



South Shore
Regional Centre for Education

REGIONAL UPDATE

December 2025



Tree Decorating Day at WNES

One of the most cherished traditions at **West Northfield Elementary School** is their annual Tree Decorating Day. Each holiday season, every class has the opportunity to hang ornaments they've created themselves, adding a personal touch to the school tree.

As students decorate, the rest of the school gathers to sing favourite holiday songs.

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A Message from the Regional Executive Director

As we approach the end of the calendar year, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to every member of our school community—students, families, school staff, and our regional team. The successes we're seeing across SSRCE are the direct result of your collaboration and care.

I'd also like to recognize the many community partners who contribute to student success. Some of those partners include members of the various councils and committees within SSRCE. These include School Advisory Councils, the Regional School Advisory Committee, and the Regional Student Advisory Council.



School Advisory Councils

Recently, our School Advisory Council members and administrators came together for important learning and collaboration at both our October Regional SAC professional development session and the Provincial SAC Conference on November 28th.

Thank you to everyone who participated in our regional professional development session which included a presentation on the Code of Conduct, followed by an engaging Q&A discussion. Additionally, thank you to those who attended the Provincial School Advisory Council (SAC) Conference last month in Halifax. I invite you to read more about that day on page eight. I would like to extend my appreciation to all those who attended to represent SSRCE—your commitment to local voice and collaboration strengthens our region.

Regional School Advisory Committee

Another group who volunteer to contribute to student achievement, are the members of our Regional School Advisory Committee (RSAC). On November 13th the RSAC met and welcomed new and returning members. The committee discussed several important topics, including updates to the community use of school facilities, exploring the ethical and practical implications of artificial intelligence in education, and reviewing the student code of conduct with a focus on consistency and student well-being. The committee also addressed the national anthem policy, ongoing improvements to school facilities, and the importance of regular communication between teachers and parents about curriculum and assessment practices.

Regional Student Advisory Council

Finally, I'd like to thank the group of students who make up the Regional Student Advisory Council. Members of this group share their voice on key topics such as achievement, well-being, and the overall student experience. This council will meet later in December and their input will be extremely valuable as we make plans for the upcoming year.

The holiday break is an important time to rest and recharge. The last day for students before the break is December 19 and we'll welcome students back on January 5. Wishing everyone a peaceful holiday season. I look forward to seeing you in January - rested, recharged, and ready to continue our work together for students.

Warm wishes,

Angela Gladwin
SSRCE Regional Executive Director

SNAPSHOTS FROM SCHOOLS



The Grade 4–5 Longley/MacLaughlin class **Aspotogan Consolidated Elementary School** has been hard at work creating products to sell in support of the S.H.A.I.D Animal Shelter. They created an incredible variety of handmade items, including Christmas ornaments, art pieces, bookmarks, surprise bags, sweet treats, sculptures, bracelets, and more. After recently selling their products, they raised more than \$600!



Our Pre-Primary programs have recently been hosting a variety of open houses, welcoming families to their classrooms to share what children have been learning and to give a glimpse into their daily experiences.

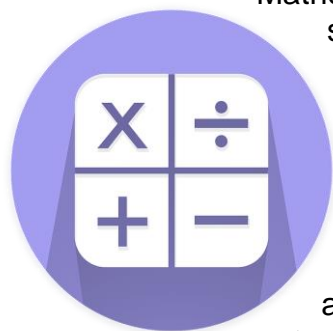
Here's a photo from one of the open houses. This snapshot is from **Newcombsville Elementary School**. A big thank you to all those who attended any of the pre-primary open houses around SSRCE.



Hebbville Academy grade three students recently visited a local duck pond. Thanks to Ducks Unlimited and Coastal Action for their sponsorship of the class trip.

Math Spotlight

“How do I know what my child is learning and how can I help?”



Mathematics Pacing Guides provide an overview of the units of study, and support with the timing of yearlong learning. Teachers in SSRCE use these as a reference tool.

To access the Pacing Guide for your child and see what they are learning about in mathematics, visit the link: [Pacing Guides Primary-Grade 10](#).

Please reach out to your child's teacher if you have any questions and/or would like more detailed information about a particular topic or strategy.

