

MONTHLY UPDATE

From the AVRCE Regional Executive Director of Education



Annapolis Valley
Regional Centre for Education



MATH IS EVERYWHERE

Improving student achievement in mathematics is one of the goals of our System Improvement Plan. To help achieve this, schools are encouraging students to think mathematically, build confidence and have fun with math inside and outside the classroom.

Gaspereau Valley Elementary School has a stairway math puzzle...can you solve it? At St. Mary's Elementary School, the whole school takes part in Esti-Mystery challenges, reinforcing math language and concepts from the classroom. Regional Executive Director Dave Jones captured the photo above in Ms. Coric's grade 1/2 class at Clark Rutherford Memorial School, showing the whole class engaged and enjoying math using the interactive white board.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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- Students explore careers through summer co-op
- Period products free in schools
- Calling all volunteers! New provincial Extracurricular Activity Volunteer policy

COMING UP

- October: Mi'kmaq History Month and Women's History Month
- October 7-18: Nova Scotia Assessments - Grade 6 Reading, Writing Math
- October 14: Thanksgiving Day
- October 18: Common early dismissal
- October 25: Provincial conference day (no school for students)
- November 8: Marking day/Inservice day (no school for students)
- November 11: Remembrance Day

GROW AND BELONG



October is Mi'kmaq History Month in Nova Scotia, beginning with Treaty Day on October 1st. Many schools started the month with celebrations honouring Mi'kmaw culture. It is also Women's History Month in Canada, including the International Day of the Girl on October 11.

Over the past month we have been finalizing our regional System Improvement Plan, a roadmap that will guide our work in helping students to grow and belong.

This plan was developed collaboratively, and is aligned with the guiding principles of the recently announced provincial Inclusive Education Policy. It supports and enhances the work schools are doing to ensure student well-being and improve achievement in literacy and mathematics.

Schools will continue to develop and monitor their own Student Success Plans, focusing on equity, building on strengths and addressing challenges unique to their communities. The regional System Improvement Plan provides evidence-based foundational practices schools will use within their Student Success Plans.

The System Improvement Plan details our focus on continued professional learning and meaningful analysis of student data. This way, we can better know who our students are, how they are doing, and take concrete actions to improve the support we provide.

Some highlights of our System Improvement Plan are below; the complete document is available at www.avrce.ca or you can request a copy by contacting our Regional Office. I hope you will explore our System Improvement Plan, and I invite you to connect with your school to learn more about how we are working together to help students grow and belong.

Sincerely,

Dave Jones
Regional Executive Director of Education

@DaveJones_AVRCE · #WorkingTogetherforStudents · #AVRCEProud

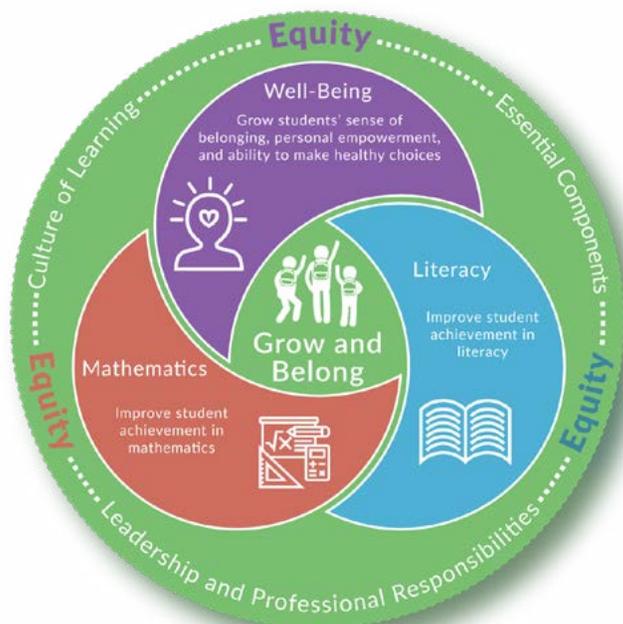
AVRCE Student Enrollment
1996-2019



Our fall enrollment numbers are in, and I am pleased to report we have seen an increase in our student population for the first time in at least 23 years!

Our total enrollment across AVRCE is 12,947 students as of September 30, up 86 from 2018-2019.

This is great news for our communities and schools, and it is hopefully a trend that will continue.



SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

Visit www.avrce.ca/system-improvement-plan for the complete plan

In AVRCE, every student will grow in their academic achievement, sense of identity, belonging and personal empowerment in a supportive, student-centred and responsive environment.

Foundational Practices

- Create an environment that values and fosters positive relationships
- Plan and use ongoing balanced assessment for learning

Well-Being

- Create a culturally-enriched environment where students recognize themselves in their learning
- Support schools through creation of school equity teams
- Support school-based leadership in developing and implementing well-being goals and strategies as part of the School Success Planning process
- Support schools with decision-making processes that promote a healthy lifestyle

Literacy and Mathematics

- Ensure collaboration between intervention, student services and classroom teachers
- Collaboratively review school data and make decisions about next steps

ORANGE SHIRT DAY: EVERY CHILD MATTERS

Students and staff across the region wore orange and learned about the impact of residential schools on Indigenous people



On and around September 30, students learned about Canada's residential school system and the intergenerational impacts it continues to have on Indigenous communities and families today.

