



REGIONAL UPDATE

December 2024

Sounds of the Season



The Hebbville Academy band performed a Holiday Concert on December 4th.

Please click the photo to listen to some of their terrific performance, or follow [link](#).

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A Message from the Regional Executive Director

December is a time for celebration, gratitude, and giving, and I am proud to share some highlights from the last month.

Leading up to the holiday season, our schools have been bustling with festive activities. From holiday concerts, to community service projects, our students and staff continue to show remarkable dedication and spirit.

I encourage you to take a look through this monthly report, which features a collection of festive photos from around the region, including the photos on this page, from Chester District School and West Northfield Elementary School.

In addition, we are pleased to share information highlighting instruction in the classroom. This month, we are sharing details on how SSRCE is focusing on growing writers and how teachers are embracing the *thinkSRSD Framework* to enhance writing instruction. You can find this story on page six.

I would also like to take a moment to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone for their collective efforts in education over the last year. As always, our top priorities are the well-being and achievement of our students and staff, and that success is not possible without the support our entire school community.

On behalf of SSRCE, I extend warmest wishes for a joyful and restful break. We hope you take this time to relax, recharge, and enjoy moments with your loved ones. We look forward to seeing the continued growth and success of our students in the new year!

Sincerely,

Angela Gladwin

SSRCE Regional Executive Director



Holiday Concert at Chester District School.



Thank you to Van't Hofs Christmas Trees for their donation of West Northfield's school gym tree.

FEEDBACK WANTED

SURVEY ON DELAYED START

The South Shore Regional Centre for Education is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of students and staff during inclement weather.

To improve our process for handling school closures or delays, we are exploring alternative options that provide more flexibility, such as implementing a delayed start, as neighboring regions have done.



We value your feedback and insights to help us make informed decisions. This survey will also share information about the decision-making process behind school closures and delays to address any misconceptions and provide transparency.

Your participation is greatly appreciated and will help us create a plan that best meets the needs of our community.

[Please complete the survey here.](#)

QR Code for Survey on Delayed Start

Parent/Guardian Questions or Concerns?

1. **For curriculum or classroom-related questions**, 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 school principal.
3. **For questions about programs and services available from community partners at a school**, and how to access these supports, please contact SchoolsPlus (Shannon Vincent at 902-523-1451).
4. **For questions related to busing, bus stops, and or/bus routes**, please contact SSRCE Transportation at 902-541-8252 or busdispatch@ssrce.ca
5. **For school closure/weather inquiries**, contact 902-523-5368 or weather@ssrce.ca.
6. **For general inquiries**, please contact the SSRCE office, where someone will be happy to connect you with the appropriate staff member. Email receptionist@ssrce.ca or 902-543-2468.



SCHOOL SNAPSHOTS



Students at **Newcombsville Elementary School** are enjoying the newly rebuilt tipi (pictured left). This project could not have happened without the support of the school community. Thank you to Gerald W. Veinot Excavation Co. for their donation of time and materials to build a sturdy foundation. Thank you also goes out to Matt Crouse and his son Wyatt, for preparing two new poles over the summer as well as, Mr. Snow and Mr. Cannon for their help with the recent rebuild.



Grade 7 and 8 students at **South Queens Middle School** display their recent work on a comprehension English Language Arts activity. The lesson included explaining to their peers the information they learned from an article they read, as well as explaining the artifact they created to go with it. (Pictured left).



A student at **West Northfield Elementary School** enjoys lunch, as part of the new NS School Lunch Program. On this particular day, the menu consisted of a choice of fish cakes or potato cakes, along with baked beans, peas, and oranges. (Pictured left).

SCHOOL SNAPSHOTS



Pre-primaries at **Petite Rivière Elementary School** show wreaths they made. Together, they gathered all the items they needed and then wrapped wire around the branches and attached it to the round form. While building the wreaths, the class noticed that each piece of brush smells different, looks different, and had different textures.



Bridgewater Junior High School students recently enjoyed a holiday meal. 400 people were fed a full turkey dinner with all the fixings in under two hours! Staff and students would like to thank the cafeteria team along with all the student helpers who prepared this meal.



