Summer 2016: June 10, 2016
 PL Summer 2016: July 4, 2016





Fig. 1



Fig. 2

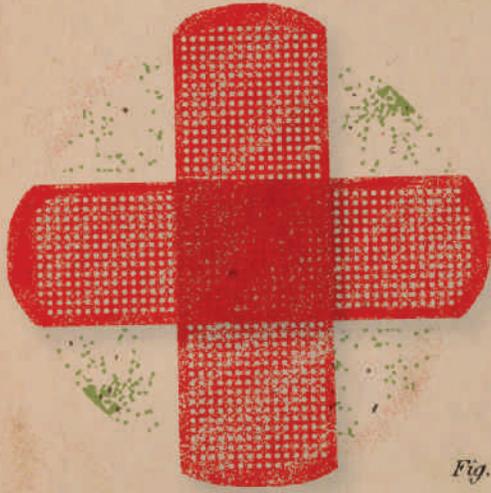


Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



By Mary Linton
Illustrated by Mike Ellis

What does it really **Entail?**

Health and Physical Education
Administrators' Toolkit helps
clear up the questions

ON February 23, 2015, the Ministry released a revised Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum to be implemented beginning September 2015. While it had been almost 17 years since the last full update, many parents, caregivers and teachers had questions about the content of the updated material. Many myths and misconceptions circulated in communities and administrators struggled to answer some questions from concerned community and staff members. Since principals and vice-principals play a primary role in promoting positive dialogue with parents and educators, the Catholic Principals' Council | Ontario (CPCO) and the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC) developed a tailored toolkit for each association to help their administrators better understand the revised HPE curriculum and support its implementation throughout the province.



Our HPE Administrators Toolkit includes a video, a Toolkit Guide, Questions and Answers resource to support HPE implementation and useful PowerPoint presentations for parents and educators. These resources can be found on the Member's side of the OPC website by selecting **Professional Development → Resources → Health and Physical Education Curriculum Toolkit**.

This article serves to highlight specific sections of the HPE Administrators Toolkit to give OPC Members a sense of what resources are available

The primary objectives are to help administrators understand the curriculum, facilitate conversations with parents, staff and community members, and support school-wide development.

in support of the implementation process for a curriculum that touches our students' lives in personal and critical ways. A brief overview of each resource is provided, along with suggestions for use with parents and educators.

VIDEO

A five-minute **video** was developed to help support administrators in sharing key information with parents and educators in a pleasant, informative and non-threatening manner. The video offers an overview of what students will be learning, who was consulted in the review process and why the revised material was important for student health and well-being. The video can be used as an introduction to a meeting with individual parents, school council members or staff members. It is accessible on both the public and Member sides of the OPC website. It can also provide administrators with a user-friendly resource to share with parents and/or educators when a face-to-face meeting is not possible.

TOOLKIT GUIDE

Our **Toolkit Guide** document provides an overview of the resources available. In this document you will find

- suggestions on how to use the Toolkit's various components
- tips for addressing parent questions and concerns
- tips for handling requests for religious accommodations and
- background information about the curriculum.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO SUPPORT HPE IMPLEMENTATION

The **Question and Answer** resource includes useful background information, supporting research, links to support documents, and answers to address many of the questions that administrators may be asked by parents, educators and community members. Some of the questions were included to address myths and misconceptions raised by the media and community groups. Detailed answers are provided using references from the curriculum and/or data from the experts as appropriate. The Question and Answer resource can be used as a reference when meeting with parents, responding to an email or as an information item in a school newsletter.

The Q and A is divided into three sections: About the HPE Curriculum Revision, About Topics in the HPE Curriculum and Staff Questions About Implementation and Resources. Specific examples from the three sections are listed here:

The HPE Curriculum Revision: Why was it necessary to revise the HPE Curriculum?

The government reviews all curricula on a cyclical basis to ensure that it remains current, relevant and age-appropriate for all students.

