

# MONTHLY UPDATE

From the AVRCE Regional Executive Director of Education



**Annapolis Valley**  
Regional Centre for Education



## READY TO RIDE!

This year, Pre-Primary busing is available to five of our Pre-Primary sites. This promises to increase access to Pre-Primary for many families, and is part of a multi-year rollout of busing for the Pre-Primary Program.

To help children get ready to ride the bus, our Transportation staff hosted special school bus orientation sessions in August at Clark Rutherford Memorial School, Champlain Elementary School, Glooscap Elementary School, Lawrencetown Consolidated School and L.E. Shaw Elementary School.

Here, Pre-Primaries at Glooscap Elementary practiced boarding the bus and learned important safety rules from the bus driver.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

- A September to Remember: Message from the Regional Executive Director
- More positions supporting inclusive education, classroom conditions, Pre-Primary & SchoolsPlus
- Pink Shirt Day: Standing up for inclusive, welcoming schools
- Summer work in AVRCE
- SACs: Community voices for student success
- New Teacher Support Program
- Wear Orange September 30 to honour residential school survivors
- Before and After Program at four AVRCE schools
- Back to school life hacks for a great school year

## COMING UP

- September 26: Common early dismissal
- September 30: Orange Shirt Day
- October: Mi'kmaq History Month
- October 1: Treaty Day
- October 14: Thanksgiving Day
- October 18: Common early dismissal
- October 25: Provincial conference day (no school for students)

# A SEPTEMBER TO REMEMBER



We will certainly remember the start of this school year, with Hurricane Dorian sweeping across Nova Scotia only two days after we welcomed students back to class. Thankfully, our Operations staff responded quickly to make sure schools were

safe and ready for everyone's return, and crews worked diligently to restore power to schools as quickly as possible. Many schools also reached out to their communities, offering access to food and necessities during the school day for students who were without power at home.

As we settle in to school year routines, I wanted to share some of the initiatives underway to increase student achievement and success, and to close the wellness and achievement gap for students.

We are in the final stages of completing our System Improvement Plan, which will guide our region-wide efforts to support the well-being of all students, increase student achievement in mathematics and literacy, and provide a student-centred equity lens in everything we do. In the process of creating this plan, we are examining our approaches to instruction, school culture and leadership. At the school level, the goals, priorities and actions in this plan will provide a framework for school Student Success Plans.

The province has announced a number of enhancements recently, including busing for pre-primary children at several sites, a Before and After Program at select schools, and a new policy to support volunteer involvement in extracurricular activity (you can find this policy, and all of our policies, on our website at <https://avrce.ca/policies>).

As the year unfolds, I look forward to sharing more about our System Improvement Plan as well as news and developments in our region in upcoming editions of the Monthly Update. If you use Twitter, follow me @DaveJones\_AVRCE and @AVRCE\_NS for news and a daily look at what is happening across our region in schools and classrooms.

Looking forward to a great 2019-2020,

Dave Jones  
Regional Executive Director of Education  
@DaveJones\_AVRCE

## MORE POSITIONS SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, CLASSROOM CONDITIONS, PRE-PRIMARY & SCHOOLSPLUS

This year, the overall provincial budget for education increased by \$44 million. This translates to 165 new positions in the system across Nova Scotia.

So what does that look like in AVRCE this year?

More Pre-Primary sites and SchoolsPlus support	More staff working directly with students
<p>Eight new Pre-Primary sites have opened this September, adding to 13 Pre-Primary sites already in our region.</p>  <p>An additional SchoolsPlus facilitator is increasing supports available to families.</p>	<p>This year, more staff are working directly with students to support inclusion.</p>  <p>This includes educational assistants, speech language pathologists, guidance and resource, on top of 21+ inclusive education positions added last year.</p>

The positions added this year are:

- Educational Assistants: 2 FTEs
- Child & Youth Care Practitioners: 3 FTEs
- Program Planning Specialist (Autism, Resource, Behaviour): 1 FTE
- Resource Teacher: 1 FTE
- School Psychologist: 1 FTE
- Student Health Partnership Nurse: 0.5 FTE
- Middle Level Experiential Program: 1 FTE
- Native Student Advisors: 2 FTEs
- Pre-Primary Inclusion Coach: 1 FTE
- Guidance Counsellor: 1 FTE
- SchoolsPlus Student Outreach Worker: 1 FTE
- SchoolsPlus Facilitator: 1 FTE

*\*FTE = Full-time equivalent position*

These positions increase our existing complement of inclusive education supports, benefitting students and schools by improving service delivery, allowing staff to respond more quickly to student needs, and supporting pathways for students to achieve success.

