



REGIONAL UPDATE

March/April 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In this edition of the Regional Executive Director's report, I am pleased to highlight and celebrate the accomplishments of students, staff and community across our region in a number of different areas.

Education Week was held from April 14 to 20, 2024 highlighting Connections to Community. I would like to extend my congratulations to the staff members who were recognized for their exceptional contributions in creating strong partnerships with our larger community. Their leadership and dedication to creating these important relationships and the learning opportunities they developed that enhance these connections are invaluable.

In keeping with the vital importance of our connections to community I want to thank our many volunteers that support our students and staff across the region. National Volunteer Week was held from April 14 to 20, 2024. You will see a sample of some of the incredible work our volunteers are doing to support schools. Thank you for the time and generosity you give to our students.

On March 28, 2024 many students in grades five to nine participated in the Regional Science Fair at the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre. Students who participated not only demonstrated their passion for science but also a commitment to academic excellence. Each project showcased ingenuity, creativity, and a genuine curiosity about the world around us.

Finally, you will find a snapshot of the learning opportunities as well as pilot projects that are occurring in our schools. I thank our principals who are leading their teams focused on student success, and all staff who are working to create safe and inclusive environments, with a culturally responsive lens.

Angela Gladwin
Acting Regional Executive Director

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Parent/Guardian Questions and Concerns?



Who do I contact when I have a question or concern?

- 1) **For curriculum or classroom-related questions** - please start with your child's teacher. If required, follow up with the school principal.
- 2) **For questions about the Pre-primary Program** – start with your child's Lead Early Childhood Educator. If required, follow up with the Facilitator of Pre-primary Programs at jcameron@ssrce.ca.
- 3) **For questions about programs and services available from community partners and at school** – and how to access these supports, please contact the SchoolsPlus, Shannon Vincent, by email at svincent@ssrce.ca.
- 4) **For questions related to busing, bus stops, and/or bus routes** – please contact SSRCE Transportation.
- 5) **For general inquiries** – please contact the SSRCE where we will be happy to connect you with the appropriate staff member: 902-543-2468 or receptionist@ssrce.ca.
- 6) **For all other matters and media inquired** – please contact Ashley Gallant, Coordinator of Communications by phone at 902-521-9712 or by email at agallant@ssrce.ca

Volunteers Needed

RootED Call for Volunteers

RootED is currently seeking volunteers to join their Board of Directors and help raise funds to support equity meals and cafeteria equipment in our schools.

School food within SSRCE is supported by RootED, a not-for-profit organization committed to investing in our children and schools, to build a healthy food culture in our South Shore school communities. Click [here](#) to find out more about RootED and how to volunteer.



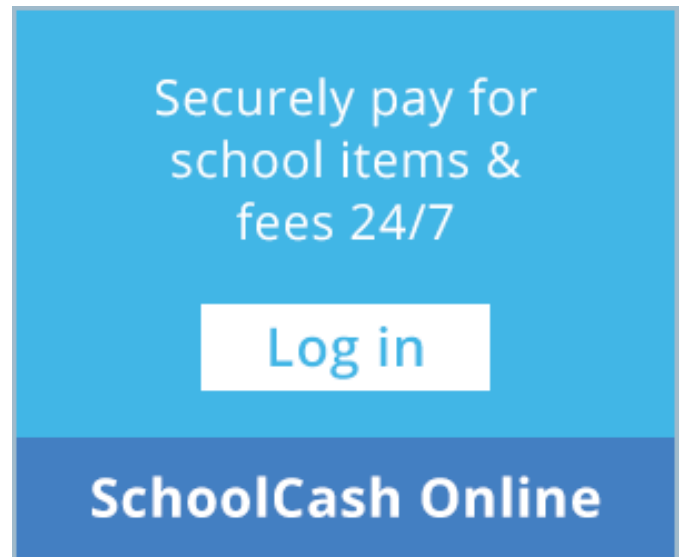
SchoolCash Online

Have you signed up yet?

SchoolCash Online as our preferred method of payment for school fees, including everything from field trips to yearbooks to lunches.

SchoolCash Online helps parents and community members pay school-related fees safely, quickly, and easily. By using SchoolCash Online, you help increase efficiency and security at your school by making payments directly into your school's bank account. This allows teachers and administrative assistants to focus on helping students, and not counting cash. In addition, you are immediately informed about school activities.

