

Upper Grand District School Board

annual report

2015



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Cover Art: Emily Mollison, a student at John F. Ross CVI, created the cover art while attending an FNMI artist workshop that featured Métis dot painting with local artist, Marie-Louise Lariviere. Emily's creation was one of the works on display at "Zoongeheskwaad" (see story on page 17).

OUR VISION

“Learn, Lead, Inspire...Together”

Students will attain individual excellence through dynamic programming provided by an effective staff and supported by a committed community. We will meet our students' diverse needs through the provision of equitable and accessible resources.

Our learning environment will be characterized by empowered administrators, effective communication and mutual compassionate respect.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As leaders in our educational community we will do our work by:

- Leading with confidence
- Learning through collaboration
- Inspiring all voices





Message from the Director of Education

It is always such a pleasure to present the Upper Grand District School Board's Director's Annual Report. Every year, we highlight some of the brightest points in the school year, and as always, there is much to report.

The Board unveiled a new multi-year strategic plan. Input from a wide variety of stakeholders was used to develop our four goals of achieving excellence, promoting student and staff well-being, ensuring equity of access and opportunity, and enhancing public confidence. The strategic plan was guided by our vision of the Upper Grand as an environment where we learn, lead and inspire – together.

In 2014-15, we saw the successful completion of our five-year implementation of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) in the Upper Grand. All of our 65 elementary schools now offer a full day program for both Junior and Senior Kindergarten students. Inquiry and intentional play-based learning supports the achievement of our youngest learners.

Great strides were taken in environmental initiatives and First Nations, Métis and Inuit education. A record number of schools were certified as EcoSchools and the Board continued its commitment to reduce paper consumption through the Less Paper Campaign. Twenty-four schools received visits from Elders or Traditional Knowledge keepers, opening students' minds to new ways of learning. Two feature events – our student art show,

showcasing artwork inspired by Indigenous teachings and culture, and the Aboriginal Heritage Festival – were so popular, we had to turn people away.

We continued to embrace technology that enhances and supports student learning. Chromebooks were made available in all public libraries in our district, allowing our students to access Board supports and resources required to complete their work. Technology coaches were sent to classrooms to ensure that Special Education students can use assistive technology, such as Google Read & Write, fluently. There are now more than 400 eLearning courses available to our secondary students.

Our staff and trustees continued to focus on student well-being and learning – showing time and time again that they truly care about the achievement, health and safety of every child in the Board. I commend everyone who is part of the Upper Grand District School Board for their dedication.

Enjoy our 2015 Annual Report.



Message from the Chair of the Board

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am pleased to present the 2014-2015 Annual Report for the Upper Grand District School Board.

The 2014-15 school year was one of new beginnings and evolution, with much to celebrate – so much that I won't be able to mention it all here, but here are some of the moments that stuck with me the most.

We welcomed three new trustees to the Board of Trustees, all of whom have brought with them fresh approaches and unique perspectives that have contributed to a positive board culture. The Board passed another balanced and compliant budget, another nod towards the Board's history of fiscal stewardship.

Trustees endorsed the Board's new, multi-year strategic plan, which reaffirms our commitment to student and staff achievement, supports the well-being of staff and students, and provides a variety of programs and services for students to ensure equity of access and opportunity. The Board is committed to engaging the larger community, and seeking new ways to maintain and improve transparency and accountability.

We celebrated the opening of four new schools: Arbour Vista Public School and William C. Winegard Public School in Guelph, Harris Mill Public School in Rockwood, and Spencer Avenue Elementary School in Orangeville. These schools, along with all of our elementary schools, saw a successful final year implementation of Full Day Kindergarten for our youngest students.

We continued the rollout of our mental health strategy. A number of resources were allocated to promote mental wellness in schools and connect students to the supports they need.

New and enhanced initiatives showed our continued commitment to the environment, from a new board-wide focus on environmental stewardship, to an action plan that details specific steps we'll take to encourage sustainable environmental practices in all of our facilities. Interest in creating natural play-scapes on school grounds was so popular, a School Ground Greening Committee was formed to meet the demand. Using funds from grants, schools planted trees, created shade gardens, started composting programs, and more.

Even as we celebrate our accomplishments, our Board remains committed to ever improving.

