

Via the Seine

Report to the Community

Learning and thriving amid change

A message from Wendy Bloomfield, Chair, Board of Trustees

We are a few months into the school year, and it is so great to see all of our students back in our schools, learning and thriving in their classrooms, and enjoying some of the school activities they have been missing. We are still taking precautions, following public health orders and committing to doing all we can to ensure schools are safe and successful learning environments for students.

We started off this school year by bidding a sad but fond farewell to our Superintendent, Michael Borgfjord, who has left the division. For 13 years, Mike worked to support students, staff and all of

our communities in building strong, inclusive and more equitable systems, as well as effective and collaborative school teams. Read more about Mike's contributions to our Division and beyond, on page 2.

Until we appoint a new Superintendent, Elaine Lochhead and Simon Laplante have stepped in on an interim basis this year, sharing a Co-Superintendent role. Elaine has been an instrumental leader in ensuring all students have inclusive learning opportunities in which to learn and thrive, and is a passionate advocate for early literacy programming. She returns to the

Division after retiring in June from her role as Assistant Superintendent of Student Services. Simon is an outstanding school and system leader and a passionate educator and advocate for inclusion, French language programs and developing a deep sense of community. He retired from his role as Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction in 2014, then returned to the division as a mentor for new administrators at several schools.

We are grateful to both Elaine and Simon for stepping into these interim roles, as they work to support and lead our schools this year. ●

Books on the menu



▲ Grade 7 and 8 RCH students sample books at the Novel Series table at the Book Café.

Middle years students at Richer School (RCH) were treated to a fine dining experience in October – but instead of sampling tasty treats, they got a taste of some great new books.

To help get middle years students more engaged in reading, the school bought \$3,000 in current, popular books and held a "Book Tasting" event to build interest and enthusiasm. Grade 4-8 students visited the gymnasium, which was transformed into a Book Café with soft lighting, dinner mints, menus of book titles and silver platters stacked with high-interest novels.

"The students moved from table to table in their cohorts to sample different genres – graphic novels, books by Canadian authors, novel series and stories dealing with teenage drama for our older students," says Literacy Support Teacher Michelle Wolf. Groups spent 10 minutes browsing books

at each table and completing tasks such as taking note of a sentence that drew them into the book or showed the emotions of a character. By the end, each student had sampled more than 50 new books.

"We want middle years students to want to read, to have the opportunity to read as many good books as possible and to see themselves in the books," Wolf says. "Knowing they would find the novels in their classrooms the next day amped the excitement up even more."

Inspired by the Book Café, Principal Karen Thiessen added a "What are you reading?" segment to the morning announcements, with one student each day sharing about a book they're reading.

"That's exactly what we want – excitement and engagement about books!" Thiessen says. ●

Exploring animal roles through art

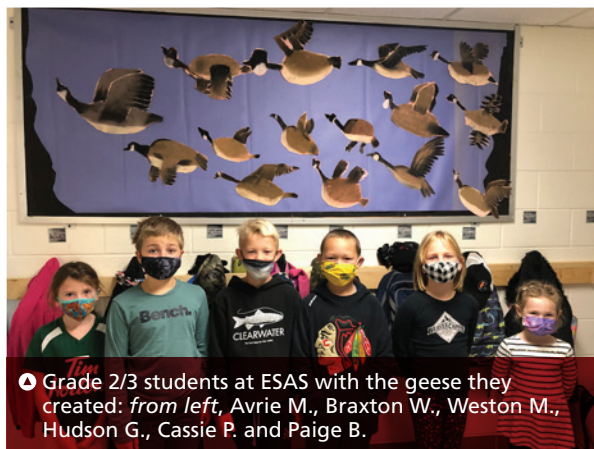
As the geese were preparing to fly south this fall, a Grade 2/3 class at École St. Adolphe School was learning about the birds' role in Indigenous culture.

Teacher Julie Martinussen and her class spent time in September learning about treaties, talking about the land acknowledgement they hear with morning announcements and reading books by local authors with Indigenous perspectives.

"We talked about how Indigenous People value and connect with the land and animals, and about the circle way of looking at things – in this case, the changing of the seasons and the honking of the geese let it be known that they are leaving for the winter or have returned safely," Martinussen says.

They explored the cultural significance of Manitoba animals and plants with help from a colouring book called *Mino-Te-Mah-Ti-Zee-Win – A Good Way of Life*, taking inspiration from it and the other books to bring geese to life through art.