It has been 17 years since the health and physical education curriculum was last fully updated and the world has changed significantly in that time for young people. The research tells us:

- 45% of students access the Internet using a smart phone. (mediasmarts.ca)
- 25% of grade 4 students, 50% of grade 7 students and 85% of grade 11 students own their own phone. (mediasmarts.ca)
- 51% of students want to learn how to tell if online information is true. (mediasmarts.ca)
- About 14% of grade 11 students with cell phones say they have sent a sext. (mediasmarts.ca)
- About 31% of students report being threatened online. (mediasmarts.ca)
- Most school classrooms in Canada likely have at least one or more students who are not heterosexual. (Sexual Health Education in the Schools, Questions and Answers, Updated Ontario 2015 Edition, SIECCAN)
- 27% of Ontario students were born outside of Canada. (OECD, Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education, 2011)
- Estimates suggest that 15 to 20% of children and youth struggle with a mental health problem. (Supporting Minds, Ministry of Education, Draft Version 2013)

What students learn at school needs to reflect and keep pace with the challenges and opportunities they face in the world.

Topics in the HPE Curriculum: Why are students being taught about anal and oral sex?

These concepts are included as examples within the context of learning about delaying or abstaining from sexual activity and preventing transmission of STIs. Students in grade 7 learn to identify ways of preventing unintended pregnancy and STIs, including HIV, by means such as delaying intercourse and other sexual activities until a



3:01 PM



YOUTH STATS



51% of students want to learn how to tell if online information is true.

OWN THEIR OWN PHONES

25% of grade 4 students



50% of grade 7 students



85% of grade 11 students



About **31%** of students report being threatened online

About **14%** of grade 11 students with cell phones say they have sent a sext.

Source: HPE Curriculum Administrators Toolkit, Q & A to Support HPE Implementation

person is older, abstaining from sex, and using condoms consistently if and when a person becomes sexually active.

The terms “oral-genital contact” and “anal intercourse” appear as an optional example to highlight to teachers that there are risks to different forms of sexual activity. This information also helps teachers anticipate questions that might arise in class. Discussion of these concepts in class may occur within the context of discussing the risks of sexual activity and delaying or abstaining from sexual activity. (See pages 195-196, section C1.3, Gr. 1-8 HPE Curriculum.)

Experts advise that students need access to information before they may need to use the information to make a decision, whereas having the information after the fact is less effective (or ineffective). Current research indicates that the focus should be on providing factual and straightforward information and de-stigmatizing concepts associated with sexuality.

Staff Questions About Implementation and Resources:

I'm planning to meet with some concerned parents. What are some parent resources about the HPE Curriculum that I can share with them?

The Ministry has developed several resources specifically for parents that describe what students will learn in Health and Physical Education. They also provide excerpts from research, background information and ideas for supporting the learning at home. It is recommended that principals, vice-principals and teachers review these materials as they will help to build a general understanding of the updated curriculum and help respond to parent questions.

These parent resources have been translated into the following languages: Arabic, Chinese (Traditional), Chinese (Simplified), Farsi, Korean, Polish, Punjabi, Somali and Urdu. A link to the English resources and brief descriptions are provided below:

- A Parent's Guide to the Revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum, Grades 1-12 This guide is four pages in length. An example of a curriculum expectation is included to illustrate how the curriculum is structured and

A brief overview of each resource is provided, along with suggestions for use with parents and educators.



This guide is six pages in length. It includes an overview of what students will be learning about human development and sexual health as they move from grade 7 to 12. Specific examples from the grade 7 and 8 curriculum documents are included.

Ideas for supporting children's learning at home and where to find more information are found on the last two pages.

- **Grade-by-Grade Guides: Grade 1 to 8**
Two-page overviews of what students learn at each grade level in Health and Physical Education.
Ideas for supporting children's learning at home and where to find more information are found on page one.
- **Grade-by-Grade Guide for Grades 9-12:**
Four-page overview of the HPE Curriculum, including a detailed overview of what students learn in grade 9 Healthy Active Living Education.
- **Quick Facts for Parents:**
 - *Learning about Online Safety, including Risks of Sexting*
 - *Learning about Healthy Relationships and Consent*
 - *Learning about Mental Health*
 - *Learning about Concussions*
 - *Learning about Staying Safe*
 - *Learning about Active Transportation*

These Quick Facts documents are two pages in length and outline what younger and older students will learn, define the concepts and offer strategies that parents can use to engage in conversations with their children.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION FOR PARENTS

The **PowerPoint presentation** for parents highlights key curriculum changes, supporting research, the Human Development and Sexual Health education component and resources available for parents. It is best viewed in Slide-show mode so viewers can see all animations and content. Embedded in the slideshow is a brief video, created by the Ministry of Education, outlining the realities of today's youth. Detailed speaker's notes are provided to assist with session facilitation.

This presentation is editable and can be adapted to serve the needs of your school community.

how optional prompt and examples differ from a mandatory learning expectation.