Registering for SchoolCash Online is safe, simple, secure. Create an account [here](#).



Upcoming Dates to Remember

- Monday – Friday, May 13-28, 2024 - Grade 3 Literacy and Math Assessments
- Monday, May 20, 2024 – Victoria Day
- Tuesday, May 21- Tuesday, June 4, 2024 – Grade 8 RWM Assessment
- Wednesday, May 29, 2024 - Embedded CLT (90-minute early dismissal)
- Monday, June 17, 2024 – NS Virtual School Summative Assessments
- Wednesday, June 19, 2024 – Semester 2 Summative Assessments Begin
- Wednesday, June 26, 2024 – Assessment/Evaluation Day (10-12)
- Thursday, June 27, 2024 – Assessment/Evaluation Day (P-12)
- Friday, June 28, 2024 – Report Card Distribution (P-12); Last Day

LOCAL VOICE: Public Engagement Sessions

Regional Public Engagement Session: March 6, 2024

As part of the initiatives in the [Strengthening Local Voices in Education](#) SSRCE (South Shore Regional Centre for Education) was pleased to host our first regional Public Engagement Session on March 6, 2024 at Hebbville Academy. The event was universally designed with an interactive virtual component, and sign language interpretation. We appreciate all of those who were able to participate, ask questions and provide feedback in person, as well as online.

The focus of this introductory session was to provide information on where we are in our region with student well-being, student achievement and capital planning, and to provide an overview of our region's departments. This was followed by small group discussions on each area to allow for questions, discussion and to provide feedback on the guiding questions listed below.

- What do you see as the priority for our students?
- What are you wondering? Is there anything that surprises you? What else would you like to know about in the future?
- What barriers could we remove to support student success?
- Going forward, how do we work together as partners for student success?

The themes that emerged from the discussions and feedback are noted in the bullets under each area.

Student Achievement

- Increase home and school connections and sharing information on how families can support literacy.
- Continue the work on improving reading and writing skills
- Improve middle school math achievement

Student Well-being

- Increase feelings of safety at school for ALL students
- Continue to build skills with students and staff to support emotional health and well-being
- Continue with anti-racism and anti-discrimination education
- Provide cultural supports including diverse perspectives

Capital Planning

- Continue sharing communication on how decisions are made to avoid assumptions about the process.
- Resolve bus cancellations
- Extremely interested in understanding the funding process

In addition, we received feedback on the format of the session itself, with suggestions on how we could increase and gather diverse viewpoints. There was a request to focus less on regional data sets and more on qualitative insights from the participants.

We are pleased to be hosting a second introductory Regional Public Engagement Session on May 15, 2024 at South Queens Junior High. We look forward to this chance to share and discuss information, receive feedback, and respond to questions.

LOCAL VOICE: Public Engagement Sessions

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS



Wed. March 6, Hebbville Academy
6-7:30 p.m.

Wed. May 15, South Queens Middle School
6-7:30 p.m.

We will be holding our second Public Engagement session on May 15th at South Queens Middle School (with a virtual option). For parents/guardians who attended the March 6th session, the same information will be covered at this upcoming session, so there is no need to attend this one as well. The sessions this year are introductory in nature and the format and information going forward will be responsive based on your feedback from these initial sessions.

Date & Location: **Wed. May 15, 2024** at South Queens Middle School, 157 Old Bridge Street, Liverpool or virtually.

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

What: The session will be led by the Regional Executive Director, with senior staff providing break out information sessions on the following topics: Student Achievement, Student Well-Being, and Capital Planning.

RSVP: For planning purposes, we ask that you **please [RSVP here](#)** and indicate if you plan to attend in-person or virtually.

If you have questions related to the sessions, please email communications@ssrce.ca.

Strengthening Local Voice

Regional Student Advisory Council

We are thrilled to announce that we have established our Regional Student Advisory Council as another part of the provincial [Strengthening Local Voices in Education](#) initiative. The role of the council is to lend student voice to topics such as achievement, well-being, and other aspects of student experiences, especially as it relates to the Student Success Survey.

