Thursday
March 28, 2024

Issue 03

Gazette

Our Mission

The Western Québec School Board is committed to developing lifelong learners who actively contribute to society and are well prepared for the future.

A Message from George

Although this edition of The Gazette features events that occurred in March (and there were many!), I am taking the opportunity to write about Autism Awareness and Acceptance month, which is celebrated each year in April.

Throughout the year, the Western Québec School Board recognizes the importance of accepting and supporting autistic individuals so they can achieve their full potential in school and in life.

World Autism Awareness Day, designated by the United Nations on April 2nd, aims to increase awareness and acceptance of autism worldwide. At WQSB, we mark this significant day each year by seeking a better understanding of neurodiversity.

Autism Acceptance Month, celebrated every April, goes beyond mere awareness. It is also a time to promote acceptance, drive change, and celebrate achievements. Our goal is to move beyond acceptance by providing support, a sense of belonging, and opportunities for success to all students on the autism spectrum within WQSB. Autism Speaks Canada

Take good care, **g**

Happy Easter! Easter long weekend is March 29 to April 1.
Photo by Laura D'Alessandro

Destination Imagination hosted by Symmes Junior High/D'Arcy McGee High School on March 22nd
Photo by, Laura D'Alessandro

Laura D'Alessandro

Destination Imagination!

Feature Article

Destination Imagination (DI) is an international competition which challenges elementary and middle school students' scientific, technical, and fine arts skills.

The regional competition took place at Symmes Junior High/D'Arcy McGee High School Friday, March 22nd. The Western Québec School Board has been proudly participating in DI for the last 13 years, and the organizers for the event, Educational Technology Consultant Lisa Diner and Consultant in Complementary Services, Steve Greig offered two main challenges to the participating students: a technical challenge for middle school teams and a scientific challenge for the elementary school teams.

This year, there were eleven schools participating, and a total of 17 teams comprised of 4-5 students.

In attendance were teams from Onslow Elementary, Poltimore Elementary, Greater Gatineau Elementary, Chelsea Elementary, Namur School, Lord Aylmer Elementary, Wakefield Elementary, Dr. Wilbert Keon School, Eardley Elementary, Hadley Junior High, and Symmes Junior High. The special guest for DI this year was the Honourable Greg Fergus, Speaker of the House of Commons. Western Québec School Board Chairperson, Wayne Daly.

The Western Québec School Board extends its congratulations to all participating teams for their ingenuity and effort, as well as to their dedicated team managers. Full Story with Photo Gallery

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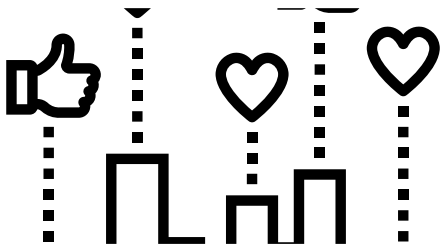
Marie-Eve Groulx

Educational Spotlight

FSL Collaborative Group



This winter, a collaborative group of Secondary 2, 3 and 4 FSL teachers from various WQSB high schools met for a series of learning sessions.

During the meetings, various topics were addressed through pedagogical discussions, participants explored different teaching strategies and discussed daily challenges. Teachers reflected on their own practice and benefited from the ideas, resources, and advice of their colleagues. There was something for everyone.

"This collaborative group enabled me to fraternize and share with colleagues from different schools. It was also a great opportunity to learn from others and discover new material. I particularly appreciated the group's collaboration with our educational consultant." **-Kevin Cabeceiras, Hadley Junior High School**

"I used the diagram for the lexical mapping with my grades 7 and 9. One word in the middle with 'adjectives', 'common nouns' and 'verbs' as branches.... It went REALLY well - plus, this way they have to focus on the nature of the word, which helps sentences in general! It's definitely a tool I'll continue to use often to deepen vocabulary! I even heard the magic words... "THIS IS ACTUALLY FUN!!!" **-Annie Lance, St Michael's High School**

The French teachers also worked on creating educational material. One group has developed a series of interesting activities on the theme of bullying, while another has designed a project that brings together three of our rural schools. Through a sequence of authentic tasks targeting all three disciplinary competencies, students discover different regions, communicating with students of their own age. This will surely be highly motivating and engaging for students!

