

In Touch

Annapolis Valley Regional School Board
"Working Together for Students"



December 2010
Happy Holidays

Provincial Autism Award for Port Williams Elementary School

The 2010 Sheelagh Nolan Award for Excellence in Teaching has been awarded to Port Williams Elementary School for the support, guidance and inclusion of a young student with Autism Spectrum disorder. The nomination was submitted by the child's parents who, one year prior to their child starting school, worked with school staff to ensure resources were in place and the student's team prepared. The award was accepted by PWES principal, Cathy Woodford, who made it clear in her acceptance speech that the entire school had contributed to the student's success. She offered praise not only to the staff and students, but to the parents for their dedication and faith in the school, the consultants who worked with staff, and other support teams. They all worked together to help with encouragement and strong, inclusive educational practices that have contributed to this success story.



ADVENTURE EDUCATION AT EVANGELINE MIDDLE SCHOOL



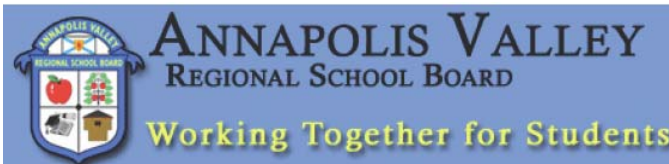
Early December is an exciting time at Evangeline Middle School (EMS). All students are given the opportunity to take part in a school-based ropes climbing

program. The program, based on an experiential/adventure education model, began in the early 1990's and has been a yearly highlight ever since. The EMS ropes course includes a variety of elements and apparatus including high ropes, low ropes and ground level activities. The program stresses interactive and co-operative learning, with the development of trust, teamwork and self-esteem. "This is truly a hands-on approach to learning with the potential to impact student



development both in the school environment and beyond," said Keith Moores a senior EMS staff member and climbing instructor.

Looking Good—New AVRSB Website



AVRSB is proud to present their new website. We hope you will visit at www.avrsb.ca. Every effort has been made to make things as easy to find as possible and every effort will be made to make it even better to meet your needs. As with any major change, a few hiccups will occur along the way and the webmaster is ready to help fix these problems as they arise as quickly as possible. If you have any questions or suggestions for site improvements, please go to the homepage and click on the link provided for technical support.

Regular Board Meeting Wednesday, December 1, 2010

Public Presentation

Colonel Bill Seymour, Commander, 14 Wing Greenwood, presented an overview of the operation of the Greenwood base and its connection to AVRSB. Member families are encouraged to be active in school communities and activities. Colonel Seymour recognized the importance of education offerings to military families, such as French programs and supports for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Educational Presentation

Erica Bawn, Coordinator of Employee and Labour Relations and Allen Hume, Director of Human Resources, presented information on administrative hiring and teacher qualifications. The first part of the presentation covered the education, abilities and experience required of potential candidates for principal positions. Ms. Bawn explained that qualifications are defined as formal training in a specialized area, and they are used in considering teaching assignments, decisions of hiring, promotions, and evaluations. They are an important tool in the interview process for new candidates and as well, in providing growth plans for existing employees.

Board Meeting Highlights

- The Committee memberships for the upcoming year were approved. Board Committees are: Education; Finance & Audit; Human Resources; Operations; RCH; Suspension Review; Suspension Appeal; IPP Appeal. These committees meet regularly and make reports and recommendations to the full board.
- The Superintendent reported that the ten schools involved in the transition for school configuration purposes in the coming school year have received a template and plans for coordinating their transitions. The transition planning considers physical lay-out recommendations, the placement of appropriate texts and materials, plus staff considerations.
- Renovations are complete at St. Mary's, Gaspereau Valley and Somerset Elementary schools. Students of these schools will finish school one day earlier in December and start back to school one day later in January to allow for staff to pack, move, and set-up classrooms back in their home schools. These three schools have been accommodated in host schools since September.

Roots of Empathy

A recent CNN program on the Roots of Empathy program has heightened awareness of the use of the philosophy of the program— to reduce bullying by helping children to not become bullies in the first place. Clark Rutherford Memorial School was the first school in AVRSB to introduce the program, recognizing the increasing number of students with significant social emotional issues. The program used in Europe, the UK, and New Zealand as well as in Canada, uses the family's interaction with a baby to allow children to observe individual differences, see the baby's cues and the parent's responses, and introduce the students of the concept of temperament. This is the third year that CRMS has had a family with a new baby visit the school to spend time with groups of children to help them better understand their own feelings and lay the foundations for safer, caring classrooms.



A Close Shave for a Good Cause

Annapolis East Elementary School principal Karl West really trusts his students. The school has a Walk-a-thon each year to raise money for additional classroom supplies plus items for the library and computer room. This year he challenged students to surpass last year's total of \$8000 raised from the walk-a-thon and if they did, he would shave the mustache he has worn for 25 years. The students raised \$8102.67 so the "event" took place on stage in the gym and a video link was set up so everyone could see on the large screen. As the entire school attended, there was an audible amount of anticipation heightened by several false starts. With several students helping, the "shaving" started (with some attempts with safety scissors and razors) but the final job was done electrically, to the appreciative chants of the audience.



Submissions to the *In Touch* newsletter are welcome. Please submit to communications@avrsg.ca

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