### GET IN TOUCH WITH AVRCE

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**Pink Shirt Day  
2019**

Clockwise from top left: Champlain Elementary with RCMP School Safety Resource Officer Cst. Ponee; Kingston and District School chooses "kind"; Mrs. MacCallum's class at Aldershot Elementary made "Wrinkled Heart" art; Glooscap Elementary Vice Principal Ms. Keddy and students; Student messages outside Ms. Kent's classroom at Brooklyn District Elementary; A sea of pink at Hantsport School.

## STANDING UP FOR INCLUSIVE, WELCOMING SCHOOLS

The first Thursday in September is *Stand Up Against Bullying Day* (aka "Pink Shirt Day") in Nova Scotia.

On September 12, students and staff across our region wore pink to show that, in a world where you can be anything, we choose to be kind.

Since 2007, the first Thursday of September has been known as *Stand Up Against Bullying Day* in Nova Scotia.

Now, it is often called *Pink Shirt Day*. No matter which name you choose, this day has become an annual celebration of kindness, with pink shirts symbolizing our shared commitment to welcoming, inclusive and safe schools and communities for everyone, every day.



## SUMMER **WORK**

Even though school is out over the summer, there is a work happening all over our region to prepare for the new school year. Over the summer months:

- Our Information Technology team upgraded technology infrastructure and wireless in schools;
- Property Services staff worked tirelessly to carry out maintenance, upgrades and extensive cleaning in every school building;
- Our Transportation staff planned and implemented new bus stops and adjustments to bus routes, and responded to hundreds of parent/guardian requests;
- Our Regional Office was active all summer, responding to your questions, hiring for vital positions, and planning for the upcoming year.

## SACs: COMMUNITY VOICES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

School Advisory Councils (SACs) play an important role in supporting student success at the community level. SACs are volunteer advisory bodies to individual schools on a range of issues in the local school community and the overall school system.

The number of SACs in our region is growing, with 23 active SACs. Our Supervisor of School Support Services is meeting with each SAC throughout the fall, and is planning a regional SAC meeting.

To get involved with your school's SAC, or to talk about forming an SAC at your school, contact your school principal.

## NEW TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Each year, dozens of new (or new-to-AVRCE teachers) take part in our New Teacher Support Program. This program helps build a foundation for teachers as part of the AVRCE team. It emphasizes strong instructional practices, relationship building and the important role teachers play in the lives of their students. This year's cohort began meeting in August with a discussion led by Coordinator of Programs and Student Success Planning, Maria Carty.



**Did you know?**  
Lots of teachers go to  
"school" in the summer!

Many staff members take part in teaching and learning over the summer. More than 250 teachers participated in 23 Summer Institutes; many of these professional development sessions are led by AVRCE staff. Many teachers also dropped in to 15 classroom open houses to learn first-hand from their peers.

# Back to School LIFE HACKS FOR A GREAT SCHOOL YEAR!

## Encourage Healthy Habits

- Be active
- Eat well
- Get plenty of sleep
- Wash hands regularly



## Establish Routines

- Wake up & go to sleep at regular times
- Set expectations for getting ready for school
- Plan time for homework, daily reading
- Build in time for activities and fun



## Communicate

- Ask your child about their day
- Call, email or visit your school if you have questions or thoughts to share



## Build Resilience

- Give your child age-appropriate responsibilities
- Let them tackle challenges, take risks
- Allow them to try new things
- Help them know it is ok to fail or get frustrated



## SEPTEMBER 30, 2019: WEAR ORANGE TO HONOUR RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS

Orange Shirt Day is an opportunity for communities to come together in a spirit of reconciliation and hope, because *every child matters*.

Orange Shirt Day is an annual recognition of the impact of Canada's residential school system on Indigenous people, including the impact of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, which operated in Nova Scotia from 1930 to 1967.

The Orange Shirt Day movement was founded by Phyllis Webstadt, a residential school survivor. To learn more about the meaning behind Orange Shirt Day, visit [www.angeshirtday.org](http://www.angeshirtday.org).

We encourage everyone to wear orange shirts, pins or accessories on September 30. Share your photos of Orange Shirt Day activities with us on Twitter @AVRCE\_NS.



## Before and After Program Available at Four Schools

The Nova Scotia government has launched a new Before and After Program across the province, including four AVRCE schools. This fee-based program is open to Pre-Primary children and public school students from ages 4 to 12, and provides supervision and activities before and after school hours, with a focus on physical literacy, movement and outdoor play. Contact a program provider or Visit [novascotia.ca/BAP](http://novascotia.ca/BAP) for more information.



For more information or to register, contact service providers:

- Bridgetown Regional Community School - YMCA of Southwest Nova Scotia, 902-638-9622
- Clark Rutherford Memorial School - YMCA of Southwest Nova Scotia, 902-638-9622
- Dwight Ross School - Dwight Ross Kids Care, 902-321-1495
- Glooscap Elementary School - Apple Tree Landing, 902-582-3086

## 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. Please 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. For more information, visit [www.avrce.ca/parentguardian-concerns](http://www.avrce.ca/parentguardian-concerns).