Homework Hub

The Nova Scotia Homework Hub is an online math resource and tutoring site for students in grades 4-12. Access to textbooks, videos, practice questions, and vocabulary review is available 24/7. Free bilingual tutoring is available for students in grades 4-6 Monday - Wednesday from 5:30-7:30, and for students in grades 7-12 Sunday - Thursday from 5:30-9:30. To access, click on the Homework Hub (Math) icon from the GNSPES Launch Page.

We know the importance of communicating what your child is learning and understanding the strategies used in mathematics. The Nova Scotia Homework Hub is a great resource for both students and students!

Progress Conferences

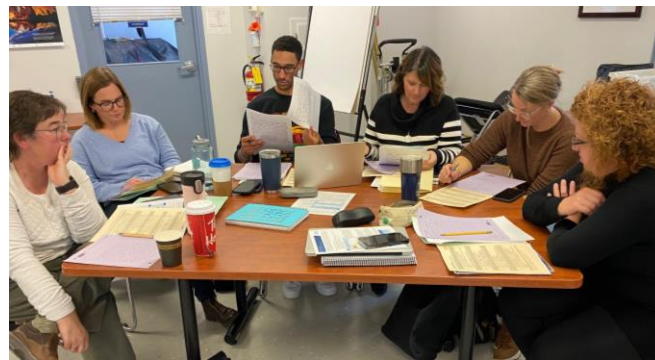


Progress Conferences (formerly known as parent teacher meetings) took place earlier this month. These meetings provide a valuable opportunity for families and teachers to connect. If you were unable to attend, we encourage you to reach out to your child's teacher or school to request a conversation. Here's a photo of Zach Haughn at West Northfield Elementary School, happily awaiting families to review their child's growth and next steps.

Literacy Spotlight

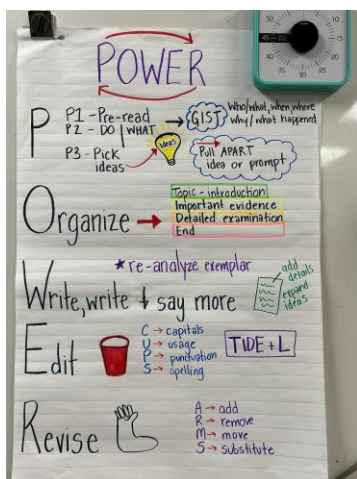
Writing Matters for School Leaders

November was a busy and productive month for our P–6 Principals. With writing as the central focus of literacy work across the South Shore, Principals participated in a full day of professional learning led by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). During the session, two EECD team members guided Principals through assessing student writing samples and exploring a range of instructional supports to strengthen writing development within their schools.



This collaborative work deepened Principals' understanding of provincial expectations, writing benchmarks, and the skills students are expected to develop at the grade three level. It also provided valuable insights they can bring back to their school communities to further enhance writing instruction.

Writing with Purpose

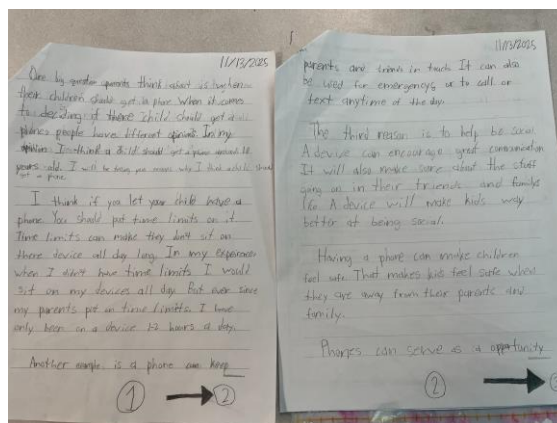


Writing with purpose motivates students and helps them recognize that their ideas matter and that their voices can make a real impact. Across our schools, teachers in Grades 3 to 8 are using structured and systematic writing instruction, supported by the thinkSRSD framework, to teach writing with a purpose. The thinkSRSD approach also helps students organize their thinking, build strong writing habits, and communicate their ideas with confidence.

Recently, many classes have been engaging in meaningful writing connected to real-world topics. One example comes from learning about National Child Day help every November. This day celebrates children as active participants in their own lives, their schools, and their communities. It reminds us that young people have important ideas—and that they deserve opportunities to influence decisions that affect them.