Primary students at **Dr. John C. Wickwire Academy** have been working on being independent with learning centres, to support small-group guided reading lessons, which they will be starting soon (pictured left).

ENHANCING WRITING INSTRUCTION

Growing joyful writers who are skilled and effective at communicating messages to a specific audience with a clear purpose is an important goal for SSRCE, at all grade levels. To support student learning we have created exemplars to assist teachers and their collaborative learning teams in assessing where a student is, and to support planning for what a student needs to learn next to develop as a writer.

Wondering what our writers are expected to be able to do in each grade level? Check out the link to see an example from Primary to Grade 12. [SSRCE Writing Exemplars P-12.](#)

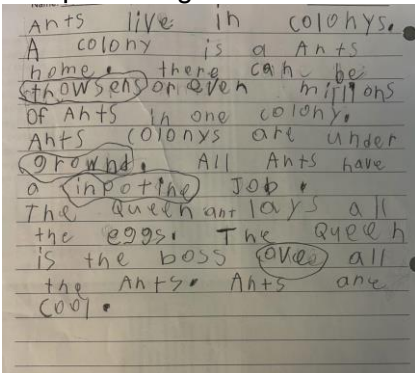
All SSRCE Language Arts teachers in grades 3 to 8 are participating in professional development focused on writing instruction through the thinkSRSD framework.

thinkSRSD is an evidence-based framework that supports all types of writing, with the current focus on informational and persuasive writing. thinkSRSD integrates reading and response to strengthen both skills, as research shows that reading and writing reinforce each other, especially when taught together. thinkSRSD also emphasizes self-regulation, helping students learn and internalize the steps of the writing process through structured support, self-talk strategies, and self-reflection. By using direct instruction, collaborative writing, goal-setting, and self-evaluation, students gradually build independence and confidence, ultimately learning to write organized paragraphs and essays with clear steps in mind.

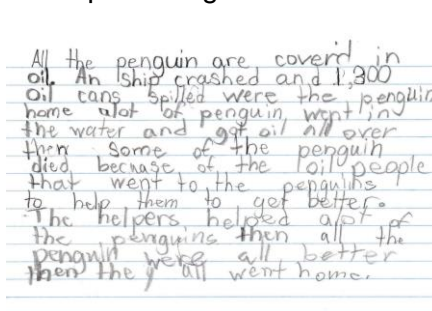
Here's how the process works:

1. Students start by reading a text. After reading the text, the students independently respond in writing to what they have read. This connects reading and writing.

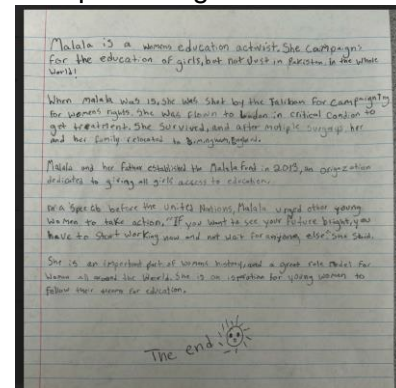
Sample from grade 3-4:



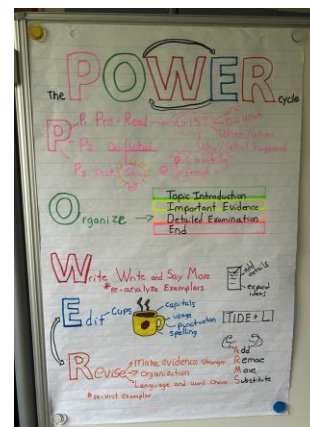
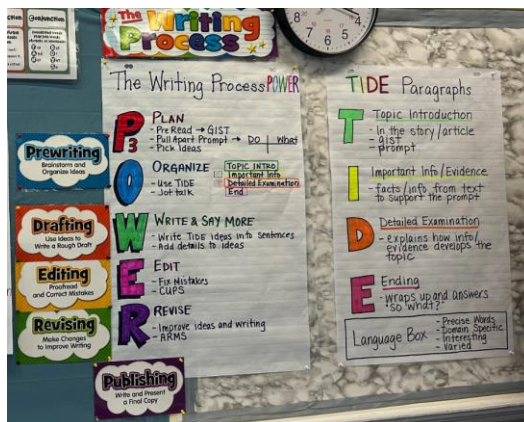
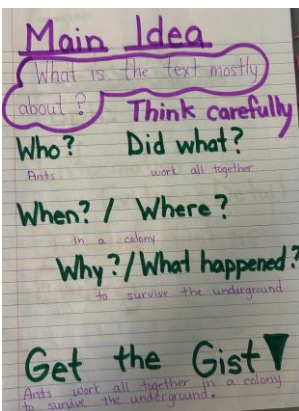
Sample from grade 4-5:

