

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



Dear WQSB Staff,

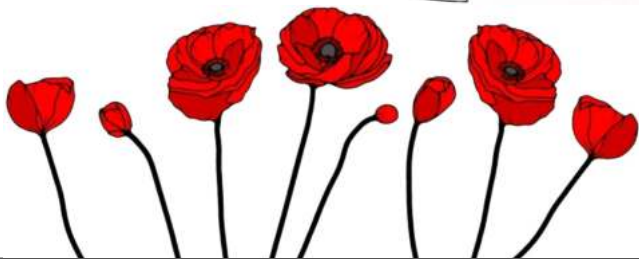
As we approach the month of November, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the significance of Remembrance Day. This day, observed on November 11th, is a time for us to honour and remember the brave women and men who have served and sacrificed for our country. Their courage and dedication have shaped the freedoms we enjoy today.

Many, if not most or all of you will be recognizing Remembrance Day through various activities and ceremonies in your schools and centres. Thank you for organizing these events designed to educate our students about the importance of this day and to pay tribute to those who have given so much. I commend you for your participation and for your role-modeling in taking this opportunity to reflect on the values of peace, freedom, and respect.

Let us come together as a community to remember and honour our veterans and active service members. Their legacy is a powerful reminder of the strength and resilience that define our nation.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our school community.

Sincerely,



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Photo by Fatima Sow

Fatima Sow

Canoe Racing at St. Micheal's High School: A Day of Fun and Team Spirit

On Friday October 11th, St. Michael's High School hosted its annual canoe racing competition at the Low Boat Launch on the beautiful Gatineau River. The event brought together students, staff members and parents for a day of friendly competition and camaraderie. This yearly event is a real success and promotes team spirit while celebrating a love and appreciation for the outdoors.

In attendance for the races were students and staff members from St. Mike's High School, Maniwaki Woodland School, Pontiac High School, D'Arcy McGee High School and Philemon Wright High School. Participants from these five WQSB high schools gathered at the Warf in the early morning, eager to take on the challenge. The course is accessible for all and stretched just about 300 metres, with buoys placed in the water to indicate the start and finish lines. Each team, made up of two students, were able to demonstrate their navigation and paddling skills as well as their ability to work together.

The event was not just about competition; it was also an opportunity to strengthen ties between high school students and staff members. The weather was perfect, food was available for purchase to fuel everyone, and echoes of laughter, cheers and excited voices could be heard across the lake, creating a joyful and light-hearted atmosphere.

At the end of the race, medals were awarded to the top three teams as well as for best team spirit. Most importantly, the memories made from this event will live on, illustrating the passion and energy of the Western Québec school community.

Many thanks to Debbie Picard, Matt Orlando and Graham Fong for organizing and facilitating this event, making it a huge success.

[Click to watch a video of the event!](#)

A. Paquin, K. Boutin, C. Loschmann

Human Resources

Teaching in Quebec: Do You Need a Brevet?



Are you a teacher at the Western Québec School Board unsure if you need a brevet?

Here’s a quick guide to teaching licenses in Québec:

Determine Your Status

Take the anonymous quiz on the Quebec.ca website: [Teaching License Application Service](#)

Types of Teaching Licenses

- 1. Teaching Diploma (Brevet): Permanent license.
- 2. Provisional Teaching License: Temporary license allowing you to work while studying.
- 3. Probationary Teaching Permit: For teachers trained outside Canada.

Tolerance

A tolerance permits non-qualified teachers to teach temporarily, as authorized by the Minister, and must be requested by the school principal.

Fast-Track Programs

Québec offers programs for those who want to become teachers quickly. Visit the Ministère de l'Éducation website for a list and map of programs.

Need Help? For more information, visit [Obtaining or Renewing a Teaching License](#) or email titularisation@education.gouv.qc.ca.

Matt Russell

Education

Culture and Citizenship in Québec – Screen Time Survey

A few weeks ago, I sat waiting in anticipation for Hayley Nesbitt’s grade 5 class at South Hull Elementary School to arrive for their Culture and Citizenship in Quebec (CCQ) class. Ms. Nesbitt explained that she had taken one of the Learning and Evaluation situations produced by Récit/LEARN and had modified it to fit the needs of her students.

Hayley’s students were working on an inquiry into screen time amongst the grade 5 and 6 students at South Hull – it is exactly what the CCQ program should be.