I want to close by thanking my fellow trustees, who are thoughtful, passionate, and dedicated to student well-being and achievement. I look forward to continuing to work with each, as well as our first class Director of Education and senior administration, as we continue to seek new ways to increase public confidence in our system, close the achievement gap so that all of our students can reach their full potential, and focus on high value methods of assessing and achieving ever higher levels of student well-being and academic success.

2016 Trustees



Mark Bailey
Board Chair



Marty Fairbairn
Board Vice-Chair



Linda Busuttill



Kathryn Cooper



Barbara Lustgarten-Evoy

GUELPH (WARDS 1 & 5)
Centennial CVI
Fred A. Hamilton PS
John McCrae PS
Ottawa Crescent PS
William C. Winegard PS

GUELPH (WARD 6) PUSLINCH
Aberfoyle PS
École Arbour Vista PS
Centennial CVI
Kortright Hills PS
Rickson Ridge PS
Sir Isaac Brock PS
Westminster Woods PS
Wellington Centre for Continuing Education

GUELPH (WARDS 2, 3 & 4)
Central PS
College Heights SS
Gateway Drive PS
John McCrae PS
June Avenue PS
Taylor Evans PS
Victory PS
Willow Road PS

GUELPH/ERAMOSA ERIN EAST GARAFRAXA
Brisbane PS
Centre Wellington DHS
East Garafraxa PS
Eramosa PS
Erin DHS
Erin PS
École Harris Mill PS
Rockwood Centennial PS
Ross R. MacKay PS

CENTRE WELLINGTON
Centre Wellington DHS
Elora PS
J.D. Hogarth PS
James McQueen PS
John Black PS
Ponsonby PS
Salem PS
Victoria Terrace PS



Martha MacNeil



Susan Moziar



Bruce Schieck



Lynn Topping



Barb White

GUELPH (WARDS 1 & 5)
Guelph CVI
Jean Little PS
John Galt PS
École King George PS
Ken Danby PS
Priory Park PS

GUELPH (WARDS 2, 3 & 4)
Brant Avenue PS
Edward Johnson PS
John F. Ross CVI
Mitchell Woods PS
Paisley Road PS
Waverley Drive PS
Westwood PS

WELLINGTON NORTH MINTO MAPLETON
Alma PS
Arthur PS
Centre Peel PS
Centre Peel SS
Drayton Heights PS
Kenilworth PS
Maryborough PS
Minto-Clifford PS
Norwell DSS
Palmerston PS
Victoria Cross PS
Wellington Heights SS

AMARANTH, EAST LUTHER/ GRAND VALLEY, MELANCTHON, MULMUR, MONO, SHELburne
Centennial Hylands ES
Centre Dufferin DHS
Glenbrook ES
Grand Valley & District PS
Hyland Heights ES
Laurelwoods ES
Mono-Amaranth PS
Primrose ES

ORANGEVILLE
Credit Meadows ES
Island Lake PS
Montgomery Village PS
Parkinson Centennial PS
Princess Elizabeth PS
Princess Margaret PS
Orangeville DSS
Spencer Avenue ES
Westside SS
Dufferin Centre for Continuing Education

The UGDSB Student Senate elects two students who sit on the board as non-voting trustees for a school year. In 2015-2016 the student trustees were **Leia Johnson** (John F. Ross CVI) and **Dylan Challinor** (Erin DHS).

By the Numbers

(All numbers as of October 2015)

SCHOOLS

65 Elementary
12 Secondary
4 Continuing Education sites

STAFF

Elementary teachers (not including OTs) = 1315
Secondary teachers (not including OTs) = 708
Senior administrators = 11
Schools administrators (Principals and Vice-Principals) = 130
Support staff = 1371
Occasional teachers (E & S) = 782

STUDENTS

Elementary:
22,513 students
22,496.66 full-time equivalent
457 ESL
175 self-identified Aboriginal

Secondary: 11,515 students
11,231.39 full-time equivalent
263 ESL
188 self-identified Aboriginal

DID YOU KNOW?

