



Annapolis Valley
Regional Centre for Education

November
2018

Monthly Update



Dr. Arthur Hines School students and staff celebrated Take Me Outside Day and International Walk to School Month with a three+ kilometre hike at Smiley's Provincial Park, combining fitness, school spirit and outdoor education.

Coming Up This Month

November 9: Regional shutdown day

November 11: Remembrance Day

November 12: Remembrance Day observed, no school for students

November 13-22: High school reporting period; Report cards sent home

November 19-29: High school parent-teacher conferences

November 20: Transgender Day of Remembrance

November 26-December 6: Elementary reporting period; Report cards sent home, parent-teacher conferences

Get in Touch

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Berwick, NS B0P 1E0

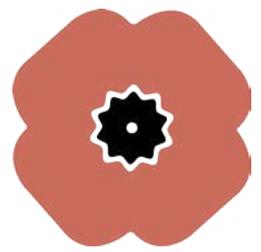
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www.avrce.ca
 @AVRCE_NS

November News



This month, schools across the region will honour Remembrance Day through class discussions, visits with veterans and Canadian Forces members, and special assemblies. Students and staff will hear the stories of veterans, and will learn the importance of remembering those who served in the name of peace and freedom. We welcome all school community members to take part in Remembrance Day assemblies, and to join with us in thanking our veterans and those who currently serve.

In last month's Monthly Update, we reported on 21 new inclusive education specialist positions in our region, made possible by a provincial \$15 million investment to increase supports available to students. These 21 positions add to our current complement of inclusive education specialists and supports in schools, and already we are seeing a positive impact. For example:

- An additional Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) position has reduced the average number of schools SLPs serve from five to four;
- The addition of this position has allowed SLPs to improve their service delivery;
- Program Planning Specialists are able to be more responsive to student needs; they are able to meet with school staff in a timely fashion as needs arise, and have time to remain at a school as a student's individual plan is put into action. This allows on-the-spot plan adjustments and capacity-building during initial implementation;
- Our Parent Navigator is connecting with schools and families. She can be reached at tammy.ring@avrce.ca or 902.844.2816.

An exciting opportunity is available to grade 6-12 students. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the provincial Business Education Council announced the Minister's Entrepreneurship Award of Excellence earlier this month. Students are invited to submit a plan for a small business idea for a social or environmental issue in Nova Scotia, for the chance to win a \$1,000 grant and mentorship opportunities. For more information, visit <https://novascotia.ca/entrepreneuraward/>.

Also, parents and guardians will soon hear more about a provincial review of school busing. Please continue to watch for information at www.avrce.ca and on Twitter @AVRCE_NS.

2018-2019 CLASS CAPS REPORT



0

There are 0 grade 10-12 classes over cap
Soft Cap = 30
Hard Cap = 32

1

1 out of 118 grade 7-9 classes is over cap (0.8%)
Soft Cap = 28
Hard Cap = 30

1

1 out of 155 grade 3-6 classes is over cap (0.6%)
Soft Cap = 25
Hard Cap = 27

7

7 out of 141 grade P-2 classes are over cap (5%)
Soft Cap = 20
Hard Cap = 22

*In all cases, classes exceed cap by only 1 student

Parent/Guardian Questions or Concerns?

If you are a parent/guardian and 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. The next step is to follow up with the principal, if needed. If more action is required, contact AVRCE at 902.538.4617. For more information, please visit www.avrce.ca/parentguardian-concerns.



Race Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding and Human Rights (RCH) Snapshot

One of our ongoing annual goals in the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education is “to enhance race relations, cross-cultural understanding and respect for human rights.” This RCH goal touches our work at all levels, from daily support to students and classrooms through the Student Support Worker and Native Student Advisor Programs, to creating safe and inclusive spaces for all students through GSAs (Gay-Straight Alliances or Gender and Sexuality Alliances) and Diversity Clubs in every school, to employment equity in all Human Resources practices. Here’s a snapshot of our RCH focus over this year.

SSW Program

362 students in program*
26 schools served
17 graduates in June 2018



Native Student Advisors (NSAs) and Student Support Workers (SSWs) enhance the learning environment and school experiences of students of African descent and students of Aboriginal, First Nations and Métis ancestry. NSAs and SSWs work with students, families, communities and school staff to offer support, provide cultural learning opportunities and contribute to a positive schooling experience for students in these programs.

Student Self-Identification

57% of students self-identified this year. This increases understanding of the communities we serve and enables evidence-based approaches to close the achievement gap.