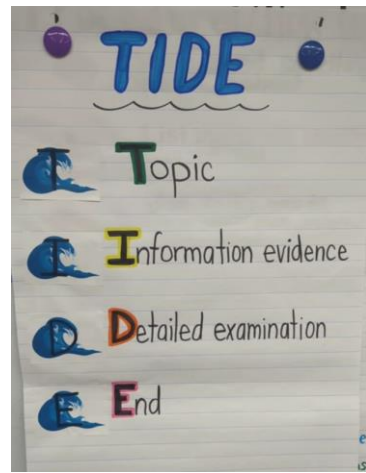
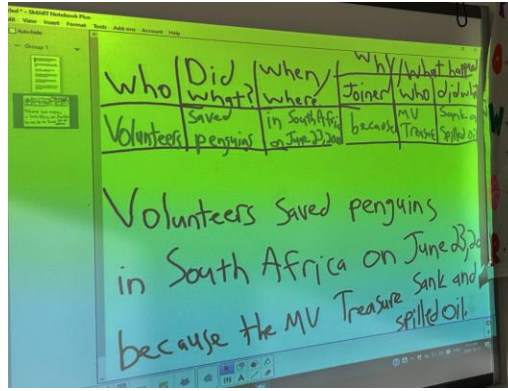
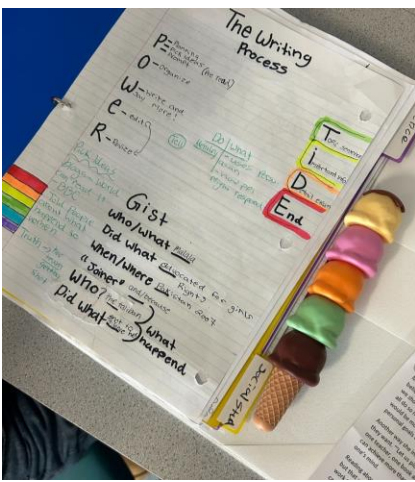


Sample from grade 6-8:

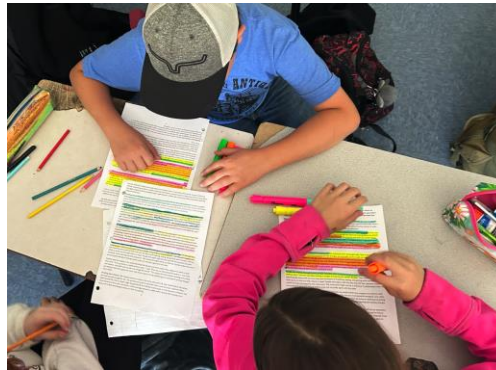
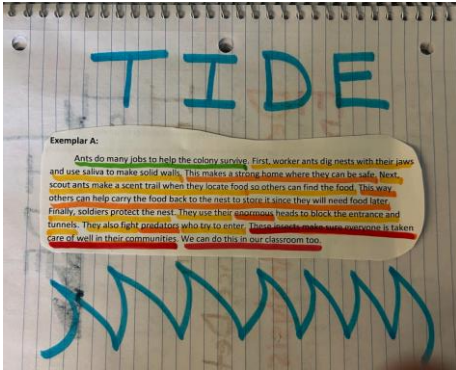


2. Next, students learn about the writing process (POWER- plan, organize, write, edit, revise) and paragraph structure (TIDE- topic, information evidence, detailed examination, end).