"We looked at the shapes within the goose – ovals for the body and head, triangle for the beak, long rectangle for the neck, squares with triangles for the wings," says Gabrielle Doll, SRSD Visual Arts Consultant. "They did great, and each goose, like each student, is one of a kind." 🟡



Big shoes to fill

How do you replace someone who made such a big difference?

That's the task at hand for our Board of Directors, after Michael Borgfjord hung up his Superintendent's hat following 13 successful years at the helm of the Seine River School Division, moving into a new role as Superintendent of Schools for the Pembina Hills School Division in Alberta.

"I remember when I first met Mike. Within his first six weeks as Superintendent, he had visited every single school, shaken the hands of every single teacher and talked to students in every building. That to me is pretty remarkable," Elaine Lochhead, Interim Co-Superintendent and long-time Assistant Superintendent, recalls.

"Over the years, he always put the students' learning first. Whenever decisions were difficult he would always say, 'Is this in the best interest of our students? Will it help make their learning better? If the answer is yes, we need to find a way to make it happen'."

Mike's leadership was always guided by the Division's three core values – honesty, empathy and respect.

"We will need someone who can carry on Mike's legacy of making students the centre of our division, making decisions to best support their learning, and also having tremendous respect for the staff," Elaine adds.



🟡 Mike Borgfjord, former SRSD Superintendent.

During his time with SRSD, Mike was a provincial leader in education and a powerful advocate for students, committed to building strong, inclusive and equitable systems. Literacy and numeracy were some of his high priorities, and he helped breathe new life into school and classroom libraries, even taking students out on shopping sprees for new books. He spearheaded the iPad project, getting technology into the hands of all of our Grade 6-8 students, in turn enhancing classroom instruction and engagement.

Mike was also a strong proponent of professional development for all staff, bringing in experts from across Canada and establishing divisional supports such as literacy, numeracy, French Immersion, early years learning and Indigenous education consultants, as well as instructional coaches in all schools. He helped build strong, collaborative school teams and establish the Learning Fair, a division-wide, collaborative sharing event to enhance educational strategies.

Mike also represented SRSD in many local, provincial and national educational organizations and committees, and presented at a number of international Educational conferences. He was also very community-minded beyond the schools, volunteering for many years as a dedicated hockey coach and leader in Lorette. The Seine River School Division is better for having had Mike as its Superintendent, and while he is wished all the best in his new role, his leadership is greatly missed. 🟡

Honouring the past

Whether for a day, a week or a month, students and staff in every school across the Division spent time in September remembering, honouring and learning about the painful history and ongoing impacts of residential schools, in recognition of Orange Shirt Day and Canada's first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.



La Salle School staff and students wore orange shirts and hung a Métis flag and land acknowledgement in the school's new Library.

Schools were closed for the new statutory holiday on September 30, but staff and students recognized these important days prior to and on September 29.

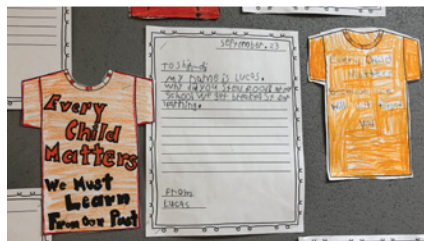
"We wanted to make sure students didn't think the National Day was just a day off. There was a need for reflection, for understanding and for conversations," says Sandy Turcotte, SRSD Indigenous Education Consultant. "Some schools did community walks, to show solidarity for the survivors and those who didn't make it home. Many of them invited Indigenous Elders who are residential school survivors or storytellers to come and speak. Some read books about residential schools and made 'Every Child Matters' paper t-shirts with messages to display around the schools. And every school had assemblies to talk

about the significance of the day."

At Collège St. Norbert Collegiate, where Turcotte is based, poems by residential school survivors were read over the announcements each day, with students reflecting on them through conversation, writing or art. The school's Indigenous leadership group, "Ooskat," collected donations from other students to contribute to residential school survivors, said group member and Grade 11 student Khloe M.

"We've done a lot to educate everyone about residential schools and the '60s Scoop, to help understand why Indigenous People are where they are today," Khloe says. "I was impressed by how many kids participated this year and wore orange shirts, listened to the assembly and were really respectful."

Teachers at La Salle School have been working on integrating Indigenous perspectives into their classes, and hung a Métis flag that was gifted to the school, along with the divisional land acknowledgement, in the renovated school Library. In Cathy Normand's Grade 2 class, students learned about Orange Shirt Day and Treaties.