The council is comprised of student members ranging from grades 7 to 12 who represent the four community of school groups in our region and the rich diversity of our communities to ensure various perspectives and voices are heard. The council advises the Regional Executive Director.

We had our first meeting on April 26, 2024 and hosted 9 students at our inaugural Regional Student Advisory Council event. These students participated in a deep dive into four areas of the Student Success Survey; including The School Environment; Time at School; Racism/Discrimination/Homophobia or Transphobia and Technology. The team was very engaged and provided thoughtful stories, examples and viewpoints to be considered. Student feedback will be reviewed, lending another student lens and voice to help determine areas of priority work for next year.

The Regional Student Advisory Council will meet three times per year, once in each term. We will add additional meetings as needed and requested by the Regional Executive Director or members of the council.



SSRCE Regional School Advisory Council

Another initiative we are excited to be starting is the establishment of a Regional School Advisory Council. We have worked with our School Advisory Councils (SACs) to receive expressions of interest and are pleased to report that we have established our first regional school advisory council membership with representation from across the region and our diverse communities. This committee will provide advice and input directly to the Regional Executive Director (RED), share community issues, and discuss potential solutions. The focus of the committee will be on student achievement and well-being; enhancing local voice; and relevant local issues as determined by the group. It will help ensure the School Advisory Councils (SACs) are more connected to the SSRCE regionally and create another resource for the region to tap into local voice. Our first Regional School Advisory Council meeting will be held on June 6, 2024. Going forward the council will meet three times a year, with both in person and virtual options available.

School Advisory Council Professional Development Session

On Tuesday, April 23rd we held our annual Spring professional development session with regional staff, school administrators, and chairpersons. The agenda items were generated by priorities identified by our School Advisory Councils and included a session on the SSRCE work with well-being called, "Creating Conditions for Well-Being for Staff and Students." There was also a request to provide an update on The South Shore Food Project and draw connections with the exciting direction for food in schools provincially. The end of the evening focused on networking and collaborating to share practices across the School Advisory Councils. I want to thank our SAC (School Advisory Council) members who generously volunteer their time and share their insights to support our students' achievement, well-being, and overall success at school.

Want to know more about the role and work of SACs? Please check out the link:

[School Advisory Council Information](#)



New Germany Consolidation Update

Recently, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Honourable Becky Druhan, approved the consolidation report for New Germany Rural High School and New Germany Elementary School, based on the public consultation process that occurred in the fall of 2023.

The next steps will be for the Department of Public Works to conduct a site selection, which will begin in the near future. As part of this process there will be a chance for public feedback. We will continue to update you as we receive further information.

Last spring, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development asked teachers across the Province to share their **Ideas for Education**, to generate innovative ways to improve the education system.

Several new roles were created by these pilots in the SSRCE to support both student and staff success.

Match Experienced Mentors with New Teachers

Elizabeth Brideau-Clark (Liz) is a retired teacher with 32 years' experience teaching English Language Arts at various grade levels. Liz was a Literacy Mentor earlier in her career and a Literacy Coach before retiring.

The idea for an experienced mentor to support new teachers came from feedback gathered as part of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Ideas for Education survey. This idea strengthens support for professionals early in their career and captures the strength of experienced colleagues who are willing to assist their peers.

What does the mentor do?

The Teacher Mentor supports teachers who are new to teaching at their grade level within the last two years. Through conversations with teachers, Liz and the teacher decide how to best support student growth. Some of the support Liz has been offering includes:

- Foundational literacy skills in word reading and spelling
- Writing stamina and instruction
- Modeling small group instruction for reading comprehension
- Writing units (development of the unit, creation of resources, delivery of lessons, organization of learning centers and assistance with student writing and publishing)
- Co-assessment of student learning
- Preparation for the upcoming provincial assessment



Teacher Mentor: Elizabeth Brideau-Clark (left) and Immersion Teacher: Joline Gaudet (right)

How is the Pilot going?

Teachers are very receptive and happy to receive support. They are especially pleased to have another teacher they can rely on to assist with small or large groups, who already knows the content and teaching strategies. Currently Liz is supporting five schools, which allows for regularly scheduled time slots for each classroom.