Orange Shirt Day in schools is an opportunity to listen to the stories of those who experienced residential schools, and to reflect on our responsibilities toward reconciliation.



Focus on Mi'kmaq Language at L.E. Shaw Elementary

L.E. Shaw Elementary School staff work hard to create a "school family" environment where students see themselves and their culture reflected every day at school.

Focusing on Mi'kmaq language is one way the school does this. Glooscap First Nation is part of the school community; students from the community are receiving Mi'kmaq language lessons in school via Skype, thanks to a collaboration between the school and Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey Language Technician Beverly Jeddore.

The focus on language and culture is carried throughout the school in other ways, too. Posters and art highlight Mi'kmaq words and phrases. Traditional drums and ji'kmaq are among the instruments students can play in the music room, and everyone learns the Mi'kmaq Honor Song. Recently, Glooscap First Nation Chief Sydney Peters and artist Gerald Gloade visited their school to share their knowledge. Collectively, these actions help build a sense of identity and belonging at school for students of indigenous ancestry, and fosters everyone's understanding of our roles as Treaty People.

Try it at home! There are lots of apps and websites to help you learn Mi'kmaq words and phrases:

- firstnationhelp.com/links.php
- www.jilaptoq.ca/en/posters.html
- www.mikmaqonline.org/
- Astue'kl (opposites game app)
- Tal-tluen (phrase book app)



TREATY EDUCATION & SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS



Treaty Day

Raising the Mi'kmaq Grand Council flag at Gaspereau Valley Elementary on October 1.

While October is a special time to acknowledge Mi'kmaq history, Treaty Education initiatives are infusing Mi'kmaq culture, ways of knowing, and our shared history and responsibilities as Treaty People, into classrooms and schools year round.

Our Coordinator of Mikmaq Education Services, Holly Meuse, and our team of Native Student Advisors are leading these efforts, as well as supporting the success and well-being of students of Indigenous ancestry through the Native Student Advisor Program. This important work aligns with regional approaches in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.



Native Student Advisor Shanika MacEachern-Ward shows an eagle feather to students at Aldershot Elementary's Treaty Day event

Treaty Education initiatives include making Mi'kmaq language part of every school day through signage and a word-of-the-day programs. Music classrooms continue to teach the Honor Song and drumming. Discussions about Truth and Reconciliation are encouraged in age-appropriate ways, and many schools are working to build stronger relationships with communities, Elders and knowledge keepers.

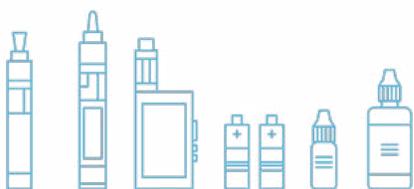
TIPS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS: TALKING WITH YOUR TEEN ABOUT VAPING

The rise in youth vaping has been in the news recently. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is working with other government departments to develop an overall approach to youth vaping.

Schools are also working to educate students about the potential harms of vaping, and we encourage parents and guardians to share this message at home, too.

Middle and high schools recently sent home a “tip sheet” from the Province of Nova Scotia, to help families talk with teens about vaping risks.

For more resources to help you stay informed and take action, visit: www.canada.ca/en/services/health/campaigns/vaping.html



Vaping Health Risks

Here are some key things to know about vaping when talking with your teen:

- Vaping devices can be used to inhale different substances, including nicotine and THC from cannabis.
- Vaping is not harmless. It exposes users to harmful chemicals, and the long-term effects are unknown.
- Vaping products often contain nicotine.
- The latest generation of vaping products, like salts or pods, contain very high doses of nicotine. A single nicotine pod can contain the same amount of nicotine as a whole pack of cigarettes.
- Nicotine is highly addictive, especially in such high doses.
- Young people's brains are still developing and can be harmed from exposure to substances like nicotine and cannabis.
- Lifelong addiction often begins when substance use starts at a young age.



NSISP-AVRCE Welcomes 223 Students from 30 Countries

The Nova Scotia International Students Program (NSISP) in AVRCE welcomed 223 students to our region in September, representing 30 countries. Having international students as part of our school communities enhances the educational and cultural experiences of all students. A warm welcome to all NSISP students, and thank you to our homestay families and NSISP-AVRCE staff for your support!



Students Explore Careers Through Summer Co-Op Placements

Sixty students completed co-operative education work placements over the summer, earning 93 full credits and two half credits, equivalent to 9,400 co-op hours! Students explored careers in construction trades, health care, recreation, child care, agriculture, machining, welding, office administration, automotive, information technology, automotive, veterinary medicine and more.



Period Products Available Free in all Schools Serving Grade 4 and Up

In September, Education and Early Childhood Minister Zach Churchill announced that free menstrual products are available in every school serving grade 4 and up. Many schools have been providing period products to students as needed; this change ensures consistent, equal access for all students. Students can look for posters in school find out where period products are available.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

A new provincial Extracurricular Activity Volunteer policy came into effect recently. Under this policy, principals can assign a registered volunteer to lead and supervise extracurricular school activities, without requiring a staff member to be present. We welcome school community members to volunteer in schools! Contact your school's principal to find out more.

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. 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.