Students at Ste. Anne Elementary created orange shirts with Every Child Matters messages, and wrote letters to characters in books about children at residential schools.

"We learned about the promise to share the land for as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow – and that the promises were broken, and now Canada is acknowledging that we are on Treaty land and are working towards

knowing the truth of residential schools and broken Treaty promises," Normand explains.

Ste. Anne Collegiate held a Truth and Reconciliation Week to raise awareness and acknowledge its commitment to a path towards reconciliation each day. Information was shared on the announcements, students wore orange shirts and they joined Indigenous drumming and teachings at lunch. The whole school also did a community remembrance walk and held an 'Every Child Matters' poster design contest for students to illustrate their thoughts.



Grade 11 student Miracle C. won Ste. Anne Collegiate's poster contest with her artwork.

At Ste. Anne Elementary School, teacher Rebecca Brown read books with her Grade 3/4 class about residential schools, and had discussions to help the students share their feelings and connect with the characters, by writing a letter to one of the characters in the stories.

"This powerful writing activity allowed students to ask the characters meaningful questions related to very mature issues involving residential schools. They were very empathetic and questioned why children were treated so unfairly," Brown recalls. "Recognizing residential school survivors this year and every year is incredibly important as students, teachers and staff must learn from Canada's past." ●

Learning with lizards

Two new classroom pets have been thrilling kindergarten students at Dawson Trail School, while helping them learn about animals and responsibility.

The class adopted a pair of leopard geckos in October, and have been researching, doing reports and sharing information about the lizards, says teacher Jessica Laluk.

“Our class had so many wonders and interesting questions about our geckos, and we were able to research to find the answers using different books, watching videos, and making close observations. It’s also teaching the students how to look after and care for different living things,” Laluk says.

The students are eager to help feed and water the geckos – who they voted to name “Rock & Roller” and “Sonic Spirit” – each day.

“We have been learning how to keep animals safe and that some animals need careful touching, quiet voices, water and food, just like us! The students enjoy observing the geckos and drawing pictures of them, and love teaching other people about them,” Laluk says. 🍌



🍌 Some of the results of the DTS kindergarten students’ research on their new pets. *Inset:* Rock & Roller, one of the new leopard geckos.

Back in action



🍌 Students from LSS and other schools are happy to be able to run in cross-country meets again, like this one in September.

After being shut down for months due to the pandemic, many school sports and extra-curricular activities are back on – and students are happy to be able to take part again.

Cross-country running is one activity that was embraced at La Salle School (LSS) this fall, with 70 students from Grade 5-8 participating.

“Students were extremely excited to learn they could participate in cross-country after a year of uncertainty. The protocols put in place for practices and divisional meets made it possible to attend and participate in the season safely,” says Physical Education teacher and coach Darla Rodewald. The Division held separate regional meets in September, limiting participants to comply with provincial guidelines. LSS students ran in the west side meet, then in the MILK Provincial Cross Country the next week, where the Grade 5, 6 and 7 girls, and the Grade 7 and 8 boys, all won banners.

“The return of these sports has meant a great deal to our school community, who missed out on participation, learning and development due to the pandemic,” Rodewald says. “We are very happy to provide these opportunities for our student athletes to continue to grow and evolve with both physical and emotional skills.” 🍌

A stroke of luck

It was a gym class Tyson Thomas will never forget.

The Grade 12 Collège Lorette Collegiate student was just finishing up nine holes at the Lorette Golf Course as part of the school’s Physical Education unit on golf in September when he surprised everyone by hitting a rare hole-in-one.

“I wasn’t paying too much attention but then I looked back I saw the ball rolling towards the hole, and it just plunked in,” recalls Tyson, who has been golfing for about three years. “I was pretty shocked and excited!”

The cheering from Tyson’s foursome grabbed the attention of the other students and PhysEd teacher Kevin Mamchuk, who were all already at the clubhouse, packing up to head back to school.

“We heard yelling and screaming, and all the students ran over to the green to see what was going on,” Mamchuk says. “The Golf unit has been offered to Grade 10-12 Phys Ed students at CLC for at least 10 years, and I have never seen a student – or anyone! – get a hole-in-one.” 🍌



🍌 Grade 12 student Tyson Thomas hit a hole-in-one during CLC’s golf unit.