Grade three teacher Martha Farquhar-McDonnell said, *"I have really appreciated Liz's flexibility and support with literacy. She was able to support with detailed running records with some of my students. The data we gathered has been helpful for my planning and communication with the families. She also worked with my students in small groups on bumping up their writing, which has been valuable."*

Mathematics Specialist Pilot: Bayview Community School

Jenna Kilfoil, Math Specialist for this pilot program, has been working with her colleagues to teach, co-teach, co-plan, co-assess and support grades 3-6 students in mathematics.

Jenna has also hosted two family nights, where families had the opportunity to experience how their child is learning mathematics. The response was positively received, with overwhelming feedback citing the night was extremely helpful. Multiple families also shared that their child has now developed a passion for math. Another family shared that their child does not want to stay home when they are sick because they do not want to miss math class!

Teachers are also noticing a positive change in student mindset about mathematics. When students were surveyed, 88% reported that they feel great about math, and 99% said they felt great about their ability to do math in class! These survey results confirm what the teachers are noticing in class. Preliminary evaluations of the pilot are promising. Grade 4 students have seen an increase of 38 percent of students meeting expectations from October to April, and Grade 5 classes saw a similar increase of 30 percent.

Jenna has received positive feedback from her colleagues who have enjoyed having Jenna teach weekly in their classes to model and co-teach lessons. Adam MacDonald, Grade 4/5 Teacher said *"I have very much enjoyed having Jenna in the pilot. I have learned a lot by watching her and it has been nice having someone so knowledgeable to bounce ideas off."*

"Having Jenna available during and outside of instructional time has been invaluable. She can access resources, provide teaching tips, support student and family learning as well as collaborate more effectively."

Jenna's knowledge of the curriculum, best learning practices and differentiated teaching ensures all our students have been given excellent support.

Without her in the school these past months, we certainly would not have improved our teaching methods, provided better differentiated instruction nor would we have enjoyed teaching math so much." Kelly Cooksley - Grade 5 Teacher.



Classroom teacher: Kelly Cooksley (left)
and Math Specialist: Jenna Kilfoil (right)

Child and Youth Care Practitioner Pilot: Dr John C. Wickwire Academy

We have a Child and Youth Care Practitioner (CYCP) for this pilot, who has been working with the staff and students at Dr John C. Wickwire Academy to help build relationships and trust with some of our students who require extra support. The CYCP assists with co-regulation and trauma informed behavior support and building community connections. There has been a strong focus on getting to know the students and their interests and then participating in activities to educate the student further in that interest.

One example of this experience has been a student who likes to cook, so they have been making different meals together at the school. The next step will be to teach the student how to create a grocery list and to build a budget when it comes to grocery shopping. The CYCP has also been working on plans to take a small group of students to the local art gallery for art lessons.

Teachers have welcomed this additional support person in their classroom who they can collaborate with to ensure student achievement and well-being.

Collaborative Learning Time (CLT)

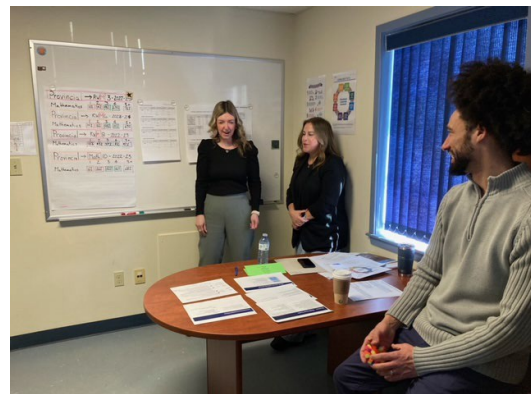
What is embedded CLT? Collaborative Learning Teams are a group of educators who meet regularly to examine student data, work collaboratively to improve teaching practices and respond to student needs, to share expertise, and support the academic performance and well-being of students. CLT days happen 14 times a school year and students are dismissed 90 minutes early. To ensure your child doesn't miss any instructional time, all other school days have been extended by a few minutes each day. The essential skills are still taught each day in all classes.



In March, French Immersion teachers from Bluenose Academy and Bridgewater Elementary Gathered to discuss examples of their students' writing. This teacher-led work is part of their CLT focus on creating a writing continuum to align expectations for French Immersion.