This collaboration between FSL teachers will help support the development of dynamic and impactful learning environments. It is inspiring to see motivated and competent teachers discussing and integrating rich and diversified approaches that benefit our students.

Many thanks to the teachers who participated this year, and we hope to see even more participants in 2024-2025!

Michele Elstone, Janet Sauve, Carlee St. Denis

Autism "Appreciation" Month!

Re-adaptation Officer Team

April is Autism Appreciation Month!

Our role as re-adaptation officers is to meet people wherever they are in their journey of autism awareness and help them to continue forward as we are all learning together!

Read about the levels below that were developed by Autism Level Up! and decide where you land and how you would like to take a step forward.

Awareness - " *You've heard of Autism. You know someone autistic. You may even know some of the diagnostic criteria and typical forms of "support" offered to autistic people, but you're wondering why we could dare call them "autistic people."*

Acceptance - "*You embrace Autistic people as part of your community. You realize that your preconceived notions about autism derived from textbooks and public awareness campaigns are limited and likely wrong."*

Appreciation - "*Informed by Autistic people, you strive to understand the reality of autism; that is the strengths AND challenges and the true range of diversity within the Autistic community."*

Empowerment - " *You support, follow, and let Autistic people lead. You strive to arm Autistic people with the knowledge, tools, and strategies to navigate the world as they are."*

Advocacy - *"You are committed to being an ally to Autistic people. You are responsive to the priorities of the Autistic community, and you work to change the world in ways that are meaningful to them."*

3 Things you can do:

- Learn more about ASD here
- Follow and listen to autistic creators, professionals, and researchers
- Support autistic owned/led businesses, organizations

Things you can do in your classroom:

- Use visuals and non-verbal cues
- Provide structure with routine and visual supports
- Support transitions about changes or unusual events
- Build in choices
- Give opportunities for breaks, alternative seating, quiet spaces, and movement
- Teach students how ask for breaks and accommodations
- Facilitate communication opportunities with peers and adults
- Teach to strengths and incorporate special interests
- Give options for expression through drawings, charts, and technology

Stuart Gray and Lisa Diner

Education Technology Spotlight

Did you know?

Destination Imagination's Technical Challenge brought a level of complexity this year which was met head-on by our teams.

The "Space Monkeys" from Symmes Jr. High incorporated technology into their solution with an animated introduction they created as well as using Makey Makey.

They created a closed circuit with copper wires, and, with Makey Makey, sent the signal to a Scratch program causing a specific sound to be played.

This was a great way to link these two great tools with their DI solution!

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Jenny Svetec

HR Spotlight

Employee Nominations are Open!

It's time to shine a spotlight on the incredible folks that form the WQSB!

It's the 2nd Annual WQSB Outstanding Employee Awards in May and we're on the lookout for School, Centre, or Department employees who go above and beyond, making a real impact on their students and colleagues alike.

Take a moment to click on the link below and share with the Recognition Selection Committee because your nominee deserves a "You Shine" award.

But hurry – nominations close on April 12th. Nominate Here!

Join Our Team!

People make Western Québec

At Western Québec, people make a difference. We're dedicated to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.

If you're passionate about making a positive impact and being part of a dynamic team, we want you!

Come be a part of something special. Join us at Western Québec!

Spread the word apply here!

#JoinOurTeam#MakeADifference

Erin Millar

Book List

It's Officially Spring!

All around us, the natural world is waking up and as March makes way for April, the school year just seems to get busier and move more quickly.

Monthly themes can keep us hopping; some months are jam-packed with exciting and important events, and this March is no exception.

This month, the library team focused on creating book and online resource lists for International Women's Day, which is on March 8th, and for Ramadan, which officially began for the Muslim community at sundown on March 10th.

Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop famously wrote about books as mirrors and windows and these two themes present us all with many opportunities to learn: for staff and students who identify as women and girls and for those among us who are part of the Muslim community, these books may be mirrors in which to see ourselves in. For others, they can be windows to better understanding.