The CCQ program is based on the fields of sociology and ethics. These disciplines form the basis through which students develop their competency by inquiring and dialoging about the different cultural realities that they face in society.

In Ms. Nesbitt’s class, the students brainstormed and developed the survey questions, distributed the surveys and tabulated the results while I was there.

What was interesting was how the students organically discussed the results of the survey in their groups while they were tabulating the results. They compared similarities and differences, made connections to their own reference points and formed tentative conclusions.

All these activities are examples of the critical thinking skills the CCQ program seeks to build in our students.



What did they discover about screen time at South Hull?

While the results were not tallied while I was there, it looked like grade 5 and 6 students spend a lot of time on their devices, accessing social media.

What’s the next step? Ms. Nesbitt’s class is going to bring the grade 5 and 6 students all together for a town hall meeting to discuss the results of the survey, which is another example of how this program helps foster democratic citizenship.

If you have any exciting projects in CCQ or Social Studies that you are working on with your students and would like to share, please contact me at mrussell@wqsb.qc.ca

Fatima Sow

Meet Alain Paquin
the New Director of Human Resources



Human Resources (HR) are an essential part of running an organization. Beyond administrative management of employees, the department plays a strategic role in the overall success of the organization. Those who work in human resources must encompass a wide range of practices and strategies aimed at optimizing employee performance and fostering a dynamic and positive work environment.

Meet Alain Paquin, the new director of HR at the WQSB. Before moving to Des Lacs secondary school whose principal was none other than George Singfield, Sr., Alain Paquin began his career in education in 1986 as a high school mathematics and chemistry teacher at École Sacré Coeur in Masham, Québec.

Over his career, Mr. Paquin has held various positions including that of teacher, school principal, human resources director and assistant general manager (assistant director general). Alain has spent the last 26 years working at the head office of the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique in Richmond, British Columbia. This is BC’s only Francophone school board, covering 48 French schools across the province.

After retiring in July 2023, Mr. Paquin devoted a year to traveling, reading, and enjoying time with his family at their home in Palm Springs, California. However, he soon realized that his passion to work in education remained strong, and he wished to continue contributing to our field. This led him to return as director of HR this past summer for the WQSB, led this time by George Singfield, Jr.

Dixie Arial

Shoutout to Sylvie Monette

Working hard is important, but working kindly is just as important—and you’ve nailed both!

Your optimism, happiness, and overall positive attitude in the Human Resources department are a true asset, and I just wanted to say: Thank You for Being You!



With his expertise in the application and interpretation of different collective agreements, regulations, as well as recruitment, hiring and remuneration, Mr. Paquin plays a very useful role as a resource for school principals and the central office, with a goal to ensure the proper functioning of schools to offer optimal service to students, thus helping them to become responsible and engaged future citizens.

Alain Paquin most appreciates the Western Quebec School Board’s sense of camaraderie, support and mutual assistance that exists within the administrative team and throughout the board. Though he only started in August, he already feels like he is part of a close-knit family.

The Western Québec School Board warmly welcomes Mr. Paquin in his new role and wishes him a successful and smooth first year at the school board!



Stuart Gray and Lisa Diner
Did you know?
Education Technology

With Halloween right around the corner, parallel and simple circuits are a great way to add a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) to your holiday.

6 Halloween Makerspace Projects - Paper Circuits | Makerspaces.com provides step by step instructions and guidelines for six different activities all.

These project each take about 15 minutes to complete. The materials required 5 mm LED light (any colour), conductive tape such as copper tape, CR2032 coin cell batteries and the template available on the linked site.

Circuits aren’t scary... fun for everyone.



Floriane Leveder

Buckingham Elementary Students at the Foret-la-Blanche Ecological Reserve

Buckingham elementary students were lucky winners of the Foret-la-Blanche ecological reserve competition this year: three classes in cycle 3 had the opportunity to participate in a day-long field trip in the bright fall colours, making memories for life.

We had a lot of fun hiking through this protected old-growth forest: we saw frogs, cool birds such as a pileated woodpecker, all under bright sunshine. We stopped to have snacks nearby several lakes and discussed what type of fish live in the area.

Most importantly, we learned a ton about how to identify trees, how to determine their age, and how important they are in our ecosystem. Students were especially interested in learning that trees communicate with each other through their root system, thanks to a network of mushroom (fungus) that function like the internet and delivers the information to other trees around. We are very proud of our students who proved to be resilient hikers and inquisitive minds throughout the day! Great work Bisons!



