Regina Catholic School Division Director's Communiqué

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"Go Make a Difference – Love Your Neighbour as Yourself"

A Message from Domenic Scuglia, Director of Education

With Staff Appreciation Week this month, I want to begin this newsletter by extending my sincere appreciation for each and every employee in the Regina Catholic School Division. Each of you is a special gift to our students, staff, parents and community. I am grateful for all that you do, and I recognize the efforts you make that add up to create a wonderful place to learn and grow in faith. Paying attention to every detail is what makes our division run well. From the clean and functional buildings, to safe and welcoming playgrounds and hallways, to smiling staff members assisting students and families, to the front line teachers in the classroom, every one of you is a blessing. Pope Francis recently tweeted, "Christian unity is not the fruit of our human efforts but a gift that comes from above." Your concerted efforts have led to the gift we have of Catholic Education. Thank you.

Highlights from the past month include celebrating Epiphany, beginning Kindergarten registration, and opening registration for all students planning to attend our three new schools: St. Kateri Tekakwitha School, St. Nicholas School, and École St. Elizabeth. It was also an honour to have an opportunity to meet Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at Nicky's Café. Our hope is to have him visit Miller Comprehensive Catholic High School (which is celebrating its 50th Anniversary along with Archbishop M. C. O'Neill Catholic High School) at some point in the year as his father did as Prime Minister in 1972. Unfortunately, this visit did not afford Prime Minister Trudeau the time to do so, but the reminder and invitation was again extended at Nicky's Café.

The 6th Annual SWISH Basketball tournament at Miller Comprehensive Catholic High School featured fantastic competition among our elementary schools. Thank you to all who made the tournament a possibility. It was a great peek into the future of athletics in RCSD, and that future is very bright.

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We have a strong team of administrators meeting with clergy to strengthen and enhance the relationship between our schools and parishes. Those relationships are an important part of what we do, and we must remember to nurture them. We aren't just teaching the incredibly important skills of literacy and numeracy; we are educating the whole child and supporting their journey of faith. To do that, we need to ask for holy support from our community churches.

During his New Year's Day homily, Archbishop Don Bolen said, "We live in a time of political instability and confusion. To flourish on this earth, we need to reach a maturity - reflected in economic and political priorities and decision-making - that would correspond to our technology and the ways in which our world is changing, becoming more interconnected." It's an important thought as we wait to see what "transformational change" will mean for us. Sadly, the unknown of this fiscal reality has generated anxiety among many of us wondering what the outcome will be. As people of faith, we put our trust in our God that He will look after our needs as the announcements are made in the coming weeks. We commit to communicating information and any impact it may have on our division, as soon as it is made available to us. In the meantime, let us focus on the things we have control over in our lives and be thankful of the many blessings in our surroundings.

You are always in my prayers. Have a great month of February.

God bless,

Dom

Meeting Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Thursday, January 26: École St. Pius X grade 6 student Emma Rose McNamara, RCSD Board and Senior Admin.

Prayer in Action

Mr. Kauf and Mrs. LeCouffe's grade 7 & 8 classrooms at St. Josaphat School spent their December taking time to remember the words of Mother Teresa "Prayer in action is love. Love in action is service." Students completed an act of service each day till Christmas break, ensuring to put others before themselves. Some of the service acts participated in by grade 7/8 Rebels were creating prayer cards for Holy Trinity Food Hampers, decorating cookies to visit with seniors after Mass, creating messages on Food Bank boxes, holding a prayer service for those in need, and spending an hour with 60 sets of hands cleaning Holy Trinity Parish by scraping gum off pews, washing windows, scrubbing each pew and restocking pew pockets. Our hearts become filled when we come together to serve.

Speech Buddies

The Kindergarten and Grade 3/4 students in the buddy program at St. Francis Community School participated in activities that developed their language skills. Through collaboration with the school Speech-Language Pathologist, the teachers provided opportunities for both little and big buddies to use their oral language skills. Plus, it was a whole lot of fun!

Career Education

The Service & Hospitality Safety Association travelled to St. Peter School to talk to the Grade 6 students in Karen Goodon's and Patrick Brennan's classes (top photo). The second picture shows the SHSA at École St. Mary with teachers Martin Duguay (seated right) and Malia Carson (back to camera, seated left) and their Grade 6 students. The SHSA's presentations address 4 of the 6 outcomes in Grade 6 Career Education. Plus, the SHSA is trying to improve the culture of safety in Saskatchewan, and they know it starts with our young people!

Holy Rosary Twinsies! Principal Markus Rubrecht and Teacher Simon Firnesz made a plan to combine cardigan power for Twin Day at Holy Rosary Community School. Even their sneakers matched!

