

MONTHLY UPDATE

From the AVRCE Regional Executive Director of Education



Annapolis Valley
Regional Centre for Education



LEARNING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Students and staff are finding creative ways to take classroom activities outdoors. Holding lessons outside when possible is a COVID-19 prevention measure, plus fresh air and movement can help support learning and focus.

In honour of Treaty Day, Champlain Elementary School organized an outdoor activity to bring the whole school together, while still keeping physical distance. Stations were set up around the school's walking path, with grade 4 and 5 students at each station leading activities and presentations on residential schools, treaties, Mi'kmaq history and language. Classes visited every station, moving to the beat of a traditional drum.

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- Nova Scotia Homework Hub now offering math homework help for grades 7-12
- Provincial Student Attendance Policy changes for 2020-21

COMING UP

- October: Mi'kmaq History Month and Women's History Month
- October 12: Thanksgiving Day
- October 23: Provincial conference day (no school for students)
- November 6: Marking day/Inservice day (no school for students)
- November 11: Remembrance Day

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER



October is Mi'kmaq History Month in Nova Scotia, beginning with Treaty Day on October 1st. On behalf of everyone in the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education, we are proud and privileged to live and work in Mi'kma'ki as Treaty People.

In that spirit, many schools started the month with celebrations honouring Mi'kmaw culture, language and history. However, this learning happens year round as part of Treaty Education, not only in October. The back page of this Monthly Update has more information on Treaty Education and what it means. October is also Women's History Month in Canada, including the International Day of the Girl on October 11.

Recently, the province published testing results from water samples taken in schools, following an update last year to Health Canada's national guidelines for drinking water. Samples from every fixture in our schools have been tested for the presence of lead and copper. Students and staff will always have access to clean drinking water while at school. Bottled water is available wherever it is needed, and remediation work is underway on the fixtures that did not meet guidelines. AVRCE test results are available on our website.

We are also working on a review of changes at AVRCE-operated cafeterias. Across our region, cafeterias are available in most schools; some are operated by AVRCE, while others are operated by school community groups or food service companies. Some aspects of cafeteria operations have been modified this year as part of the COVID-19 health protection measures outlined in the Nova Scotia Back to School Plan. For example, salad bars are not available right now, and food is packaged and delivered to grade P-8 students in their classrooms. We also developed a standard menu for AVRCE-operated cafeterias, based on guidance from a provincial advisory team made up of representatives from regional centres for education, Public Health, the Department of Health and Wellness, and Nourish Nova Scotia. A consistent menu with one main item per day was recommended to allow cafeteria workers to focus on food preparation and delivery, reducing time needed for planning and shopping. This has helped us to simplify cafeteria operations, provide greater consistency from school to school, and ensure that menu items meet the Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Schools. Now that the school year is well underway, we are reviewing these changes and looking for opportunities for improvement and flexibility.

This is also the time of year when many schools would have open houses and events to meet teachers and staff. Many of these events are now happening online, and I encourage all families to take part in these virtual meetings if possible. Above all, we want to make sure you stay connected with your child's school, even though meeting in person is not always possible. Please contact your child's school anytime if you have a question or would like to discuss your child's school experience. Let's keep working together while we stay physically distant to protect the health and well-being of our communities.

Sincerely,

Dave Jones
Regional Executive Director of Education

@DaveJones_AVRCE · #WorkingTogetherforStudents · #AVRCEProud



We are hiring!

We have many positions available for the 2020-21 school year, including:

- School Bus Drivers
- Substitute Teachers
- Janitors
- Early Childhood Educators
- Educational Assistants
- Cafeteria Workers

Join our team for a rewarding opportunity to support the learning and well-being of students!

Call 902-538-4739 to apply, or visit www.avrce.ca/jobs.

ORANGE SHIRT DAY: **EVERY CHILD MATTERS**

Students and staff across the region wore orange in support of residential school survivors, and learned about the impact of residential schools on Indigenous people



Native Student Advisor Shanika MacEachern smudges the Mi'kmaq Grand Council Flag at Aldershot Elementary School.



Orange Shirt Day activities took place at many schools, including Glooscap Elementary, Kings County Academy, Cambridge and District Elementary, and Evangeline Middle School.

Orange Shirt Day was observed on September 30 across our region and throughout Canada. Initiated by residential school survivor Phyllis Webstad, Orange Shirt Day honours residential school survivors and their families, and to remember the many children who never came home.

It is also a day to reflect on the history and intergenerational impacts of Canada's residential school system, including the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School in Nova Scotia which operated from 1930 to 1967.

Throughout the school year, recognizing the lasting personal and cultural harms caused by residential schools is part of Treaty Education and our responsibilities toward truth and reconciliation.

THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING OUTDOORS

This year, teachers and school staff are finding creative ways to adapt classroom activities to follow COVID-19 prevention measures. When possible, many lessons are happening outside, taking advantage of resources on the school grounds and in the community. Some schools have outdoor classrooms and gardens that are being used in new ways, while "pop-up" outdoor classrooms are coming together at many other schools, thanks to collaboration with school community members.