- **A Parent's Guide: Human Development and Sexual Health in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum, Grades 1-6**
This guide is seven pages in length. An overview of what students will be learning about Human Development and Sexual Health is given for

primary and junior grades with specific examples used from grades 3 and 5.

Ideas for supporting children's learning at home and where to find more information are found on the last two pages.

- **A Parent's Guide: Human Development and Sexual Health in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum, Grades 7-12**

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It can help build parent understanding and promote conversations at school council meetings, information nights, curriculum nights and one-on-one meetings with parents/guardians.

Some administrative teams may choose to share the video as an introduction before beginning the PowerPoint presentation. Slide 20 of the presentation makes reference to a variety of parent resources. These parent resources are extremely useful and have been translated into nine languages. They are available on the Ministry website and also available free in print from Service Ontario. Administrators are encouraged to share the parent resources as a means to promote understanding surrounding the revised curriculum.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION FOR EDUCATORS

The Toolkit **PowerPoint presentation** for educators provides some foundational information for educators about the curriculum. It highlights much of the same information as the parent presentation such as key curriculum changes, supporting research, and the Human Development and Sexual Health component. In addition, there are also slides to help educators address parent questions and concerns and information about religious accommodations. Links to specific educator resources and questions will help to support small group discussions. This presentation includes detailed facilitator notes and can also be adapted for individual school needs.

Administrators can choose to use the entire presentation for staff meetings or to highlight key slides that promote and support student well-being across all curriculum areas such as healthy relationships and consent, online safety/risks of sexting and respect for diversity. Links to various resources through eduGAINS, Ophea, and The Sex Information and Education Council of Canada (SIECCAN) will be useful for teachers and support staff from a variety of communities. It is also important for all educators to familiarize themselves with the parent resources.

The HPE Toolkit was developed by the OPC and CPCO in an effort to support our Members during the implementation of the newly revised

Curriculum. The primary objectives are to help administrators understand the curriculum, facilitate conversations with parents, staff and community members, and support school-wide development. We encourage you to download these resources from the OPC website and use and adapt them to meet the needs of your school community. Further professional development opportunities will be developed to continue to

support you through the implementation of this new curriculum that, when implemented effectively can make a significant difference in the lives of children and youth across Ontario. ▲

Mary Linton, Principal Association Projects, Project Lead, is an elementary principal with the TDSB and is currently seconded as the Chair of the Toronto Schools Administrators' Association (TSAA).

✉ mary.linton@tdsb.on.ca



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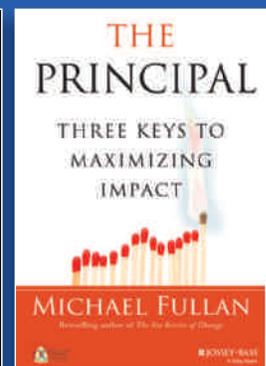
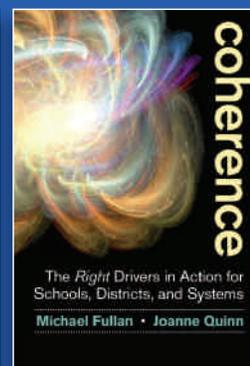
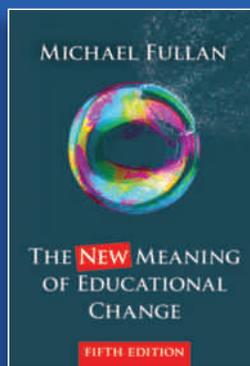
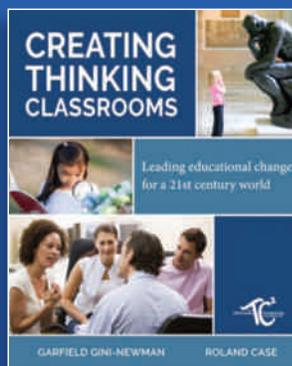
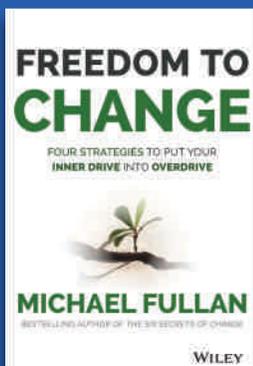




Aspiring School Leaders Program

The Aspiring School Leaders' Program (ASLP) is intended to support individuals and boards in the development of skills, attitudes, knowledge and practices understood to be core competencies for school administrators. This online and onsite program is driven by what we know about how aspiring school leaders view the barriers, incentives and disincentives related to the school leadership roles.