Teachable Moment

Aeliesha Brooks from the Canadian Mental Health Association (Sask Division) gave a great presentation to Simon Firnesz's grade 7/8 students at Holy Rosary about gambling, online gaming, social betting, etc. In the photo, she is shown listening to Simon as he takes advantage of a teachable moment to summarize a few of the excellent points she made which connected to outcomes in Health, Math and Social Studies. It was incredible timing for the Jan 25 Let's Talk day, and we look forward to more connections between our curricular outcomes and our local community!

Highway 47

On January 31 and February 1, St. Gregory School, St. Michael Community School, Archbishop M. C. O'Neill Catholic High School and Our Lady of Peace Parish took over the Regina Performing Arts Centre. A collaborative musical called *Highway 47* involved students from all three schools, plus several parishioners. The performance followed along a highway, observing parables set in modern day. The singing, dancing and acting was polished by directors Sharlene Holliday (St. Gregory School Principal) and Stacy Grunert (Our Lady of Peace Pastoral Assistant).

Study the Game Tape

by Dean Vendramin, Archbishop M. C. O'Neill Catholic High School

I recently had the good fortune to work with an intern. It is always great professional development and a chance to impact the future of teaching by working with an aspiring teacher. Our internship journey had a unique, reflective, and what I feel is a game changing twist. This twist is commonplace in many other professions and that is video analysis. Just like a football team would get the game film and break down what happened on offense, defense, and special teams and look for tendencies, strengths, and weaknesses in order to learn from and improve on last week's performance, this process was very similar.

We embarked on what was know as the TIFA (Teacher/Intern/Faculty Advisor) program lead by Dr. Kathy Nolan of the Education Math Department at the University of Regina. The process involved recording an intern's lesson, editing and submitting a 10-15-minute portion of a lesson, then getting together with the Faculty Advisor, other educators, and other interns to break down, reflect, and discuss what was in the video. First the video was shown in its entirety with the group writing down different elements of what they noticed in the lesson and the delivery. Noticing points could be on content, classroom management, student response, and more, but the key thing was to just notice and not make judgement statements in the first round of open reflection. We would go around and make statements like 'saw head was down', 'heard you say cancel out', or 'the students had many questions on that problem'. After a round of noticing the intern who was videoed was able to make reflective comments on what was noticed, offered explanations, and made connections to all elements of their teaching. Finally, we had a round where we could drill deeper on an area that stood out and have a deep, meaningful conversation with all involved. The atmosphere created for this type of reflection was safe, open, and trusting. We had two meetings that were face to face and these days were meaningful professional development for all involved. We also did one session via video conferencing where we previewed the videos on our own and came to the meeting having seen the videos and did our noticing before hand. The face to face was more personal and intimate, but the video conference was also effective as the technology worked well and was time and cost effective. During the last session, cooperating teachers we also invited to share a clip of one of their lesson. I took this opportunity to get feedback and share some of my practices. I appreciated the candid feedback and the ideas that it generated for me. Overall, it was a great experience and enriched the internship process for me and the members of this group.

This process involves having a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset. This opportunity is not meant as a way to judge, but rather a way to improve and reflect. We can all get better at our craft. I would also like to see this at a school level with teachers working together and sharing 'game' film and having conversations about teaching. I have reflected on these experiences and would invite others to consider this type of professional development. Looking for a couple resources to help you explore this opportunity? Check out https://www.edutopia.org/blog/video-pd-power-of-observation-nira-dale or Focus on Teaching Using Video for High-Impact Instruction by Jim Knight.

As always feel free to e-mail me at d.vendramin@rcsd.ca or follow me on Twitter @vendi55.

St. Gregory News

St. Gregory School has been creating St. Gregory News (SGN) newscasts all year. This month, the crew took a tour of CTV Regina to get an idea of what it would be like to be part of a professional newscast. CTV's newsroom was impressed by what SGN has been doing, and even aired part of their newcast! You can check out their hard work on Amy Perry's YouTube Channel.

Beautiful Gift

Having taught in the Regina Catholic School Division for 43 years, Rose Muchowski recently made a very large donation to honour her career. Rose taught 42 years of her teaching career at St. Augustine Community School which alone is quite an anomaly. Superintendent Michele Braun, a former colleague and St. Augustine Vice Principal Tricia Shynkaruk, a former student of Rose's, presented Rose with some flowers as a small token of thank you for her donation. This story is proof that the far reaching effects of a teacher never end.

Foods 20 Final Exam at Archbishop M. C. O'Neill Catholic High School: Burgers, Fries and Oreo Milkshakes. Final exams have never been this delicious!

