



South Shore

Regional Centre for Education

REGIONAL UPDATE

May 2025

Eye Light Sessions – Learning at the Discovery Centre



A number of our schools recently visited the Discovery Centre to participate in specialty workshops. Above are photos from students from Forest Heights Community School and Liverpool Regional High School, who are taking part in the hands-on learning session called Eye Lights, learning about optics, cells, tissues, and organs.

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A Message from the Regional Executive Director

Celebrating Excellence in Teacher Professionalism

I am pleased to share that we have formed an SSRCE Teacher Celebration Committee, which will recognize outstanding educators at various times throughout the year based on identified themes that are outlined in our [Regional Student Success Plan](#). The first theme, "Planning for All Learners," highlights teachers who have gone above and beyond to intentionally plan that every student receives the support and resources they need to succeed. These dedicated professionals have set a remarkable standard for excellence through their innovative approaches, tireless efforts, and unwavering commitment to inclusive education. In total, 21 staff members have been selected to be celebrated. These educators have demonstrated extraordinary skill in adapting their teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of their students, fostering an environment where every learner can thrive. I invite you to learn more about the honourees on our website [here](#).



As we approach the final two months of the school year, it is important that we stay focused on the success of each student. Everyday counts! I'd like to take a moment to highlight some key resources and initiatives that will help us maximize learning opportunities.

Feature on Math Fluency

This month, our newsletter features a special section on math fluency, offering valuable tips for parents to support their children's mathematical development at home. Additionally, we have included a look at the professional learning opportunities our staff participate in to enhance their teaching strategies in mathematics.

The Homework Hub

1-888-444-6607

Nova Scotia
HomeworkHUB



APPUI aux devoirs
Nouvelle-Écosse

gns pes.ca

Still on the theme of math, I'd like to take a moment to remind parents/guardians of the Homework Hub – a fantastic free resource available to all Nova Scotia mathematics students and teachers from grades 4 to 12. The Homework Hub provides a wealth of curriculum resources, including e-texts, tutorial videos, and practice problems. Most importantly, it offers free online tutoring to support our students' learning needs. To access the Homework Hub, students can login through their GNSPES login and click on the Homework Hub icon. For more info, [click here](#).

Live tutors are available in both English and French on the Homework Hub during the following times:

Grades 4-6: Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Grades 7-12: Sunday to Thursday from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

This is an excellent opportunity for students to receive personalized assistance and enhance their understanding of mathematical concepts. Let's work together to ensure a successful and enriching remainder of the school year for all our students.

Sincerely,

Angela Gladwin

SSRCE Regional Executive Director

SNAPSHOTS FROM SCHOOLS



Bridgewater Junior High School students with their projects at the Regional Science Fair held at the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre.



Students from the Mahone Bay Alternate School work on lessons with giant maps from Canadian Geographic. They viewed maps of the ocean, freshwater, and USA. Among the things they learned: Canada has the longest coastline of any country in the world as well as approximately 20% of the planet's freshwater resources. Highlights of other lessons included biodiversity, protected areas, Indigenous nations, climate change, transportation, and the economic importance of our oceans.



On Earth Day, pre-primaries at West Northfield Elementary School walked around their wooded play area and picked up any garbage they could find. The children enjoy keeping their outdoor space clean.

SPOTLIGHT ON MATHEMATICS

Mathematical Fact Fluency in Our Schools

Across our region—and throughout the province—schools are placing a renewed focus on **Mathematical Fact Fluency**. This is occurring daily in our elementary classrooms during the *Number Routine* portion of the Instructional Block. While many associate fluency with simply being able to answer a math question quickly, fact fluency is actually about much more than speed.

So, what is Math Fact Fluency and why is it important?

Fact fluency refers to a student's ability to **accurately, efficiently, and flexibly** recall the basic math facts—like single-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Students are not only capable of arriving at a correct solution but are also able to:

- discover how numbers relate to one another
- develop several efficient fact solving strategies
- rely on numerical understanding, not memory
- free up mental energy to focus on deeper concepts
- tackle more complex math problems with flexibility and ease
- build confidence and competency in problem-solving
- see the connectedness among topics in mathematics



Grade 4 students from New Germany Elementary School

How are we supporting math fact fluency?

Throughout **SSRCE**, we are committed to supporting teaching and learning around fact fluency in a way that is meaningful, fun, and long-lasting. Students are engaged through:



- strategy instruction – learning how and why a strategy works.
- targeted practice – focusing on strategies that meet individual student needs.
- hands-on games – making learning fun and interactive.
- ongoing assessment tools – helping teachers understand where each student is and what support they need.

By developing a strong foundation in the basic facts, we are developing confident, capable problem-solvers who enjoy and excel in mathematics.