Resources that work for you!



Challenging Conversations

Dealing with difficult people and conflict resolution

Dealing with difficult people and trudging through challenging conversations is something most people will encounter at one point or another in their working career. As school leaders, the audiences you encounter vary on a regular basis, leading to additional challenges. Therefore, it's important to have valuable skills to resolve conflict and manage challenging conversations, should they arise. As a leader of your school community of students, staff and parents, this is an ideal skill to showcase solutions for success.

Be Direct

During a conflict or difficult conversation, remember to address the issue attentively and with immediacy. Take a moment to collect your thoughts and record notes related to the concern at hand. Ensure you can articulate the issue clearly with the individual or group.

Investigate

Confirm that you have gathered all related facts regarding the concern or complaint and have verified the information with all parties involved. Moving towards a resolution, remain clear and upfront in your objectives with any conversations.

Be Aware of the Location

If you find yourself intercepting a conflict situation, it may be necessary to remove the individual or persons of concern to another place until tensions can cool and conversations can take place. Doing so may help to resolve a troubling situation faster.



Check Emotions

No matter how difficult it may seem, make sure you check your emotions at the door. Some situations may seem personal, but it is important to remain objective and leave your perspectives out of the conversation. Always deal with the problem, not the person.

Listen Actively

It is vital that you practice active listening. Make sure you have properly rephrased the challenge during your conversation to verify your understanding. If you are unsure, then ask for further clarification if needed. Remain open to being corrected or redirected.

Be Action-Oriented

Always try to focus on solution-oriented conversations when it comes to addressing concerns, not problem-oriented ones. If you have time, make a list of clear action items that can be discussed during the conversation.

Choose Appropriate Language

Useful responses in difficult situa-

tions include

- “We may agree to disagree. Let’s move on.”
- “You’re entitled to your opinion.”
- “Thank you for coming in and working with us to resolve...”
- “Yes, I can see how you see things.”

Be Consistent

No matter the situation, it is important as a school leader to lead with consistency when it comes to challenging situations or conversations. Address each opportunity with a uniform approach that will also put others at ease.

Take time to review your specific board policies and procedures regarding protocol when it comes to conflict resolution, harassment or safe schools. The Code of Conduct applies to all participants involved in the school system (students, parents or guardians, volunteers, teachers and other staff members) on school property, on school buses or at school-authorized events or activities. ▲



Sources: Handbook for School Leaders, www.openforum.com, *The Principal as Leader of Challenging Conversations*

✉ lromanese@principals.ca

Mark Your Calendar

New Administrator Seminar: Beginning Your Leadership Journey Together

March 3-4, 2016

Toronto Airport Marriott Hotel

Deadline: **February 25, 2016**

Email: elc@principals.ca

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Visit the list of all upcoming webinars in this specialized series by visiting www.principals.ca → Professional Development → Events.

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April 16-17

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May 14-15

May 28-29

June 11-12

Register by: **March 11, 2016**

Email: pqp@principals.ca

SOQP

The OPC has partnered with OPSOA, and is accepting applications for the SOQP summer session. We are offering **modules A, B, C and D** in Toronto.

July 10-15

Register by: **June 3, 2016**

www.principals.ca → Professional Development → Additional Qualification Programs → SOQP.

For more information on the events and courses listed above visit the OPC website or email elc@principals.ca

Just Kidding!



ILLUSTRATION: WWW.JUSTKIDDINGCARTOONS.COM/EDUCATIONCARTOONS.HTML

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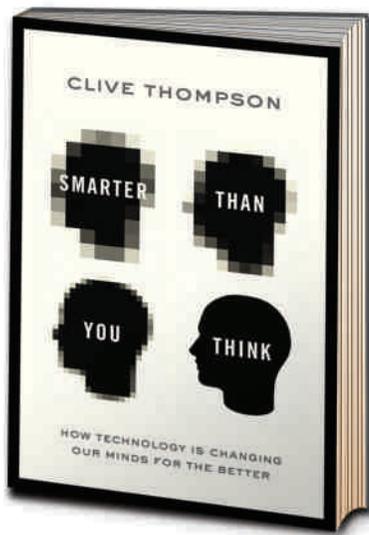
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Smarter Than You Think: How technology is changing our minds for the better

By Clive Thompson
 Publisher: The Penguin Press
 ISBN: 978-1-59420-445-6
 Reviewed by Terry McElrea

Clive Thompson's *Smarter Than You Think: How technology is changing our minds for the better*, intimates that technology will bring us towards a deeply positive transformation, creating relevance for all learners. His ideas are

useful for school leaders for analysis not just of the new abilities our tools give us today, but where they're still deficient and how they ought to improve. Thompson looks at how technology changes our mental habits by observing our cognitive behaviour, the quality of our cultural production and the social science that tries to measure what we do in everyday life. Through that we are able to understand how best to utilize technology as memory, learning and productivity tools.