Trails and natural spaces in our communities are also great settings for learning and physical activity!

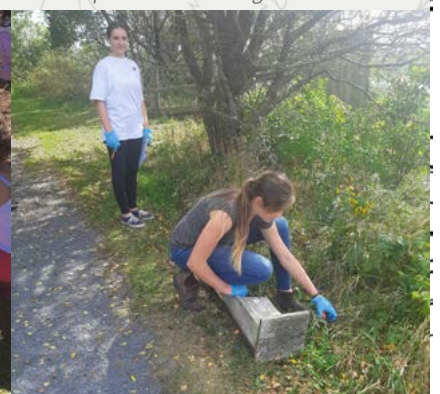
Outdoor learning can have many benefits:

- Learning in a new setting can challenge the brain to turn off "auto-pilot" and engage fully in a lesson.
- Movement and physical activity can boost memory.
- There is evidence to show that kids who are more active have larger regions of the brain that are linked to memory.
- Physical activity and exposure to natural environments can help decrease feelings of anxiety and stress, and increase feelings of well-being.
- Being outside in a new setting can increase motivation and creativity, making learning more enjoyable.
- When students are engaged and enjoying learning, behaviour concerns tend to decrease.
- Fresh air and physical movement are part of a healthy lifestyle.

Information from the 2018 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, <https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/resources/report-card>



Photos (clockwise from top left): CKRHS students in Ms. Albrecht's Biology 11 class made chalk diagrams of cellular respiration on the school's sidewalks. Grade 3-4 students at CRMS found quiet spots to write about their senses during a class walk to a waterfall. AWEC O2 students completed a service learning project with CARP (Clean Annapolis River Project), helping to maintain tree swallow nest boxes on the French Basin Trail. Primary students in Ms. Pike's class at Lawrencetown Consolidated School explored the school garden for seeds.



WHAT IS TREATY EDUCATION?

While October is a special time to acknowledge Mi'kmaq history, Treaty Education is happening throughout the year as part of the long-term, generational journey toward reconciliation. While Treaties are a familiar subject for many families, it may be something that you have not learned about before. The information below is based on materials created by Treaty Education Nova Scotia. For more information, visit novascotia.ca/treaty-education.

What are Treaties?

The Mi'kmaq have lived in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, and parts of Quebec) for thousands of years. European settlers arriving in Mi'kma'ki from the 1600s onward had very different views and cultures from Mi'kmaw values, traditions and ways of life, which resulted in conflicts.

Peace and Friendship Treaties signed in the 1700s ended a lengthy period of conflict between the Mi'kmaq and British Crown. These treaties were an agreement between nations to create peace and support trade. They were also building blocks for present-day Nova Scotia and Canada.

Treaty Denial

However, that relationship changed throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, with many laws and policies limiting Mi'kmaq peoples' access to land and resources as promised in the Treaties. Other policies and practices around education, employment, and culture further disenfranchised and discriminated against the Mi'kmaq and Indigenous people across Canada.

Present Day: Treaties as Living Documents

Today, Treaty Education is about creating an awareness of the past, acknowledging harms, and recognizing our responsibilities to work together in the spirit of peace and friendship. In schools, we include Mi'kmaq culture, history, and language in all aspects of the curriculum, and explore the impact and meaning of Treaties in the present day. This is part of our responsibilities as Treaty People under these ongoing, living agreements.



Need help with Grade 7-12 Mathematics Free Online Resources & Tutoring

- ✓ Online mathematics resources available with anytime access to video tutorials, practice questions and vocabulary review.
- ✓ Free one to one online tutoring sessions at gnsps.ca or toll free call 1-888-444-6607 to speak to a live tutor.
- ✓ Tutors available from 5:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday. French speaking tutors available.
- ✓ Easy access to online resources and tutoring through your [gnsps](https://gnsps.ca) account (gnsps.ca) by clicking on the Nova Scotia Homework Hub icon.

Nova Scotia
HomeworkHUB



APPUI aux devoirs
Nouvelle-Écosse

Provincial Student Attendance Policy Changes for 2020-21

It is important for students to follow public health advice and stay home if they are feeling unwell, or experiencing any symptoms identified by Public Health as potentially related to COVID-19.

To support this, the provincial Student Attendance and Engagement Policy has been amended for this school year:

- A temporary suspension of the Loss of Credit for Grades 10-12 portion of the policy is in effect until at least June 2021. This applies to all students regardless of the absence reason.

If your child is absent due to medical reasons or while following public health directions, schools will work with your family to help support your child's learning and well-being during the absence. Thank you for working together to reduce the spread of COVID-19!

GET IN TOUCH WITH AVRCE

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QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

If you have a question or concern about something at your child's school, we want to work with you to resolve it. Start by speaking with your child's teacher. Then, follow up with the principal if needed. If more action is required, contact AVRCE at 902.538.4617. www.avrce.ca/parentguardian-concerns.