NSA Program

255 students in program*
12 schools served
17 graduates in June 2018



Curriculum

Number of schools offering:

- 7 African Canadian Studies 11
- 2 English 12 African Heritage
- 10 Mi'kmaq Studies 11
- 1 Gaelic Studies 11
- 8 Citizenship 9

*As of November 2, 2018

Strengthening GSAs

All AVRCE schools have a GSA (gay-straight alliance/gender-sexuality alliance) or similar group to provide support, promote inclusion and offer a safe space for students to talk.

Recently, school GSA advisors met with an LGBTQ educator and consultant from *Equity Educate* to discuss how schools can best support all students and families and celebrate pride at all ages and grade levels.



Black Caucus Builds Relationships

Starting in 2017-2018, the RCH Division created the Black Caucus, a community learning team that brings together teachers of African descent. The goal is to provide professional support and a forum to discuss ideas and regional issues. The Black Caucus currently includes 12 teachers.



Mi'kmaq History Month

Last month was Mi'kmaq History Month in Nova Scotia. Mi'kmaq culture and history is part of curriculum throughout the year, but October is a special time to highlight the diverse aspects of Mi'kmaq history, language, culture, art, food and innovation, and to acknowledge we are in Mi'kma'ki.

Above, L.E. Shaw Elementary welcomed Elder Shirley Clarke of Glooscap First Nation, to teach students a song in Mi'kmaq and share knowledge about drumming and art. Artist Lorne Julien shared his work with Clark Rutherford Memorial School students, and inspired them to create their own artwork based on his style.

Uncommon Common Art

Many students have been exploring their creativity to make outdoor art installations in partnership with Uncommon Common Art, an organization dedicated to bringing art out of galleries and into communities across Kings County. Students at several schools have used math, art and design skills to create beautiful pinwheel displays, like this one at Aldershot Elementary School.

Winter is Coming...



Winter is coming, and that means it's time for families to make a back-up plan in case of school cancellations due to weather or road conditions.

Student safety is our first priority. Decisions around cancellations are based on many sources of information on roads, weather and real-time conditions. For details, visit www.avrce.ca/storm-daysschool-cancellations

How do I find out if school is cancelled?

Parents/Guardians: We will text/email you using the contact information you provided to your school in September. Update your school if your email or phone number changes.



School Community

Members and Staff: You can sign up for NotifyMe texts/emails on the AVRCE website. If you signed up before, your information is still on file.

We also share announcements on:

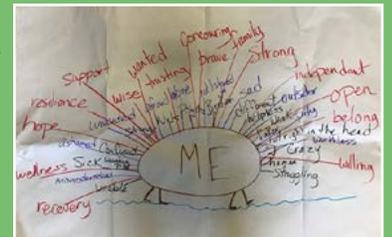
- www.avrce.ca
- @AVRCE_NS on Twitter
- AVRCE phone line, 902.538.4600 or 1.800.850.3887
- Local media (AVR Network, Magic 94.9, 89.3 K-Rock, CBC Radio 1, CTV Morning Live Atlantic)

HEADSTRONG Summit Equips Student Leaders to Reduce Mental Illness Stigma

Students from AVRCE high schools and experiential schools are working to promote mental health and reduce stigma after taking part in the HEADSTRONG Summit.

On Thursday, October 18, 49 students in grades 9 to 12 met at Brigadoon Village for a day-long summit focused on mental health and how stigma hurts people and prevents them from getting the help they need. The goal is to flip the narrative on mental health, to focus on the person, not the illness.

To help examine perceptions of mental illness, students developed a "porcupine map" – first, drawing "quills" of stereotypes and negative attitudes, and how those negative ideas affect people. After hearing speakers discuss their own experiences, more quills were added to describe the experience and the person.



By the end of the day, students had plans to bring information and positive messages back to their schools to help combat stigma; including information on daily announcements, creating safe places for people to seek support, having a quiet space in school for mental health breaks, developing articles for newsletters, and putting posters and flyers in school washrooms.

Patty Cornwall is the SchoolsPlus Facilitator for Annapolis County and helped to organize the event. She says the feedback on the day has been very positive, and the participants now have the tools and support to be leaders and mental health champions in their home schools.

"It was a phenomenal day. Students were engaged and active throughout the day. Each school presented amazing ideas on how they would spread the message. Principals are saying their staff are motivated and inspired to support students and their activities going forward."

The summit was a partnership between AVRCE, the Nova Scotia Health Authority and SchoolsPlus of Annapolis, Kings and West Hants, Family Matters Family Resource Centre, the Western Kings Community Health Board, and the Canadian Mental Health Association (Kings County Branch) with support from the Mental Health Commission of Canada.