National Child Day is linked to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC National Child Day was adopted on November 20, 1989, and Canada joined in recognizing the day in 1991. By doing so, Canada committed to ensuring that all children are treated with dignity and respect and are given every opportunity to reach their full potential. This includes: protecting children from harm, ensuring children's basic needs are met, and providing opportunities for children to have a voice and be heard.

At Bluenose Academy, a Grade 6 class explored these rights and reflected on how they apply to their everyday lives. Students then wrote opinion pieces on issues that affect them—such as the role of phones in their lives. Their writing showed thoughtful reflection and strong use of the strategies they have been learning through structured and systemic instruction. A sample of a student's work is shared to the right, highlighting how purposeful writing helps students connect classroom learning to the world around them.



Collaborative Learning Time

What's a CLT?

On seven days throughout the school year, students are dismissed two hours early to allow educators to participate in collaborative learning time. A professional learning community, or CLT, is a group of educators who meet regularly to share expertise, look at student data, work collaboratively to improve teaching practices, and support the academic performance and well-being of students. There are seven CLT days in SSRCE this school year and to ensure your child doesn't miss any instructional time, all other school days have been extended by a few minutes each day.

We are pleased to share highlights of work that's been happening during CLT time at a few of our schools.

At Dr. John C. Wickwire Academy:

During the recent CLT day, teachers at Wickwire Academy focused on on-demand writing—a quick writing assessment that gives educators a clear snapshot of how students write independently. Students respond to a prompt without prior preparation, using the skills they've been practicing in class.

Teachers used their CLT time to review samples of student work and how they were scored using a rubric that looks at four key areas:

Ideas and Content – Is the writing clear and focused?

Organization – Does it have a beginning, middle, and end?

Language Use – Are words and sentences effective?

Conventions – How are spelling, punctuation, and grammar?

This process helps teachers identify strengths and areas for growth, monitor progress, and ensure consistency in writing expectations. On-demand writing is an important tool to support students as they develop into confident, independent writers.

At Chester District School:

At a recent CLT day, Chester District School staff analyzed Short Cycle data, Math Common Assessments, and writing samples to identify the greatest areas of need for their students. Based on this information, teachers created plans to strengthen classroom learning and provide extra help where needed. Dedicated intervention time was set for specific grade levels or classes to receive focused support in areas such as literacy, math, or social-emotional learning. The Student Services meets regularly to check on the progress and makes changes when necessary. Every six weeks, they reassess the data and interventions are adjusted based on student needs.



Teachers at DJCWA review student work and data on a recent CLT day.

Welcoming the World: Stories from NSISP Students

As part of the Nova Scotia International Student Program (NSISP), SSRCE is proud to welcome students from around the world into our schools and communities. These students bring diverse perspectives, rich cultural experiences, and inspiring stories that enhance learning and foster global connections.

In this special series, we'll introduce you to international students currently studying in SSRCE. Through their profiles, you'll learn about their journeys, passions, and what life is like for them here in Nova Scotia.

We are always looking for host families to help make these experiences possible—if you're interested in opening your home and heart, you can find the application [here](#).



Asia Caronti **Italy**

Asia Caronti arrived in Nova Scotia from Roccaraso, Italy in September to experience Nova Scotian culture and the education system for one semester. Asia has adjusted well to New Germany Rural High School and is in grade 12. She is forming special bonds with her host family and international host sister.

Asia likes to keep busy by helping and volunteering. For example, Asia helped to buy the toys for the IWK Toy Drive through the New Germany & Area Christmas Toy Drive Society. She also enjoys cheering on her international host sister at sport games, 4-H, and gathering brush for Christmas

decorating at home with her host family or cooking for the family!



Noah Ivanovic **Switzerland**

Noah Ivanovic from Zug, Switzerland arrived in Nova Scotia early September to start his 10 month Canadian experience at Forest Heights Community School and with his Host Family. Noah has quickly adjusted to both school and his host family, it is like he has always been here.

Since Noah is an only child he thought it would great to experience having siblings. Noah has the same interests as his host brother and younger host sister – they all enjoy sports. You can often find them outdoors in the yard kicking the soccer ball or shooting pucks. At FHCS, he has played soccer, volleyball, and is currently playing on his school's hockey team. He has been playing hockey since he was 3 years, soccer for 10 years and baseball for 2 years.