Stephanie Frigon

Speed Safety Awareness at GVS

In collaboration with Cinémomètre Vivant, Golden Valley School recently participated in a safety activity organized by the Sûreté du Québec. This activity was designed to raise awareness towards respecting the speed limit in a school zone. Many thanks to Caroline Lapointe and the students of Golden Valley for your participation.



Allison Boone

Rest In Peace, George the Dog

Today was a hard day; we had to say goodbye to George.

George started coming to G. Thérberge School 9 years ago and semi-retired last year. He loved coming in and getting pats (and treats) from all of the students and staff over the years. He brought a lot of joy to GTS.

This picture is from George's last visit to the school a few weeks ago.



Lindsay Woodman
Pontiac High School Students Visit the CHSLD

In a heartwarming display of community spirit, Mme Woodman’s grade 9 French and History classes from Pontiac High School are spreading some Halloween cheer among the residents of the local CHSLD and the long-term care facility of the Shawville Hospital.

The day began with a spooky twist as the students transformed the common area of the long-term care into a delightful, haunted house. With cobwebs, friendly ghosts, and cheerful decorations, students and staff created an atmosphere that was both festive and fun. Residents and staff alike were treated to a series of light-hearted scares, complete with laughter and smiles echoing through the halls.

Following the haunted house, students then assisted with a pumpkin carving event at the CHSLD. Armed with an array of pumpkins, carving tools, and plenty of creativity, the students and residents teamed up to create some truly spooktacular designs.



These events not only provided entertainment but also fostered intergenerational connections, bridging the gap between youth and the elderly. As Halloween approaches, Mme Woodman’s students have proven that the spirit of the season is not just about tricks and treats, but also about kindness and connection.

With plans for more visits in the future, the students are excited to continue their outreach, ensuring that the elderly community feels loved and remembered, not just during the holidays, but all year round.

Geordie Productions Visits G. Th  berge, Noranda School and Golden Valley

The Montreal based Geordie Productions recently performed “The Velveteen Rabbit” at G. Th  berge, Noranda School and Golden Valley. The play focuses on the balance between using your imagination and the use of AI technology, and the young audiences were captivated by the actors as well as the set pieces!



Nancy Peterson
Pie with a Punch at PCEC



To get us in the mood for Thanksgiving at the Pontiac Continuing Education Centre we decided to do something sweet. Staff brought in a wide range of pies from apple to strawberry rhubarb that were served to everyone at lunchtime.

To wash down the pie there was a choice between hot chocolate, mulled (non-alcoholic) cider and tea. Everyone found it to be a great way to start the Thanksgiving weekend.

Laura D'Alessandro
WQSB Community Spirit

On October 10th Onslow Elementary School hosted their annual WQSB elementary school soccer tournament, where 13 Western Québec schools came together for a day of friendly competition and fun. The soccer tournament has been a long-standing tradition at Onslow since George Singfield started it in 1998.

Scores are not kept, nor are medals awarded, which takes the pressure off the students and enhances the feeling of community between schools. The weather was perfect, and both students and staff members in attendance were full of team spirit and enthusiasm!



Photos by Laura D'Alessandro and Fatima Sow





Jeff Harvey’s shoelace tying to the rescue!



Coach Phil gives a one-on-one pep talk



Special thank you to Onslow Elementary School principal Cathy Nugent for organizing public consent for student photography amongst the coaches and for providing information about the tournament.

Steve Greig, Lisa Diner, Alan Earwaker

Destination Leadership Camp 2024

Leadership and team-building skills are invaluable in the workforce and society. Employers highly value these attributes because they are difficult to teach. While specific job-related tasks can be trained, qualities such as communication, cooperation, collaboration, respect, and problem-solving are essential in any work environment. The Destination Leadership (DL) program aims to help students recognize and develop these crucial skills in a fun, active, and unique group setting.

This year, Destination Leadership took place on October 17-18 at Camp Awacamenj Mino in Low, marking its 14th year. Students, teachers, and leaders enjoyed the beautiful fall weather, with warm temperatures, clear skies, and a full moon enhancing the camp experience.

DL 2024 included 49 students and a teacher leader from each participating school: Noranda School, St. Michael’s HS, Pontiac HS, Philemon Wright HS, and D’Arcy McGee HS. Under the guidance of Steve Greig, Alan Earwaker, and Lisa Diner, Grade 10 and 11 students learned about the qualities and skills of a positive leader during the two-day camp.