3. Afterward, students analyze a strong student-written response to the same text and writing they completed, identifying the parts of TIDE.



Grade 5 Exemplars

Task: Describe the effects of the spill on the penguins and the rescue efforts that followed. Support your piece with information from all three sources.

Exemplar A:

A few years ago near South Africa, the effects of an oil spill and the rescue effort that followed threatened thousands of endangered penguins. A first effect was that just moving their bodies through the water became difficult because the penguins would wobble and roll in the dense oil. This must have threatened their ability to catch the food they need in the water. By the time the humans came to rescue them, the penguins were so frightened that they scratched, bit and attacked the people. This shows that the oil must have frightened them too, which made the rescue efforts even more difficult because they were so scared. Finally, the rescue work of cleaning and feeding them; the repulsive smell in the warehouse from penguin droppings, dead fish, and sweat must have made people want to give up. No one did. Maybe no one gave up because of how much they cared about the threatened penguins. Overall, this story shows the effects of the spill, the difficulties in the rescue and what happens when people work effectively in a supportive system. It also shows how important it is for people to remain dedicated when protecting those who are vulnerable, even when there are major risks involved.

4. Next, students engage in collaborative writing with texts they study in class. The teacher provides a prompt, guides students through the POWER Cycle (Read, Plan, Write, Reflect/Score), and together they build a response. Students color-code, self-score, and set goals for improvement. By repeating the POWER Cycle regularly throughout the year, students continue to grow as readers and writers.

What Teachers Are Saying



"I am 100% all in (on thinkSRSD). I have been waiting for something like this!" - Grade 5 teacher

"I thought thinkSRSD would not be right for my grade level. I was wrong. I realized that my expectations were too low. I have raised the bar and my students are on the way to reaching it." - Grade 3 teacher

"I love this writing program. SRSD is structured with a continuous cycle of assessment that provides students with the opportunity to make decisions on how to bump up their next piece of writing. Assessment as learning is critical for true learning. All students are able to access the colour coding which enables students to physically see what needs to happen next... Students are using POWER and TIDE...and are learning how to critically engage with challenging material. Very exciting stuff, indeed!" - Grade 5 teacher



myBlueprint

Over the past two weeks, all students in grade 7-12 in SSRCE have engaged in career exploration activities through myBlueprint.

myBlueprint is an online tool that allows students to learn more about their own skills, interests, and potential pathways to make informed decisions about their future. Activities included completing short surveys about learning styles, personality types, interests, and motivations, as well as course planning and research on career pathways and post-secondary options. Some students even began to create portfolios to showcase their skills and accomplishments. Throughout the activities, students engaged in meaningful conversations with their peers and teachers enabling them to reflect on what options are available to them as they begin to make decisions about their future.

myBlueprint is a tool that can be accessed by SSRCE students and their families throughout their time in grade 7-12.



Upcoming Dates to Remember



- Friday, Dec. 20/24 - Last Day Before Holiday Break
- Thursday, Jan. 2/25 - Teacher Professional Practice Day (no classes all schools).
- Friday, Jan. 3/25 - First Day Back for Students After Break
- Jan. 27-30 - High School Summative Assessments



Nova Scotia
International Student
Program

BECOME A HOST FAMILY

Open your home and heart to an international student



IMPORTANT UPDATE: COMPENSATION INCREASE STARTING SEPTEMBER 2024

\$825 /mth PER STUDENT (Tax Free)	\$925 /mth if you can accommodate a vegetarian or lactose free diet	\$1025 /mth if you can accommodate a vegan or celiac diet
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REFER A NEW HOST FAMILY AND RECEIVE **\$100** UPON SUCCESSFUL STUDENT PLACEMENT
Just give us their name and contact details, and we will reach out to them.



Homestay Families:

- Must be able to provide food for three meals a day
- Must be willing to submit a Criminal Record and Child Abuse Registry Check
- Must have a private bedroom for the student in their house
- Receive a monthly remuneration

For more information on the referral initiative or on the homestay program please speak with your local homestay coordinator or visit ssrce.ca/host