SAC Leaders Unite:

Building Stronger School Communities Across Nova Scotia



Photo credit: NS Department of Education & Early Childhood Development

On November 28, School Advisory Council (SAC) Chairs and principals from every school in Nova Scotia gathered in Halifax to learn how to maximize the impact of SACs and learn about the amazing work happening in schools across the province.

The conference focused on strengthening engagement and collaboration between SACs and schools. Key topics included updates on Safe Schools implementation and the Code of Conduct Policy, interactive breakout sessions, and guidance on SAC roles, legislation, and

responsibilities. The afternoon featured a panel on Nova Scotia's School Lunch Program, highlighting partnerships that support student nutrition and well-being.

Vanessa Spicer, SSRCE's Program Lead for the School Lunch Program, was part of that panel. The session showcased the people and partnerships that make the Nova Scotia School Lunch Program (NSSLP) possible, featuring voices from across the program—including provincial lead Amanda Northcott, two regional School Food Program Leads, and a school principal who shared experiences and insights.

As the Regional Food Program Lead for SSRCE, Vanessa spoke about managing and overseeing the NSSLP in the region, emphasizing the impact of expanding on the great work of food service workers, volunteers, and administrators who support the program daily. Vanessa highlighted that the program is more than just food—it ensures all students have access to a healthy meal every day.



Vanessa Spicer, SSRCE's Program Lead for the School Lunch Program participates in the panel discussion on the Nova Scotia School Lunch Program.

The discussion explored how collaboration between provincial leadership, regional teams, and schools is essential for success. Vanessa shared examples of how her team supports food service workers, ensures menu compliance, and partners with finance and operations teams for equipment, food ordering, and financial oversight. The conversation also underscored the positive impact on students—providing access to healthy meals in a non-stigmatizing way so students can focus on learning and overall well-being.

Finally, the panel reinforced the value of partnerships with School Advisory Councils (SACs) to promote the NSSLP through positive conversations, success stories, and resource contributions to advocate for healthy food in schools.

Teacher Celebration

Join us in recognizing the following teachers who go above and beyond to create positive and productive learning environments. Through their dedication, creativity, and commitment to student success, these educators foster classrooms where each learner feels valued, supported, and motivated to achieve their best.

Recognizing Excellence: Inside SSRCE Schools

Theme: Learning Environments

Charlotte Butt
Grade 4 Classroom Teacher
Bridgewater Elementary School

Charlotte fosters a calm, supportive grade 4 classroom where students feel a strong sense of belonging. She champions differentiated instruction, allowing students to learn at their own pace and show their understanding in unique ways. Using flexible seating and peer learning, the room operates as an engaging community where every contribution is valued.



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Recognizing Excellence: Inside SSRCE Schools

Theme: Learning Environments

Jeff Rhodenizer
Grades 7 & 8 ELA and Social Studies Teacher
Bridgewater Junior High School

Jeff creates a positive, safe, and highly organized learning environment. His grade 8 Social Studies classroom features flexible seating and designated zones for whole, small, and individual instruction. This intentional space, combined with his positive regard for all students, enables them to thrive, feel comfortable being themselves, and enthusiastically master challenging material.



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Recognizing Excellence: Inside SSRCE Schools

Theme: Learning Environments

Leslie Malcolm
Grade 1 Classroom Teacher
Dr. John C. Wickwire Academy

Leslie is an outstanding grade one teacher, embodying the "warm demander" approach. Her students feel deeply cared for while being held accountable to clear routines and expectations. She uses colourful classroom visuals to support student learning and organization. This balance of warmth and clear structure allows her students to thrive.



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Recognizing Excellence: Inside SSRCE Schools

Theme: Learning Environments

Julie Wentzell
Primary Teacher
Bluenose Academy

Julie's primary classroom is an exceptionally positive learning environment. It fosters a warm, structured, and inclusive atmosphere where students feel safe, valued, and eager to learn. Julie builds a community grounded in respect, empathy, and collaboration. This dedication greatly enriches the school.