Regional Student Success Plan

At the March and April administrators meeting, the Administrators worked together as part of the Regional Leadership Team to review the most current data that informs our Student Success Plan. The specific actions and strategies in this plan are responsive to student needs and our identified areas of growth. We will be seeking feedback and input on this plan from our Regional School Advisory Council as we revise it for the upcoming school year.



SEE INSIDE OUR CLASSROOMS

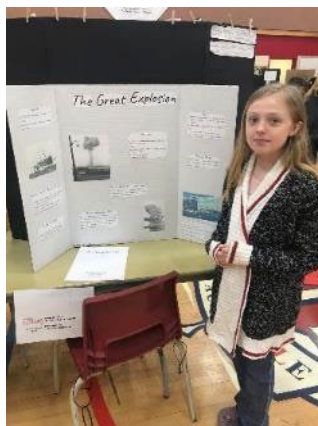
Heritage Fair



The Heritage Fair took place in April and gave many students the opportunity to share their learning with classmates, volunteer judges, and families. Newcomville Elementary School students (pictured above, two pictures on the left). Bridgewater Junior High had over 170 students who shared their learning with classmates, volunteer judges, and families. Twenty students were recognized for their efforts with awards, and 10 students will advance to the Regional Heritage Fair. (pictured above, to the right).

Hebbville Academy has 11 students who will be advancing on to the Regional Heritage Fair in May. (pictured left).

Congratulations to all students who will be advancing to the Regional Heritage Fair!



SEE INSIDE OUR CLASSROOMS



Students at New Ross Consolidated School celebrate World Down Syndrome Day by making some beautiful socks!



Students at Dr. John C. Wickwire Academy (left) and North Queens Community School (right) worked hard cleaning up litter from the school yard for Earth Day on April 22, 2024.



There was lots of excitement in many of our classrooms in early April with the approaching Solar Eclipse. This rare solar event gave students the opportunity to learn and experience the eclipse firsthand. The Grade 3 students in Ms. MacPhee's Class at Newcombville Elementary School (far left) are learning about the solar eclipse. Students from Petite Riviere Elementary School (left) explored the solar eclipse through art by using oil pastels.

Regional Science Fair

The students' dedication, hard work, and innovative spirit truly shone through, and it is inspiring to see the incredible projects students brought to fruition.



In addition to the main event, breakout sessions from Math Circles and Supernova Science, hosted by Dalhousie University, provided valuable insights and opportunities for students to delve deeper into various scientific disciplines. Furthermore, participants had the chance to share their projects with judges and community members, fostering dialogue and collaboration within our regional science community.

These experiences also connect to integrated learning, literacy, and numeracy, promoting interdisciplinary approaches that enrich students' educational journeys and foster well-rounded skill sets essential for success in the modern world.

We would like to extend our congratulations to all the winners in the Regional Science Fair! We would like to offer a special mention of the 4 students who will be representing Team Nova Scotia at the National Science Fair, Prithviraj Singh, Phoenix Wilkins, Walker Comstock, and Jasmine Ghaffari (pictured below).



Regional Science Fair



The career of SSRCE employee Jane Berrigan was celebrated by Youth Science Canada on March 28 at our South Shore Regional Science Fair. Jane was awarded the 2024 YSC Distinguished Service Award which was 1 of 9 awards distributed this year throughout the country.

Jane has been an integral part of running science fairs on the South Shore for 25+ years. Not only has Jane served as the chair of our South Shore Science Fair committee; she has advocated for STEM projects in the classroom, mentored hundreds of kids in their science fair endeavours and even chaperones their trips to the Canada Wide Science Fair. With an impressive 26-year journey dedicated to nurturing young minds, Jane's passion for inquiry-based learning has been the driving force behind her efforts.

"Jane's dedication to nurturing young Canadian minds through science fair is a beacon of inspiration. Her

volunteered time and energy has empowered countless students to experience hands-on science learning with opportunities to present their work at the provincial and national level. Jane has opened doors for students to gain recognition that has launched scientific careers that have led to global impact. Most importantly, Jane has consistently created the conditions for students to fall in love with experimental learning and to realize the potential of a career path in science and technology."

- Darren Rodenhizer (PhD)
CWSF Gold medalist (2008)

Join us in congratulating Jane for this well-deserved recognition. Her dedication reinforces the importance of science education in shaping our future.