Full Day Kindergarten = offered at all 65 elementary schools; 191 FDK classes
Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM) = programs in all secondary schools
eLearning = 400 courses available to secondary students
OYAP = there are 156 apprenticable trades in Ontario
EcoSchools = 33 elementary and secondary schools have been certified as EcoSchools for 2015
Graduation rate = 69% (4 year rate), 84% (5 year rate)

2015-2016 BUDGET

Classroom instruction = \$253,731,560
Non-classroom = \$95,892,656
Total = Operating \$349,624,216 and Capital \$45,289,654



Our Strategic Plan

The board developed a new multi-year strategic plan, inviting input from a wide variety of stakeholders to assist with the review of its vision, mission and guiding principles. Stakeholder input was also used to develop four goals: achieve excellence, promote well-being, ensure equity of access and opportunity, and enhance public confidence. The board's three-year Strategic Plan is a living document that will be reviewed and renewed.

Our strategic goals in 2014-2015 were:

ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE

- Board Improvement Planning for Student Achievement
- Prioritizing initiatives and resources
- Supporting and developing staff

PROMOTE WELL-BEING

- Supporting well-being of students
- Supporting well-being of staff

ENSURE EQUITY OF ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

- Providing a variety of programs and services for students

ENHANCE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

- Ensuring accountability and transparency
- Engaging the community



<http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/board/article.aspx?id=13629>

Below: Alex, a student at Orangeville District Secondary School, on his way to a silver medal in Nordic skiing at OFSAA.



Achieving Excellence

Board Improvement Planning

The 2014-15 Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement focused on two main areas: student achievement and school improvement, and student inclusion, well-being and engagement.

The following expectations were set for all of our schools:

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT:

- A culture of high expectations supports the belief that all students can learn, progress and achieve.
- A variety of relevant and meaningful assessment data is used by students and educators to continuously monitor learning, to inform instruction and to determine next steps.
- A clear emphasis on high levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy is evident throughout the school.

STUDENT INCLUSION, WELL-BEING AND ENGAGEMENT:

- The teaching and learning environment is inclusive, promotes the intellectual engagement of all students and reflects individual student strengths, needs, learning preferences and cultural perspectives.
- Opportunities for authentic learning experiences and experiential learning exist in all classrooms, schools and community programs.
- The school and community build partnerships to enhance learning opportunities and well-being for students.

Professional Development in First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education

Staff had six different professional development opportunities in the board, from art and environmental awareness with celebrated Métis artist Christi Belcourt, to medicine wheel teachings with local elder Jan Sherman. Staff were introduced to a variety of indigenous arts so teachers could prepare students for an upcoming FNMI art show, including Métis dot painting with local artist Marie-Louise Lariviere. A number of teachers also attended an elders' gathering in Ottawa put on by the FNMI provincial subject association.



Leadership development programs expand to reach more staff



Leadership Development and Succession Planning at all levels are critical factors in the success of every organization. Upper Grand is fortunate to have a strong culture of leadership development and a desire by staff to seek out new opportunities for professional development and growth. The Board Leadership Development strategy continues to support both current and future leaders through

mentoring, performance appraisal and professional learning team structures. Each year we add a new cohort of system leaders to our Cycle of Training Program.

2014-15 saw more than 25 new system and school leaders enrol in the board's Cycle of Training, which provides them with the necessary operational knowledge, skills and resources to be successful in their new roles. This fall, the board expanded its leadership development work by developing leadership pathways and supports for system-level managers and leaders in our business departments. These programs build on the success of sessions based on the themes of courageous conversations, mentoring and change facilitation skills. Looking ahead, the board is merging its Mentoring Programs from various employee groups to consolidate resources and showcase the strong culture of mentorship across the district.

Groundbreaking history project comes to Dufferin County schools and museum

In February, 20 senior history students from three Upper Grand high schools embarked on an immersive journey into the past. The Digital Historian Project (DHP), a partnership between UGDSB and the Dufferin County Museum and Archives (DCMA), ran for a full semester with students from Centre Dufferin DHS, Orangeville DSS and Westside SS. CDDHS teacher Neil Orford came up with the groundbreaking project.

The DHP fosters digital literacy in students while providing deep historical research for the country. The DHP consists of four courses that form an interesting marriage of history and math: Grade 11 Native Studies, Grade 12 Data Management Math, Grade 12 Canadian History and Grade 12 Interdisciplinary Studies, which focuses on museum work, exploring the curriculum outside of the traditional classroom setting. Each day the students worked from the DCMA, conducting deep archival research and gathering data, focusing in particular on 20th century Canadian veterans. Students also had the opportunity to work with the National Library and Archives in Ottawa,



the University of Guelph, the Juno Beach Centre and the Archives of Ontario, and tour the Battlefields in Normandy. In October, Orford won a Government of Canada History Award for his work with the DHP.