And it's better understanding that makes a beautiful world even more beautiful, in all seasons of the year.
Happy Reading!

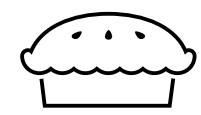
Book Lists:
International Women's Day
Ramadan

Laura D'Alessandro

Math Games

Onslow Elementary

March 14th marked International Math Day, also known as Pi Day (3.14).



Schools across the WQSB celebrated the day in a variety of ways, and at a bright and cheerful little school in Quyon QC, Selina Gervais' grade 1 students celebrated by hosting math games for their fellow k4 and grade 5 peers.

Of course, they also celebrated the day by sharing some delicious pie at Onslow Elementary School!

The idea to host these games came directly from the students during a morning meeting and sharing circle.

"They couldn't believe it when I told them they would be teaching GRADE 5 students!" shares Ms. Gervais.

Special thank you to Selina Gervais for providing the information for this article. Full Story

World Down Syndrome Day

Thursday, March 21, 2024

On March 21 we proudly recognized World Down Syndrome Day.

Let's continue to spread awareness, promote acceptance, and celebrate the incredible achievements of individuals today and every day.

Together, we can build a more inclusive and compassionate community for all.

From the dedicated members of the Complementary Services Team at the WQSB who work to ensure that our students receive the support and resources they need to thrive.

Laura D'alessandro

Meet Graham Fong!

Outdoor Education at Dr. Wilbert Keon School

Meet Graham Fong, DWKS's new outdoor education teacher. Previously, he taught math and physical education (for two years) at Maniwaki Woodland School before pursuing his passion for outdoor courses.

Trained at Laurentian University in Sudbury, ON, Graham brings expertise from the Outdoor Adventure Leadership and Concurrent Education Program.

Excited about his dream job opportunity at DWKS, Graham was drawn by the school's high academic standards, holistic student development, and the charm of the Chapeau community. Living close to the Ottawa River (renowned for whitewater activities) further fueled his career move.

Upon arrival, Graham noticed the strong community bond between DWKS and Chapeau, providing numerous unique opportunities. From cross-country skiing in a neighboring farmer's field to accessing the municipal dock for canoeing, the school benefits from robust partnerships. Local organizations also enrich student experiences with workshops and events.

Graham's outdoor program offers diverse activities, including canoeing, orienteering, survival techniques, skiing, camping, first aid, cycling, environmental stewardship, high ropes, tobogganing, and forest games like Capture the Flag.

Continue reading the Full Story

Liora Richler

SARCA Free Services

Counselling and Support

The Western Quebec School Board offers a suite of free guidance and orientation services known as SARCA (Reception, Referral, Counselling, and Support Services) tailored for individuals aged 16 and above, residing in the Outaouais region.

A SARCA consultation commences with a warm welcome, followed by an assessment of individual needs, and collaborative goal setting.

Liora Richler, a SARCA Guidance Counselor, is responsible for delivering the service, offering comprehensive support services including professional career guidance, vocational counseling, orientation, labor market insights, academic and career information, transcript evaluations, and guidance on funding options for educational pursuits. Counselors also assist individuals in gaining insight into their strengths, skills, and values, aiding in the development of personalized action plans.

This process aims to chart a path towards achieving those objectives. Some common objectives include pursuing high school or post-secondary diplomas, validating past work experience (RAC), receiving referrals to community organizations, obtaining documentation for CCQ, exploring training programs, and accessing labor market insights.

Individuals can access these services remotely or in person.

For further details or to schedule an appointment, please contact us at 819-684-1770 ext. 606022 or email lrichler@wqsb.qc.ca.

WesternQuebec.ca

School Life

See what we're up to!

Curious about what's happening in our school community? Stay in the loop with the latest news and events!

Visit our Latest News directly from the homepage to see what we're up to. From exciting events to important announcements, there's always something happening in our schools.

Don't miss out! Stay connected and engaged with School Life.