REGISTRATIONS FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR

Know someone with a child who will be ready to start school in September? We are accepting registrations for the 2024-2025 school year now.

In order to be eligible to attend pre-primary your child must be 4-years-old on or before December 31 in the year they start pre-primary.

Find info on how to apply [here](#).

A registration poster for the 2024-2025 school year. The poster is dark blue with white and light blue text. It features a photograph of a young girl with a pink backpack smiling. The text on the poster includes: "2024-2025", "PRE-PRIMARY EARLY REGISTRATION", "www.ssrce.ca/register", and the South Shore Regional Centre for Education logo and name. The background of the poster has faint, light blue icons related to education and science.

Education Week Recipients

Congratulations to SSRCE's Education Week recipients. This is a special opportunity for the education community to acknowledge educators, school support staff and partners for their outstanding work relative to the Education Week theme. This year's theme is "Connections to Community" and recognizes educators who take deliberate effort to enhance and empower their larger school communities, including families and the community at large. Recipients were honoured at a ceremony on April 16th, 2024.



Julie Ramey
Teacher/Specialist Award
(NSTU Queens Local)
North Queens Community School



Julie Chandler
Teacher/Specialist Award
(NSTU Lunenburg Local)
Chester Area Middle School



Tina Lineker
Non-Teaching Student Support Staff Award
Bridgewater Elementary School



Shawn Feener
Mi'kmaq/Aboriginal Educator/
Student Support Staff Award
Coordinator of Mi'kmaq Services



Sara Brigley
Early Childhood Educator Award
North Queens Community School

Sponsors

We thank our sponsors throughout the South Shore Regional Centre for Education, that enhance our schools in offering an increased variety of programs and necessities that our families may need. This month we would like to celebrate Hearts of Gold (pictured bottom left) and The United Way of Lunenburg County (pictured bottom right) for their generosity!



Hearts of Gold donated snacks and drinks to supplement the breakfast program at Forest Heights Community School.

Our SchoolsPlus team received a \$40,000 donation from the **United Way of Lunenburg County!** This donation is an investment into four programs that will help vulnerable students and their families living in Lunenburg and Queens Counties.

- **Connecting Families – Therapeutic Support**
This support uses the relationship that families have built with SchoolsPlus to connect them with support to engage in a relational approach to family systems therapy and healing.
- **School Fuel**
This grant money will go towards the purchase of transportation resources such as taxi fares, bus/shuttle passes, and gas cards to help families access transportation which is essential for getting to a grocery store, medical appointments, school drop off and pickup, accessing community resources, and fleeing family violence.
- **Let's Get Involved**
Funding will be used to help youth with a variety of extra-curricular activities in rural communities.
- **Hygiene and Lice Treatment**
This program will be beneficial for youth who are experiencing a lack of access to hygiene supplies such as soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, and lice treatment.

Volunteer Week

April 14th to 20th was National Volunteer Week. Our volunteers are essential to our schools. Without them, there are many opportunities that schools would not be able to offer to their students. We would like to thank our many volunteers for their time, dedication, and commitment to our schools and students.



New Ross Consolidated School would like to acknowledge Devin Broome (pictured left) for his awesome work in being a volunteer elementary basketball coach. Devin has built tremendous interest in this sport in which he currently coaches both the boy's and girl's teams. With Devin's dedication and commitment, our students have showed tremendous improvement and have grown a love for the sport. Devin's practices are engaging and rewarding for his players and he has put New Ross School back on the map in creating a strong foundation for the sport of basketball. Thank you Devin!

Dr. John C. Wickwire Academy would like to recognize their Parents of Wickwire group (pictured to the right and far right). Without this amazing group of parents, the school life for our students would not be as enriched! A huge thank you for all they do for our school community!



Pentz Elementary School community would like to recognize Kelly Himmelman (pictured left) for her years of volunteerism, school spirit, and enthusiasm. Kelly has been volunteering at Pentz for well over five years and her commitment to our students can be witnessed in many different forms. You will commonly find Kelly coaching PES sports teams, volunteering at Home and School events, or Chairing the PES SAC. Kelly has fantastic and appreciated ideas that benefit the happiness and wellness of our students. Thank you, Kelly, for all that you do!

Bayview Community School would like to recognize the amazing volunteers for the Breakfast Program (pictured right).