Tips for Families to Support Developing Fact Fluency:

1. **Incorporate Real-Life Situations:** Encourage your child to practice division and multiplication through real-life scenarios, such as sharing items equally or calculating prices while shopping. These practical applications make math more meaningful and relatable.
2. **Use Math Games:** There are many card games designed to help students practice their math facts in a fun and interactive way. Games provide students with meaningful practice incorporating new strategies.
3. **Encourage Mental Math:** Help your child practice doing simple calculations in their head such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Ask them to explain their strategy or approach to solving these basic facts. This builds both confidence and fluency in their fact learning, while making math more intuitive, accessible and fun!

Reach out to your child's teacher if you would like other ideas, activities or games to do at home to support fact fluency.

Mathematics Professional Learning for Teachers

Professional learning sessions were held for teachers across various grade levels to enhance their instructional strategies in mathematics. Here is a summary of the focus areas for each grade:

Grade 3

Grade 3 teachers focused on strategies for addition facts up to 18 and related subtraction facts. They explored engaging students through interactive activities, games, and rich classroom discussions.



Grade 4 Math Teachers PD session.

Grade 4

Grade 4 teachers concentrated on multiplication and division fact instruction, reviewing strategies and learning progressions. They highlighted targeted games supporting each strategy and later focused on multi-digit multiplication and division of whole numbers.

Grade 5

Grade 5 teachers aimed to increase students' basic fact fluency and move towards fluency with multi-digit division. They shared games targeting different strategies to engage students in meaningful and frequent practice.

Grades 7-10

Throughout the year, grades 7-10 mathematics teachers collaborated on developing and refining common assessments, analyzing recent results, and ensuring alignment with provincial curriculum outcomes. They identified strengths and challenges in student understanding, shared successful strategies, and planned targeted improvements to create a supportive learning environment.



Grade 8 Math Teachers gather for PD.

Learning Support Teachers



Learning Support Teachers PD session.

Learning Support Teachers from SSRCE gathered for a full day of professional learning focused on navigating the provincial mathematics P-9 curriculum resources. They explored tools for assessing students' current understanding and outlined plans with engaging, targeted tasks to support individual growth in mathematics.

Senior High Mathematics Course Pathways

Professional learning was provided to school counsellors, administrators, and classroom teachers about high school mathematics courses and pathways. This ensured equitable access to information and resources, helping students select courses that offer the most opportunities for their future academic and career paths. Senior high mathematics course pathways can be found [here](#).

One School's Story of Responding to Short Cycle Assessment

Roots to Reading—Foundational Literacy Support for Students in Grade 3-5 at Newcombsville Elementary School

Using short cycle data and teacher observations is instrumental in guiding interventions and support for students and their reading development.



Jill Vandertroon collaborates with Grade 3-5 classroom teachers at Newcombsville Elementary School to provide interventions for students who need extra time and support to close gaps in their reading progress. By using short cycle data, which includes frequent and ongoing assessments such as listening to students read, checking reading fluency, and conducting comprehension checks, educators can identify specific areas of difficulty in a student's reading progress. This real-time feedback allows teachers to quickly adjust instructional strategies, targeting areas where students need additional teaching.

The results from assessments, writing samples, and spelling inventories make the areas of need clear, enabling targeted and effective support. Teacher observations further complement this data by providing qualitative insights into a student's behavior, engagement, and individual learning needs. By combining quantitative data from assessments with qualitative observations, Jill can focus interventions on the root causes of reading difficulties, whether they are related to phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, or comprehension.

As a result, interventions become more responsive and personalized, improving student outcomes. Teachers work closely with Jill to implement strategies such as targeted small group instruction, differentiated reading materials, or additional one-on-one support, ensuring that each student receives the appropriate resources and attention they need. Through ongoing discussions and reflections on the data, Jill has been able to support Tier 1, 2, and 3 levels of reading.

What students, parents, and teachers are saying:

"My reading is faster now and that helps me understand what I read." ~ Grade 3 student

"I never liked to read much, but now I can read *Dogman* books and I love to read." ~ Grade 4 student.

"I notice that my son is coming home and wanting to read, where before it was always a battle to get him to read. He is not as defeated because he is applying skills taught to him which makes it a more positive experience for him." ~ Parent

"The reading support that is provided to my students in Grade 3 and 4 has been a valuable tool in helping students strengthen their skills sets in both reading and writing. These students are becoming more confident in their ability to decode unknown words, allowing them to read more fluently, gaining a better comprehension of what they are reading. This support has also allowed them to improve upon their spelling skills. It's wonderful to see these students becoming more confident in themselves in these areas." ~Grade 3/4 Tea

Provincial Concours d'art oratoire

On April 26th, more than one hundred French second-language and first-language students in grades 5-12 competed in this year's provincial Concours d'art oratoire (Provincial French Public Speaking Competition) held at Mount Saint Vincent University.



SSRCE is very pleased to recognize and congratulate Bridgewater Junior High School Middle French Immersion students, **Emmalena Wade-Amoah** and **Maria Saunders**, for winning gold medals in their respective categories.