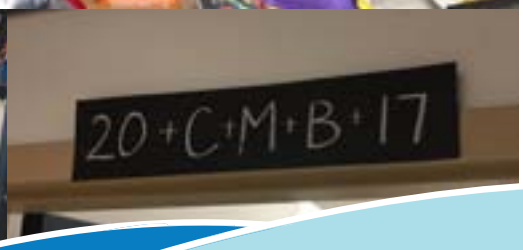
Epiphany Liturgy

On Thursday, January 12, 2017, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys School hosted a rare, special Epiphany liturgy with two different Rites within the Catholic church: the Latin Rite and the Ukrainian Byzantine Rite. In Christian churches, Epiphany celebrates the revelation of God to humanity.

The celebration was held between the official dates for Epiphany in the Gregorian and Julian calendars. Fr. Stephen Bill and Fr. Carlos Ferdinand of Resurrection Roman Catholic Parish and Fr. Vlad Simunovic of St. Basil the Great Ukrainian Catholic Parish concelebrated, according to their respective Rites. Fr. Stephen Bill emphasized the 3 Kings and Fr. Vlad the Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan, which included a special water blessing. Families were invited to send small jars for holy water distribution and home use.

After the liturgy, the newly blessed water was used by the priests and our own Deacon Joe to bless the school, classrooms, students, staff, and materials – it was a wet, fun morning! Following the blessings, the chalking of the door tradition was also done at each classroom.

January 12 is also the Feast Day for the school's patroness, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys. A delicious perogy lunch was served in honour of the three celebrations.



I Love Sandwiches

St. Jerome School teacher Megan Schlechter was thrilled to introduce Fred Penner to the entire school after she entered - and won!- a concert with Fred from CBC Saskatchewan. Fred 's performance was heart warming. His caring, talent and enthusiasm combined to create a cheerful and meaningful show. The kids, and teachers, loved every moment of his concert. The volume of the singalong was highest for "I Love Sandwiches!"

New School Prep

Principals Monica Norris and James Wahl are now working out of an office at the Catholic Education Centre as they prepare for the openings of their new schools, St. Kateri Tekakwitha School and St. Nicholas School, respectively. Principal Daniel Lizée continues to serve as principal at École St. Andrew, which will close at the end of June. Meanwhile, Daniel is also preparing to open a new school this fall - École St. Elizabeth. All three are now accepting registrations.

None are offering tours, but the principals all appreciate the interest. RCSD will not have keys until the summer. Once move in is complete, there may be opportunities for staff tours, but until then, tours are limited. To tide you over, the photo to the right shows the progress in a washroom area at St. Nicholas School.

Signs of Your Identity

Miller Comprehensive Catholic High School Education Leader Jodi Wilton invited Pulitzer Center Award winning photographer Daniella Zalcman to speak to staff at the school about her Saskatchewan Residential School Survivor Book Project – www.signsofyouridentity.com. Daniella's message brought new insight on the sufferings of Indigenous Peoples and how we can move forward in agency. The presentation led to thoughtful discussion.

Registration on Now

Special thank you to kindergarten teacher Diana Holle-Meyers and her class at St. Theresa School. Each student was photographed for the registration awareness campaign on right now. Their beautiful faces are up on digital billboards, several websites geared toward parents of young children, in social media, and for some print ads.

Tweets from Pope Francis *@Pontifex*

"There can be no true peace if everyone claims always and exclusively his or her own rights, without caring for the good of others."

"There can never be true peace as long as a single human being is violated in his or her personal identity. "

""Be not afraid, for I am with you". Let us communicate hope and trust in our time!"

"Today I want to remember in my heart all the victims of the Holocaust. May their sufferings and their tears never be forgotten. "

"God wants us all to see one another as brothers and to live as such, forming a great human family that is harmonious in its diversity."

Thank you

Board Chair Donna Ziegler presented past Chair Frank Flegel with a gavel to mark his years of service for the Regina Catholic School Division at the January Board Meeting. Thank you, Frank, for all that you've done.

Weekly Events

Starting soon, there will be a weekly notice going out to share information about events in the Regina Catholic School Division. Please share with us events that the entire division should know about: sports tournaments, musicals, band and choral concerts, art galas, special masses and liturgies, etc. We will spread the news of all the good that is happenning in our schools. Send your information to:

events@rcsd.ca.

Month at a Glance - February 2017

French Second-Language Education Week is February 6-10.

Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week is February 12-18.

Family Day is February 20.

Winter Break is February 21-24.

Red Cross Pink Day is February 22 (Activities will be held week prior).

Clean Monday is February 27.

Ash Wednesday is March 1.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.