#StayInformed #SchoolLife

Pontiac High School

Facebook Post

Mme Woodman's Grade 9 class had the pleasure of visiting the CHSLD in Shawville, a long-term care nursing home for the elderly.

Collaborating with residents, they created beautiful stained-glass pieces of art.

It was a heartwarming experience, and we eagerly anticipate our next visit!

#CommunityEngagement #ArtisticExpression

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Carolynne Ball

McGill Honour Band

D'Arcy-McGee High School

Last Friday, D'Arcy-McGee High School proudly had twelve students selected to join the esteemed McGill Honour Band.

This initiative offers an immersive concert band experience for advanced Secondary III-IV-V students.

Despite limited practice time, these talented musicians excelled under the guidance of professionals from the Schulich School of Music. The culmination was an impressive evening concert at Pollack Hall, showcasing their dedication and skills alongside peers from across Quebec.

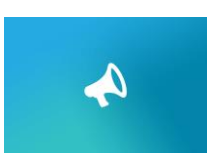
Carolynne Ball, Symmes - D'Arcy McGee's music teacher, accompanied her students to the event and was thoroughly impressed by their performance. Since 2020, Ms. Ball has overseen the school's music program, which now boasts over 80 students.

The recent participation in the McGill Honour Band reflects the program's growth and talent. Looking ahead, Symmes-D'Arcy students eagerly anticipate a joint concert with Philemon Wright, showcasing their collaborative spirit and dedication to musical excellence. Ms. Ball finds it very rewarding to see the continuous growth in the young musicians as they flourish, enriching the school community with their passion and commitment to music.

The McGill Honour Band experience not only refined their abilities but also fostered camaraderie and collaboration, showcasing the immense talent within Quebec's secondary music programs.

Measles in Schools

March 11, 2024



George Singfield sent a letter to staff at the request of the Ministère de l'Éducation regarding cases of measles that have been confirmed in various regions in Québec. Measles is a very contagious disease, and can be very serious, especially for young children, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems. There is no specific treatment for this disease.

To receive the free vaccine, go to Clic-Santé to book an appointment or call 1-877-644-4545.

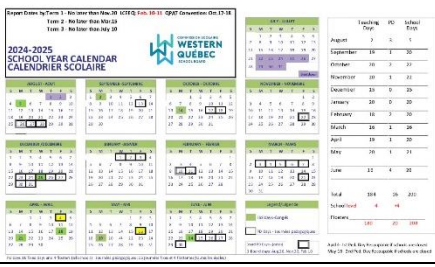
View the Letter

Board News

Boardwide Calendar

2024-2025 now available!

At its recent meeting, the Western Québec Council of Commissioners approved the 2024-2025 Boardwide Calendar. The calendar serves as the foundation for the individual school calendars across our district. Click below to view the calendar.



Sarah Plue and Ashley DV

Judy Moody and Stink!

Greater Gatineau Elementary

At Greater Gatineau Elementary (GG), students in grade 3-6 showcased their acting talents and teamwork by performing in a school play this March.

Auditions were held in September. Memorizing lines and perfecting expression became routine homework, especially for those with large acting roles.

The school's art club crafted beautiful props during their designated recesses and Greater Gatineau's talented art teachers volunteered to make inspiring backdrops on their own time.

In a true collaborative effort, dedicated staff Jody Schindel, Stephanie Stone and Sarah Plue directed the play, while Ashley DV, Alana Dickie and Courtney Roy took on the set design.

"We are so thankful to the other GG staff for being so patient with us as we often monopolized the gym to perfect our performance!"

The cast and crew created a supportive atmosphere, fostering an encouraging culture whereby students consistently rallied behind one another, lifting one another up.

This spirit of camaraderie and mutual support embodied the essence of Greater Gatineau's core values, enriching not only the production but also the school community as a whole.

Bravo!

School News

Staff Recognition

Buckingham Elementary

We're excited to share the highlights from Buckingham Elementary's recent recognition ceremony, covered by The Bison Bulletin.