Emmalena Wade-Amoah won Gold in the 5/6 Middle Immersion category for her speech: L'histoire de basketball. Félicitations, Emmalena!

Maria Saunders won Gold in the 7/8 Middle Immersion category for her speech: Terminer la pauvreté des règles. Félicitations, Maria!

We also send congratulations to all students and teachers who represented their schools at SSRCE's Regional Concours d'art oratoire. We are so impressed with your hard work, dedication and passion for learning the French language. Bravo!

Regional School Advisory Council Update

The Regional School Advisory Council (RSAC) convened on March 25, 2025. The agenda was responsive to requests of the RSAC and was co-constructed by the RSAC group and regional leadership. The meeting addressed several key topics, including curriculum overview, follow-up discussions on delayed starts, family of school communications, funding process for playgrounds, flags outside of schools, transportation out of catchment areas and the utilization of SAC funds. A significant portion of the meeting focused on curriculum discussions at the request of the RSAC and their desire to know more about this after our last meeting. Various members of our education team joined the meeting to present on current curriculum, methods for responding to student progress, regionally created tools and guides to support teachers and principals in aligning expectations, assessing student learning to support responsive planning, and the diverse programs offered within our schools, P-12.

We would like to thank the members of our Regional School Advisory Council for their time and commitment.

Expression of Interest – Regional Student Advisory Council 2025/2026 School Year

The Regional Student Advisory Council is an opportunity for members of the SSRCE student communities to provide local voice on a regional level directly to the Regional Executive Director of Education. The committee's mandate is to provide the Regional Executive Director of Education with information and advice on topics such as achievement and well-being, and other aspects of students' experiences, especially as it relates to the Student Success Survey.

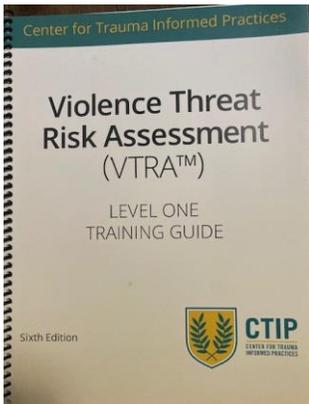
Membership is open to current **grade 6-11 students**. Expression of Interest forms are due on or before **May 15, 2025**.

To apply, click on the link <https://forms.office.com/r/73UmzQ1tPU> or scan the QR code above.

Expression of Interest - Regional
Student Advisory Council
2025/2026 School Year



Commitment to Safe Schools: VTRA Training for Staff



As part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring safe and supportive school environments, a number of our staff are participating in professional development training focused on Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA).

VTRA is the trauma-informed threat assessment framework that aims to identify and intervene within potential pathways to violence. VTRA Training instills the perspective that serious violence is an evolutionary process, meaning that pre-incident data is often available to help proactively identify and prevent the occurrence of violence.

Participants will be trained to work as teams, considering the role of trauma in individuals and systems where violence potential may be intensified. VTRA also provides professionals with a shared language and a structured, system-wide process. This proactive, comprehensive approach helps prevent situations from escalating and increases the capacity for identifying and mitigating potential violence before it occurs.

All Principals, Vice Principals, School Counsellors, and identified regional staff will complete two levels of VTRA training. Level one of this training took place throughout February and March and level two is upcoming in June.

Resilience
Strength
Humility
Truth
Social Justice
Honour

ANNIE MAE PICTOU

Legacy Award

Are you a Mi'kmaw/Indigenous woman or two-Spirit student graduating from a High School in Nova Scotia?

Do you embody the spirit and values of Annie Mae Pictou - an advocate for Indigenous rights?

If so, you could be the next recipient of the Annie Mae Pictou Legacy Award and receive \$1,000!

HOW TO APPLY

Submit either:
A written piece (500-750 words)
OR
A video (2-3 minutes)

Show us how you carry forward Annie Mae's powerful legacy in your life and community.

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Apply here by May 31, 2025:

<https://forms.gle/eSzJndFwauZjTkuV6>



APPLY HERE Deadline: May 31, 2025

<https://forms.gle/eSzJndFwauZjTkuV6>



Thank you to the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia

SSRCE SchoolsPlus is pleased to announce that the team has successfully secured funding from the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia to continue the family therapy program. This initiative, which is designed to complement the provincial mental health system, is a collaborative effort between our staff and Mental Health professionals.

With this funding, SchoolsPlus families will have timely access to essential family therapy support. This program is proudly supported by the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia.

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.

NOW HIRING

We have immediate openings for part-time and full-time positions including:

- Administrative Assistants
- Early Childhood Educators
- Teaching Assistants
- Janitors
- Bus Drivers
- Food Service Workers
- Tutors

For details and to apply visit www.ssrce.ca/employment



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