This is significant for personal professional development, because our collaboration with technology as a way of assimilating information is making its way through every part of our cognitive abilities and is affecting how we learn, how we remember and how we act upon that knowledge emotionally, intellectually and politically. At their best, today's digital tools help us see, retain and communicate more.

Thompson's attention to how digital tools can leave us smarter through our evolution towards a global culture of avid writers is useful for all educators. He speaks to practical examples for facilitating with learners of all ages. For example, we know that reading changes how we think in that it helps us formulate thoughts that are more abstract, categorical and logical. Thompson leads the reader to ask how all this new writing is changing our cognitive behaviour: what is the catalytic impact of public thinking by writing for a wider audience, and how does this affect our decisions in choosing relevant and serviceable learning processes for our students?

The book delivers on various important cognitive topics impacting how both children and adults learn, and therefore need to be of central consideration when determining technology use for students and professional learning

foci for educators. In his chapter on the Digital School, Thompson asserts that our "digital natives" do not understand technology effortlessly, and that there is great opportunity and need for critical thinking through digital literacy. Studies have shown that students repeatedly utilize incorrect information by not actively evaluating the actual relevance of the results. While they might believe that they have mastered their tools, it is evident that they often don't truly understand how they work. The message throughout the book that Thompson is trying to make can be summed up when he states, "It is up to us to make sure students are taught to use these new tools, instead of being used by them." In an educational context, the reader is led to consider how we can best serve to develop ourselves as a learning, curious and connected society. ▲

Terry McElrea is currently an elementary principal at Armitage Village PS, YRDSB. Professional areas of interest include the development of school culture, leadership capacity building, digital literacy, inquiry-based learning and assessment and evaluation.

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Remembering a Moment

One student's success story

“A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.” – Henry Adams

For me, summer is a time for reflection, not on scores, pass rates or things we did not accomplish, but on differences we've made with our students.

Recently reflecting back, I was reminded of one student, Tyler, and the powerful lesson he taught me about how even the smallest things we say can make the most impact.

It was a day in September and our school was participating in the Annual Terry Fox Run. It always makes me so happy to see students so eager to participate in this run which was started by a young man who was not so much older than them so many years ago.

A few days later, I looked over pictures from that day, printing some out to post on the school bulletin board that captured the spirit of the day. One was of a student named Tyler, running with a smile across his face, proud and happy to be there.

A week later, Tyler found himself in my office, as his behaviour in class had been less than appropriate. It was not the first time we had such discussions, although by senior year I was disappointed that this seemed to be a continuing pattern.

I sat bewildered and truly worried if he would make it through his classes and his senior year.

I got up, went to the bulletin board on which I had posted pictures from the Terry Fox Run, took the one of Tyler and brought it to him. Placing it in front of him, I told him the boy in the picture was the Tyler that could make anything happen. This boy has goals, plans and the potential to do anything he puts his mind to. This boy makes good decisions, respects himself and those around him and contributes in a positive way to our school. I told him to look at the picture and be true to that person and I left him to think about things.

Throughout the year, Tyler visited my office now and then, but the visits waned. As we reviewed the potential graduation list in May, I was pleased to see his name, and that he was on track to finish high school.

Graduation day came and I got to do one of the things I love the most in this job – handing students their diplomas. Tyler ended up receiving his from our vice-principal but I was also proud to see

that he received an award for his hard work in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program.

After the ceremony Tyler approached me with his mom, and after a quick greeting he reached out and handed me a small, crumpled picture. He then gave me a hug and said thank you in one of the most sincere ways I have ever heard. I glanced at his mom inquisitively, as I didn't recognize the photo immediately. She mouthed “thank you” with tears in her eyes.

