

# Director's Monthly Report



Content \* Design \* Layout: Trina Henley, Executive Assistant to the Director of Education

Kenora Catholic District School Board (807) 468-9851

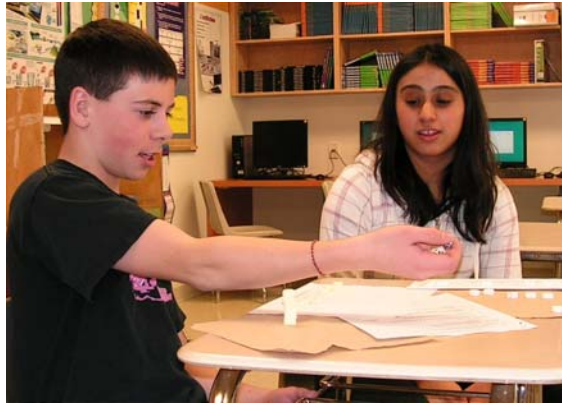
## Highlights:

- Saints Rated Top 3 in Ontario for Nordic Skiing.
- Collaborative Inquiry Learning Model
- A New Way to Track Student Data at SMB
- Board Administrative Planning Presentation

We are a Roman Catholic school system dedicated to excellence in education, the Christian formation of youth, and strong partnerships with parents and the church.



## STA's After School Program an Ongoing Success



Students Justin Tolh (grade 7) and Ana Alarcon (grade 8) are engaged in a "minds-on" activity in math, which is used as a warm up prior to the lesson.

Over six years ago St. Thomas Aquinas High School's After School Literacy and Numeracy Placement program began. Since then the program has been providing a valuable service to students in grades 7 – 9 who wish to increase their math and literacy skills.

*"The program is an enrichment program designed to prepare students for the EQAO Mathematics and Literacy tests, as well as improve their overall competency in these two subject areas. Students at all levels are encouraged to challenge themselves to improve in these essential life-long learning skills"* states Tracy Bernie, Student Success Teacher.

Murray Delorme, Assistant to the Director of Education was involved with the initial implementation of the program in 2004 and has had the opportunity to watch the program evolve since its inception. *"I'm very proud of the program. It's enhanced the learning achievements of our students and has been very successful in obtaining the results it was intended to do. I have seen the changes that have happened over the years. The original program has been adjusted to fit with the changes in the literacy and numeracy program"*.

*"Our After School Literacy and Numeracy program has been very effective in building a strong foundation in all areas of study for our students. The success at St. Thomas Aquinas High School has improved over the past six years due to the diligent work of many teachers. Through the leadership of our teachers our students have been able to improve the transition from grade 7 and 8 to grade 9, which can often times be a difficult transition for many students. Our data has indicated that for semester 1, 2009-2010, in grade 9, our students were successful in accumulating 337 out of 340 credits. This is a 99% success rate"* says Paul White, Principal at St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

Tracey Bernie has seen steady gains in students this year. *"Our students are using comprehension strategies to understand word problems in numeracy and are incorporating literacy skills across the curriculum. They are becoming more familiar with the strategies used in comprehending whatever they read. This allows the students to be more engaged when reading various texts."*

*"It is very rewarding as a teacher to see the improvements in our students. They are fantastic and because they are in various grades and at different learning levels they support and help one another. I enjoy the collaborative working environment within the program and at our high school"* says Kelly Brennan, Teacher at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. Kelly is also involved in the After School Program.

## Saints Rated Top 3 in Ontario Nordic Skiing in OFSAA Championship Competition

The St. Thomas Aquinas High School Nordic Ski team competed in the OFSAA Nordic Ski Competition in Midland, Ontario on February 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. The Saint's relay team is among the top three in Ontario, coming away with a bronze medal from the competition.

Each member of the team – Sami Burkart, Kaitie Dennis, Maya Boivin and Lina O'Connor – skied an 800 meter section in the relay race. Kaitlyn Dennis said *"before the competition we discussed as a team how we were going to leave it all on the race track and leave with no regrets – no matter what happened."*

Kathy Valentini, Teacher in Charge said that *"Sami Burkart was the best finisher from the Saint's team. Sami placed 10<sup>th</sup> out of 142 skiers"*.

Ursula Wehner, the team's coach said *"the team did fantastic. I knew they would do great but they exceeded my expectations."*



STA's grade 7 – 12 Nordic Ski Team in Atikokan in for the NorWOSSA Nordic Skiing Championships on January 13, 2010 with Coach Ursula Wehner in red.

## REGULAR BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The stories below are from presentations made at the February 16, 2010 Regular Board Meeting. For more detailed information on the items discussed at the meeting or on any of the stories you read below please visit our website at [www.kcdsb.on.ca](http://www.kcdsb.on.ca) and review the minutes of this meeting. The next Regular Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 23rd at 8:00 p.m. at the Catholic Education Center. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend the Regular Board Meetings.



### BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PLANNING PRESENTATION

At the Board Meeting, Phyllis Eikre, Director of Education provided the trustees with a high level overview of the organization's Leadership Plan. Eikre explained that the Leadership Plan essentially relates to anything that pertains to the overall management of the board such as, procedures, strategy setting, priority setting and the development of organizational culture.

Murray Delorme, Assistant to the Director provided a detailed overview of the goals and timelines of the System Plan, which contains very specific details about curriculum, student achievement and student initiatives for the board.

### A New Way to Teach – Collaborative Inquiry Learning Model

Teacher Madam Hilary Aiken provided the trustees with a very enthusiastic presentation on a new way to teach using a Collaborative Inquiry Learning Model. Aiken explained that this process was recently trialed with her grade 3 class at École Ste-Marguerite Bourgeoys. Aiken explained that she volunteered to be the guinea pig and be the teacher who was observed by her peers. The small group consisted of Teachers Leanne Chisholm, Roxanne Veil as well as Literacy Coach Dallis Novelli and Curriculum Coordinator Mary Cunningham. Aiken explained...*"it was a very new and innovative concept to have my peers observe me teaching my class and then critique me after. "I found the process very rewarding and exciting"* she says. Essentially the group came together, crafted a lesson plan, observed the lesson being delivered in the classroom, critiqued the lesson and debriefed.

Mary Cunningham, Curriculum Coordinator explained in a later interview...*"the new model was implemented out of a need for teachers to see more immediate results for their students and to help make the theory come alive. Our group reviewed the EQAO test results and really paid particular attention to specific questions that the students seemed to have trouble with. The group then developed strategies based on targeting those specific areas to get students thinking about those types of questions. We found the collaboration very powerful. Teachers, Coach and Coordinator all working as equals were able to tap into our strengths to bring all of our best knowledge to new heights for the students. It was very empowering for all of us."*

The Collaborative Inquiry Learning Model is now available on a voluntary basis to all teachers throughout the system.

### A New Way to Track Student Data at SMB

Jacqueline Duhaime, Learning Resource Teacher provided the trustees with an overview of the student tracking system she recently implemented at École Ste-Marguerite Bourgeoys. Duhaime explained that the initiative really grew out of a need for teachers to have a one-stop-shop for all student data. Duhaime made an excel spreadsheet that has every single student in the school and all of their student demographics such as OSSR assessments, report cards, court documents, EQAO assessments, formal assessment documents as well as other important information.

Principal Carlos Silva said *"Jackie Duhaime did an amazing job with the spreadsheet and spent many, many late hours inputting the data. The school community is very proud of her work."*