This ceremony was held during Hawaiian Day at the school and honoured individuals for their length of service who have exemplified dedication, commitment, and excellence in serving our school community. Members of staf at Buckingham Elementary extend their gratitude to WQSB Chairperson Wayne Daly and Ward 6 Commissioner Micheal Kane for attending and presenting the awards.

Congratulations to Bonnie Camus, Nancy Stitt, Johanne Sarrazin, Karen Teske, Andrea Scholar, Christina Howard, Lynn Logan, Tim Mitchell, Leslie Logan, Jen Friis, Marnie Brown, Stacey Smallian, Cindy Larin, Bea Teske, Tracy Charles, Esperança MacIntosh, Christine Duval, and Karine Danis for their dedication and unwavering commitment.

Time Capsule

This photo was pulled from our WQSB time capsule.

Can you guess who it is?

Here's a clue:

This WQSB employee is a graduate of Nipissing University, who enjoys extreme running, and helping others.

As you can see, our mystery person has always been able to sport a sweater vest very well. He loves talking about planes but has been known to go off on a tangent. He is extremely passionate about how crucial it is to teach children about differences and the factors that impact on division. When needed, he is sometimes called upon as an expert moderator.

Head over to our website's Resources and Support for Staff page to reveal the answer!

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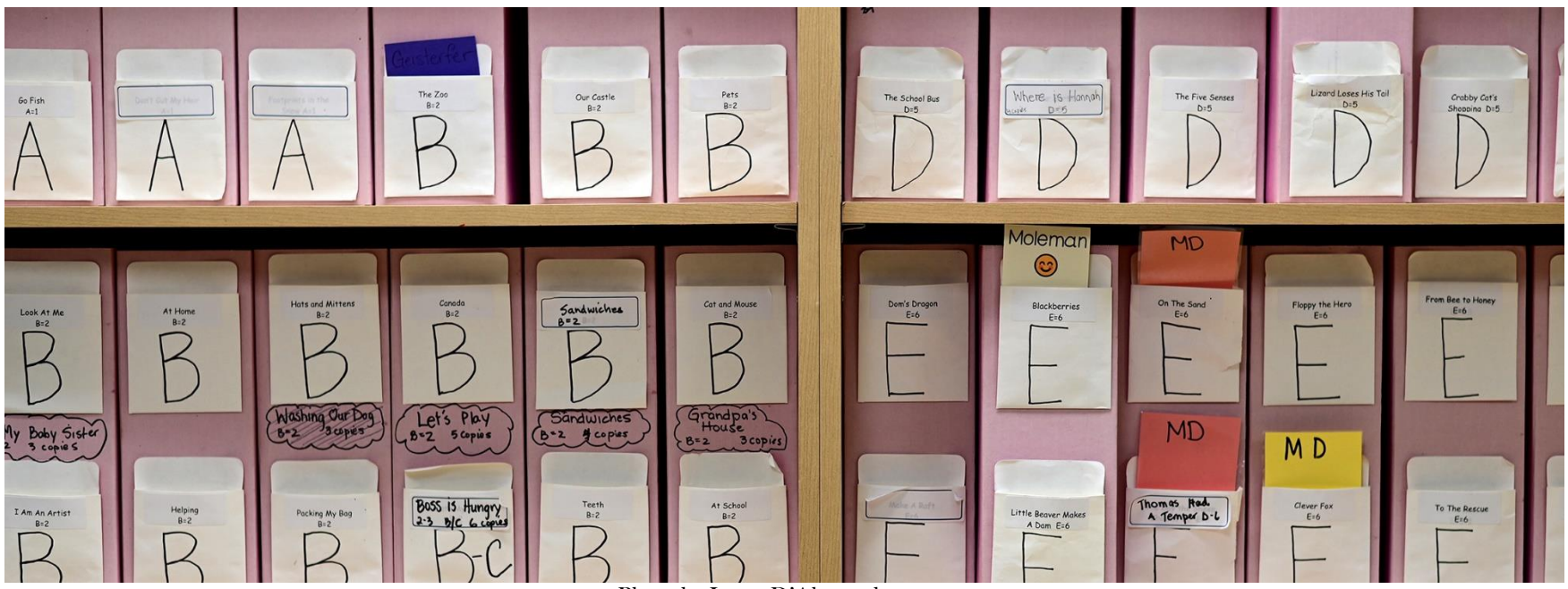