Hundreds of educators share ideas for sparking innovation at IGNITE Learning Fair



Approximately 300 educators came together for two days of learning and sharing at the Learning Fair, an annual professional development conference. This

past summer, the Learning Fair rebranded itself as "IGNITE" (Innovation. Growth Mindset. Networking. Implementing Practice. Thinking Outside the Box). The theme inspired educators from across our district to come together and share the successes they have had in their classrooms with programs that spark creativity and innovation with their students. Administrators, teachers and guest speakers alike were keen once again to demonstrate the exciting strategies and new approaches they are using that spark student interest, facilitate learning and showcase new ways to demonstrate understanding of key learning expectations. The home-grown nature of this professional development event ensures that the strategies shared are tried, tested and true within the context of the Upper Grand District School Board.

Students introduced to programming through the Hour of Code

Students learned the basics of computer science and programming through the worldwide Hour of Code. The Hour of Code is a one-hour introduction to computer science. The global movement's goal is not to teach students how to code in just 60 minutes, but rather to "demystify code and show that anybody can learn the basics." Through classroom tutorials, students are introduced to the fun and creative aspects of coding and computer science. The Hour of Code is organized by Code.org, a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing participation in computer science. The group works to reach every student regardless of their background and increase diversity in computer science.



Full Day Kindergarten fully implemented in all Upper Grand schools

2014-15 saw the successful completion of our five-year implementation of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) in the Upper Grand District School Board. Each of our 65 elementary schools now offers a full day program for both Junior and Senior Kindergarten students. This program, taught in most classrooms by educational teams consisting of a teacher and a Registered Early Childhood Educator, focuses on inquiry and intentional play-based learning principles.

Throughout the five-year implementation, the FDK program was supported through excellent professional development opportunities for educators and the purchase of selected resources to support teaching and learning. A particular focus was placed on the purchase of outdoor resources to be used when extending the program beyond the walls of the classroom.

Child care is an important part of the FDK program offered in our board, and a number of schools offer

a Before and/or After School program. Child care opportunities will continue to grow and support even more families and their children as more families express a need and interest in this aspect of the board's Kindergarten programming.

The board's Early Years team also worked collaboratively with our County Child Care Managers to identify spaces for retrofit projects in order to accommodate toddlers and preschoolers. Child care spaces at Taylor Evans PS, Fred A. Hamilton PS, Jean Little PS and Credit Meadows Elementary School benefitted from the completion of retrofit projects in the summer of 2015. The board continues to be dedicated to improving the learning environment in schools for our youngest learners.

In addition to the child care retrofit projects, 12 schools benefitted from upgrades to Kindergarten classrooms.



Primary EQAO results: Grade 3

N/A: Due to exceptional circumstances in 2015, these EQAO results were not available for 2014-15

Province Wide: UGDSB compared to the provincial highest, average and lowest English-language board level results, based on the percentage of students at Levels 3 and 4, 2010-2015. (All scores are percentages.)

READING	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
UGDSB	64	67	68	66	n/a
Highest	77	80	80	79	n/a
Average	65	66	68	70	n/a
Lowest	46	44	45	49	n/a

WRITING	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
UGDSB	73	73	74	72	n/a
Highest	89	91	88	89	n/a
Average	73	76	77	78	n/a
Lowest	46	44	50	55	n/a

MATH	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
UGDSB	67	67	64	60	n/a
Highest	83	83	82	81	n/a
Average	69	68	67	67	n/a
Lowest	52	38	40	49	n/a

Board Wide: UGDSB girls, boys, students with special needs and English Language Learners (ELL), based on the percentage of students at Levels 3 and 4, 2010-2015.

READING	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Female	70	74	73	70	n/a
Male	59	61	63	63	n/a
Special Ed.	30	33	38	38	n/a
ELL	34	39	21	n/a	n/a

WRITING	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Female	80	81	81	78	n/a
Male	65	65	66	66	n/a
Special Ed.	51	51	52	52	n/a
ELL	55	51	26	n/a	n/a

MATH	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Female	67	68	64	61	n/a
Male	67	65	64	59	n/a
Special Ed.	35	39	33	30	n/a
ELL	40	50	24	n/a	n/a

Primary EQAO results: Grade 6

N/A: Due to exceptional circumstances in 2015, these EQAO results were not available for 2014-15

Province Wide: UGDSB compared to the provincial highest, average and lowest English-language board level results, based on the percentage of students at Levels 3 and 4, 2010-2015.
(All scores are percentages.)