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Recognizing Excellence: Inside SSRCE Schools

Theme: Learning Environments

Nicole Wamboldt
Learning Centre Teacher
Bluenose Academy

As Bluenose Academy's Learning Centre Teacher, Nicole offers flexibility to her students. She is a team player who created a high-interest, inclusive, student-centred space where students grow. Nicole uses grouping and responsive instruction, collaborating with staff to ensure student's needs are met effectively and equitably.



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Recognizing Excellence: Inside SSRCE Schools

Theme: Learning Environments

Geoff Marshall
Junior High Science Teacher
Bluenose Academy

Geoff has built an engaging and effective science learning space centered on collaborative group work and flexible grouping. Students are encouraged to be innovative, creative, and critical thinkers through experiments, lab reports, and real-life science experiences. His dedication fosters deep scientific understanding.



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Recognizing Excellence: Inside SSRCE Schools

Theme: Learning Environments

Beth Gillis
Science 10/Biology 11/AP Biology 12/Human
Biology 11 Teacher
Forest Heights Community School

Beth builds strong relationships, creating a positive, fun, and effective learning environment. She offers flexible seating options to support varied needs, whether students prefer collaboration or quiet work. Beth balances whole-group instruction with dedicated one-on-one time, ensuring every student has the support needed to achieve success.



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Recognizing Excellence: Inside SSRCE Schools

Theme: Learning Environments

Lorna Deighton
Grade 4 Classroom Teacher
Dr. John C. Wickwire Academy

Lorna is a skillful veteran teacher who establishes clear routines, fostering student ownership and accountability. Her classroom, regardless of activity—be it whole group, independent, or small group work at the jellybean table—ensures every student knows their task and purpose. Lorna skillfully manages instruction, demonstrating a keen awareness of all student needs.



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Recognizing Excellence: Inside SSRCE Schools

Theme: Learning Environments

Chantel Corkum
Services Trades 10/Culinary Trades 11 Teacher
Liverpool Regional High School

Chantel runs a highly productive, hands-on learning environment with high expectations in her professional kitchen classroom. Students engage, collaborate, and produce quality work while developing culinary skills and confidence through experiential practice and observational feedback. She effectively prepares them for success in the Skilled Trades and hospitality careers.



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Learn about the Influenza vaccine

FAST FACTS ABOUT THE FLU VACCINE

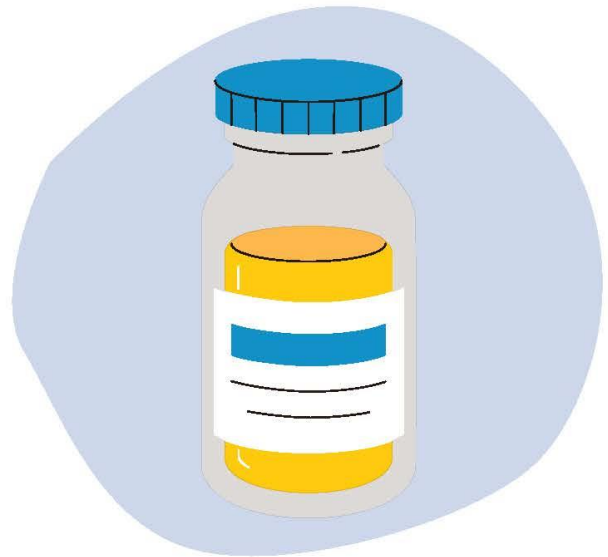
- Influenza (the flu) is virus that peaks in transmission in the fall and winter months
- Most people are mildly ill when they contract the flu but sometimes the flu can be serious and require admission to the hospital
- Children under 6 years are at the highest risk of serious complications from the flu
- The flu and RSV can occur at the same time making children more at risk of needing hospitalization
- The flu vaccine is recommended yearly for children 6 months and older to protect against serious complications of the flu

Scan to book



FLU VACCINE SAFETY

- The flu vaccine cannot cause the flu
- Serious side effects are rare, affecting less than 1 in 1000 people
- Common side effects include pain and swelling at the insertion site



HOW TO BOOK YOUR VACCINE

- In Nova Scotia, flu vaccines can be booked online and are free of cost
- You can also call to book at 1-833-797-7772. If you or your child does not have a health card, please call rather than booking online



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