Photo by Laura D'Alessandro

Latest News @WQSB

Articles Showcasing the Wonderful Staff, Students, and Events Across Western Québec and Centres

- Destination Imagination! *https://westernquebec.ca/news/*
- Grade 1 Class Hosts Math Games at Onslow Elementary *https://westernquebec.ca/grade-1-class-hosts-math-games-at-onslow-elementary/*
- Pink Shirt Day at G. Théberge School *https://westernquebec.ca/pink-shirt-day-at-g-theberge-school/*
- Black History Across the WQSB *https://westernquebec.ca/black-history-month-across-the-wqsb/*
- Enrichment Program Introducing Vocational Studies to Elementary Students: The WQCC and Eardley Partnership *https://westernquebec.ca/enrichment-program-introducing-vocational-studies-to-elementary-students-the-wqcc-and-eardley-partnership/*
- Ice Safety and Rescue Certification at St. Michael's High School *https://westernquebec.ca/ice-safety-and-rescue-certification-at-st-michaels-high-school/*
- Suicide Prevention Week – Week of Kindness and Life at the WQSB *https://westernquebec.ca/suicide-prevention-week-week-of-kindness-and-life-at-the-wqsb/*
- Teacher Appreciation Week *https://westernquebec.ca/teacher-appreciation-week-2/*
- Safeguarding Bus Transportation: WQSB's Commitment to Bus Safety *https://westernquebec.ca/safeguarding-bus-transportation-wqsbs-commitment-to-bus-safety/*
- Nature Immersion-Kindergarten Program Wins a Canadian Museum of Nature Inspiration Award *https://westernquebec.ca/nature-immersion-kindergarten-program-wins-a-canadian-museum-of-nature-inspiration-award/*
- The Spirit of Giving Across the WQSB *https://westernquebec.ca/the-spirit-of-giving-across-the-wqsb/*
- Orientation Day for Bishop's University Student-Teachers *https://westernquebec.ca/orientation-day-for-bishops-university-student-teachers/*
- Destination Leadership *https://westernquebec.ca/destination-leadership/*
- The Jim Howard Memorial Football Tournament *https://westernquebec.ca/the-john-howard-memorial-tournament/*
- Dedicated Staff at Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary School Provide Accessible Halloween Evening for Students *https://westernquebec.ca/dedicated-staff-at-pierre-elliott-trudeau-elementary-school-provide-accessible-halloween-evening-for-students/*

New Staff Articles

- Meet Graham Fong, the New Outdoor Education Teacher at Dr. Wilbert Keon School *https://westernquebec.ca/meet-graham-fong-the-new-outdoor-education-teacher-at-dr-wilbert-keon-school/*
- Meet Stephanie Frigon, the New Principal at Golden Valley School! *https://westernquebec.ca/meet-stephanie-frigon-the-new-principal-at-golden-valley-school/*
- Meet Graham Fleming, the New Vice-principal at Greater Gatineau Elementary! *https://westernquebec.ca/meet-graham-fleming-the-new-vice-principal-at-greater-gatineau-elementary/*
- Meet Hannah Patrick, the new Vice-principal at Lord Aylmer Elementary! *https://westernquebec.ca/meet-hannah-patrick-the-new-vice-principal-at-lord-aylmer-elementary/*

WQSB Senior Administration and GG Staff at Greater Gatineau Elementary School Performance

Gazette Editions

Issue 02 - February 2024

Issue 01 - January 2024

THANK YOU!

We extend our gratitude to our contributors this month.

Our thanks go out to (in order of appearance) *George Singfield, Laura D'Alessandro, Marie-Eve Groulx, Michele Elstone, Janet Sauve Carlee St. Denis, Stuart Gray, Lisa Diner, Erin Millar, Liora Richler, Carolynne Ball, Sarah Plue, Ashley DV, and Anne Jamer-Michaud, François Raymond.*

_____

Editor : Claudia Loschmann

Reach our Team