The camp featured a variety of activities, including large group team-building challenges and small group discussions, providing opportunities for deeper engagement. There are also group discussions about “how to become a leader”, combined with the opportunity to practice being a leader during teamwork challenges. The goal was to learn about leadership while practicing and developing essential skills related to respect, trust, cooperation, collaboration, compassion, participation, effective communication, a positive attitude, and problem-solving.



These students will have the chance to further hone their skills at the Destination Imagination Tournament on March 21, 2025. DL students will form a critical team, leading activities and volunteering at the tournament.

This unique initiative allows students to connect with peers and make friends from other WQSB high schools in a non-competitive environment. Many students form lasting friendships and connections. Group meals and activities foster teamwork and bonding, with many students citing these connections and friendships as their favorite memories, along with personal growth and self-discovery.

Over the last 14 years, Destination Leadership has provided hundreds of students with a safe space and the guidance needed to step into leadership roles with confidence. This unique program not only builds character and leadership skills but also enhances students’ self-worth and sense of community within the Western Québec School Board.



Julia Horner
Ms. Gibbs Gets the Snip at Eardley

Last month, resource teacher Josie Gibbs decided to add some motivation to the fundraising efforts of Eardley students for the Terry Fox Walk by shaving her head if the students achieved their goal. As a school, Eardley had set a goal of \$3000, and they blew it out of the water, raising a whopping \$4586.25!

Special Education Technician Brad Snooks had the honour of shaving Ms. Gibbs’ hair in front of an enthusiastic audience in the gymnasium. A big thank you to Josie Gibbs for making the commitment for Terry Fox and making the challenge extra fun for the students at Eardley.



David McFall
Pies to the Face at PETES



Today was a classic tale of “you can run but you cannot hide”. Well today I could not hide. The prize for the homerooms who raised the most money for Terry Fox was a chance to “pie” the principal and vice principal. I happened to be away the afternoon of October 11th, so Ms. Georgeadis and my stand-in (Ms. Frankie, our school life animator) were good sports and stood tall and were pied in the face by two classes.

I had thought that by some stroke of luck I had missed my chance to be pied; however, students of Madam Sylvie’s class did not forget. Today, during morning recess, each student in the class had a chance to pie me in the face. I thought they would have had to throw the pie (whip cream) from a distance (and that some would miss); but oh no, they were able to squish the pie right into my face.



Who would have thought that pieing the principal would have been something students would have wanted to do and watch! I don’t think I’ve ever heard as much laughter and seen students so excited. The chorus of “pie in the face” is still ringing in my ears. All in the name of a good cause!



Across the Board!



The WQCC did a cash prize raffle at lunch with delicious treats for sale and proved that you're never too old for Halloween



Principal Neil Fleming causing screams at DWKS



Staff & students went all out for Halloween at Noranda School



Everyone at St. John's Elementary School visited Saunders Farm!

Across the Board!



Cute set of bananas at PETES



Hadley JR/PWHS found all the Waldos & Wilmas!



Super heroes and villains visit DRSEM



Brilliant staff domino effect at GG



GVS staff got the assignment!



Box of crayons found at GTS's Halloween dance



PHS students create explosive pumpkins



Eardley's doors are ready



Val-d'Or Continuing Education Centre in the spirit



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COST: 150\$

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Erin Millar

Book Lists
and Resources for Remembrance Day



As we approach Remembrance Day, it's important to reflect on the significance of this occasion with our students.

To support these discussions, we’ve curated a list of books in both English and French, suitable for students from Kindergarten to Grade 11.



Picture Books

- The Eleventh Hour*, by Jacques Goldstyn
- What If Soldiers Fought With Pillows?: True Stories of Imagination and Courage*, by Heather Camlot
- Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World’s Most Famous Bear, by Lindsay Mattick
- What Does Peace Feel Like?, by Vladimir Radunsky
- In Flanders Fields: The Story of the Poem by John McCrae, by Linda Granfield
- Cher Ami: Based on The World War I Legend of the Fearless Pigeon, by Mélisande Potter
- Captain Rosalie*, by Timothée de Fombelle
- Soldier for Equality: José de la Luz Sáenz and the Great War, by Duncan Tonatiuh
- L'Histoire des chênes de Vimy: la route vers la paix, de Linda Granfield