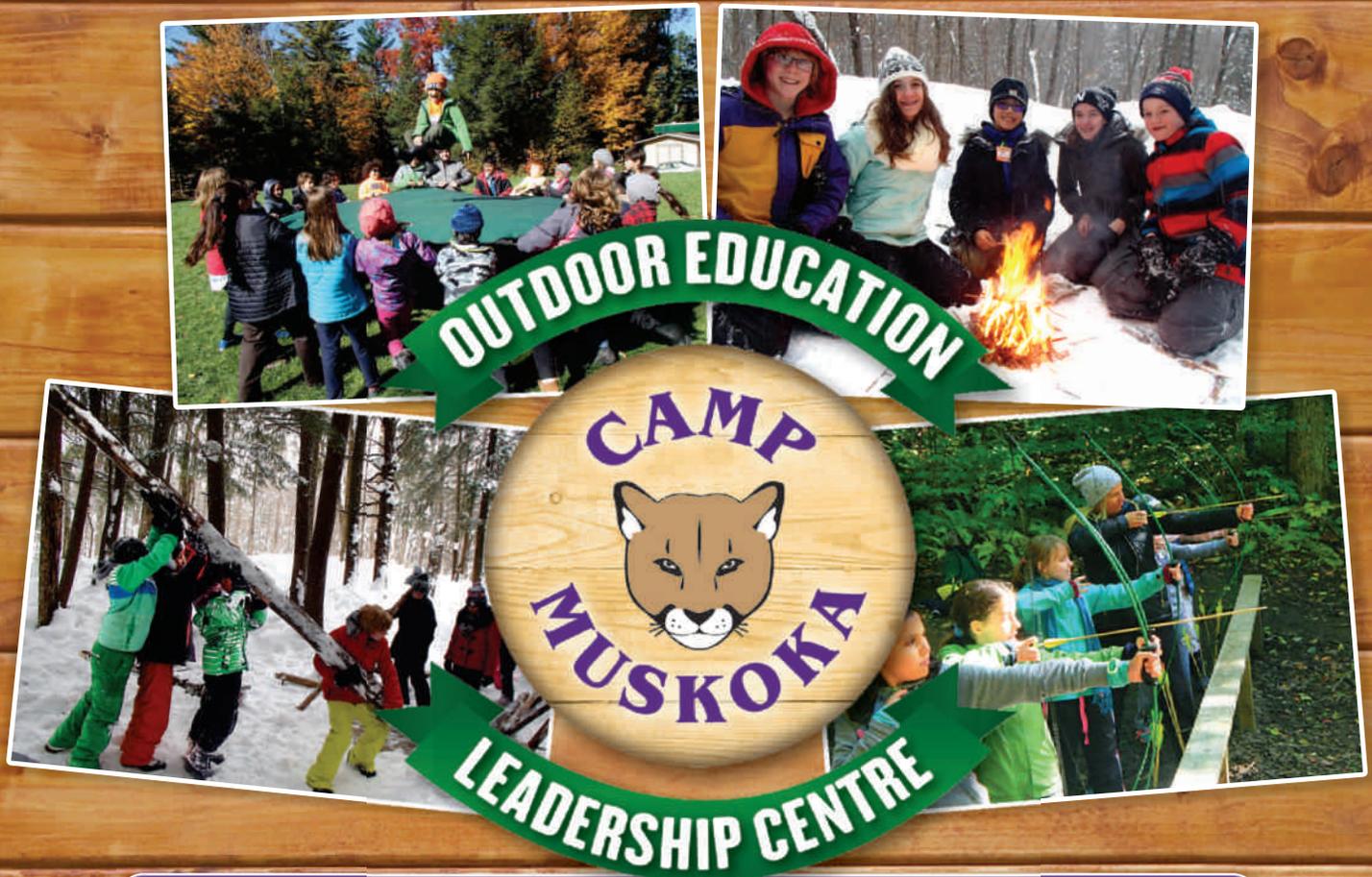
I tried to remember the picture and as that moment in September came back to me, tears filled my eyes. I looked at both Tyler and his mom and quietly said, “you're welcome.” I was incredibly taken aback that he had not only remembered that moment, but kept the picture all year and thought enough to share it with me at graduation.

It is our job to truly believe in every student; in sharing with him or her that belief and supporting them in finding it themselves. I am always thankful to Tyler and to all the students who teach me so much about my role every year. ▲

Laina S. Andrews is a principal in KPRDSB. In June 2015, the school referred to in this article closed, leaving behind a legacy of excellence in academics, athletics and community involvement and a future bright with graduates like Tyler.

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