Novels

- Code Talker, by Joseph Bruchac
- Private Peaceful, by Michael Morpugo
- War is Over, by David Almond
- The Button War, by Avi
- Stay Where You Are Then Leave*, by John Boyne
- Winnie’s Great War*, by Lindsay Mattick and Josh Greenhut

Novels YA

- Home is Beyond the Mountains, by Celia Barker-Lottridge
- The Stone Carvers*, by Jane Urquhart
- Lines of Courage, by Jennifer A. Neilsen
- And Then the Sky Exploded, by David A. Poulsen
- Last Christmas in Paris, by Hazel Gaynor and Heather Webb

The list includes titles that focus on Remembrance Day itself, the history and impact of World War I, as well as books that explore themes of peace.

We hope these selections provide valuable resources for your classrooms and libraries, whether to help navigate conversations about war, history, or the enduring importance of peace.

These stories can offer meaningful ways to engage students across different age groups in thoughtful reflection during this time of remembrance. Laurence Binyon’s poem holds true, “They shall not grow old/ as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning/ We will remember them.”

As the leaves continue to change and fall, we recognize that this season is full of observances and celebrations, including Halloween, Diwali, and El Día de los Muertos. Whatever your students may be celebrating, we wish you all a season of meaningful connections and learning.

*also available in French

Non-Fiction

- What Was World War I?, by Nico Medina
- World War I: Why They Fought, by Rebecca Rissman
- Remembrance Day, by Heather Hudak
- Shooting at the Stars: The Christmas Truce of 1914, by John Hendrix
- Indigenous Peoples in the World Wars, by Simon Rose
- Black Poppies: The Story of Britain’s Black Community in the First World War, by Stephen Bourne
- Grace Banker and Her Hello Girls Answer the Call: The Heroic Story of WWI Telephone Operators, by Claudia Friddell
- Remembering John McCrae, by Linda Granfield
- Voices of World War I: Stories From the Trenches, by Ann Heinrichs
- The War to End All Wars, by Russell Freedman
- What is War?* by Eduard Altarriba
- 50 Choses à Savoir Sur La Première Guerre Mondiale, de Jim Eldridge

Online Resources

- Constellations, La Grande Guerre:
https://constellations.education.gouv.qc.ca/index.php?p=rech_res
- Historica Canada First World War Education Guide:
<http://education.historicacanada.ca/en/tools/20>
- Historica Canada First World War and Canadian Points of View:
<http://education.historicacanada.ca/en/tools/202>
- Historica Canada Remembrance Day in the Classroom, A Teacher Resource Kit: <http://education.historicacanada.ca/en/tools/672>
- Canadian War Museum, Remembrance Day:
<https://www.warmuseum.ca/remembrance-day/#/>
- Veterans Affairs Canada, Learning Videos*:
<https://veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/information-for/educators/learning-videos>

Lee Randall
Spotlight on the Virtual Library



Biblius is an online e-book platform, accessible via Mozaik, for all public schools in the province. This selection of unlimited-access works includes a total of 451 titles, including 29 books available in FROG format.

To find out more about Biblius: how to read a book, assign books to students and more, please visit Aide Biblius.

Happy reading!

Found in the WQSB Time Capsule



In the early 90's this WQSB staff member began her education at Greater Gatineau Elementary School (then known as St. Aloysius) before moving to the Dominican Republic for several years.

Upon returning, she attended D'Arcy McGee High School, graduating in 2004.

She currently works in service of all 31 schools and centres, as well as most departments at the board.

Shortly after this photo was taken by her uncle, photographer Paul Couvrette, she picked up the family camera and began taking photos of her own. She still uses the skill to this day!

Gazette Editions

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THANK YOU!

We extend our gratitude to our contributors this month

George Singfield, Fatima Sow, Laura D'Alessandro Debbie Picard, Graham Fong, Alain Paquin, Krystal Boutin, Claudia Loschmann, Matt Russell, Stuart Grey, Lisa Diner, Dixie Arial, Floriane Leveder, Stephanie Frigon, Allison Boone, Lindsay Woodman, Jennifer Seely, Nancy Peterson, Cathy Nugent, Steve Greig, Alan Earwaker, Julia Horner, David McFall, Frankie Vermette, Ashley Dorrington-Vladars, Graham Olson, Ashley Smith, Erin Millar and Lee Randall.

Gazette created by Fatima Sow and Laura D'Alessandro

Have a WQSB story to share? Reach out to our team!