READING	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
UGDSB	73	76	76	79	n/a
Highest	85	86	88	93	n/a
Average	74	75	77	79	n/a
Lowest	58	61	51	55	n/a

WRITING	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
UGDSB	68	71	70	75	n/a
Highest	84	86	89	91	n/a
Average	73	74	76	78	n/a
Lowest	55	54	48	49	n/a

MATH	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
UGDSB	53	54	52	50	n/a
Highest	76	72	72	68	n/a
Average	58	58	57	54	n/a
Lowest	38	35	23	18	n/a

Board Wide: UGDSB girls, boys, students with special needs and English Language Learners (ELL), based on the percentage of students at Levels 3 and 4, 2010-2015.

READING	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Female	78	82	80	84	n/a
Male	68	70	72	74	n/a
Special Ed.	34	44	46	49	n/a
ELL	36	47	43	n/a	n/a

WRITING	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Female	78	83	82	84	n/a
Male	59	60	58	64	n/a
Special Ed.	28	39	36	43	n/a
ELL	31	53	50	n/a	n/a

MATH	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Female	56	58	53	53	n/a
Male	51	50	51	47	n/a
Special Ed.	15	21	20	16	n/a
ELL	27	33	33	n/a	n/a

Secondary EQAO results: Grades 9 & 10

N/A: Due to exceptional circumstances in 2015, these EQAO results were not available for 2014-15

Province Wide: UGDSB compared to the provincial highest, average and lowest English-language board level results, based on the percentage of students at Levels 3 and 4, 2010-2015.
(All scores are percentages.)

Grade 9 Math - Academic	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
UGDSB	85	87	87	88	90
Highest	92	91	92	94	n/a
Average	83	84	84	85	n/a
Lowest	60	55	53	66	n/a

Grade 9 Math - Applied	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
UGDSB	52	53	52	59	67
Highest	60	75	64	80	n/a
Average	42	44	44	47	n/a
Lowest	30	30	22	23	n/a

Grade 10 OSSLT - (first time eligible)	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Success rate - UGDSB	84	84	82	82	80
Success rate - Province	91	90	91	91	82

Board Wide: UGDSB girls, boys, students with special needs and English Language Learners (ELL), based on the percentage of students at Levels 3 and 4, 2010-2015.

Grade 9 Math - Academic	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Female	83	86	86	87	89
Male	87	88	89	89	92
Special Ed.	81	80	80	81	85
ELL	n/a	100	83	89	94

Grade 9 Math - Applied	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Female	52	53	49	58	68
Male	52	53	53	61	66
Special Ed.	48	42	43	n/a	62
ELL	n/a	10	20	52	75

Grade 10 OSSLT - (first time eligible)	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Female	87	90	89	88	84
Male	80	78	76	76	77
Special Ed.	48	52	48	47	48
ELL	81	62	83	74	n/a

Promoting Well-Being

New programs support employee wellness



The Employee Health and Wellness Department added a number of new programs and initiatives during the 2014-15 school year, continuing to build on the success of programs implemented since the

inception of the Wellness Program in 2012. In response to requests from staff, the number of fitness programs increased significantly and grew to include yoga, learn to run and boot camp style sessions. The board continued its partnership with the Stress Management and High Performance Clinic at the University of Guelph to offer a variety of personal wellness opportunities, adding a program with a focus on personal resiliency. Staff were encouraged to participate in a variety of programs including Stress Management, Relaxation Techniques, Sleep Better Programs, Energy Boosters, Heart Smart Stress Management, Tips to Decrease Anxiety, Curbing Worry and Increasing Personal Resiliency. As awareness of the various programs and supports available continues to grow, we have seen an increase both in participation and inquiries from individuals contacting the department with ideas, suggestions and looking to host programs.

Below: Students enrolled in the Specialist High Skills Major Health and Wellness program participate in a Zumba class during a wellness retreat held at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre.



Promoting mental wellness in schools and classrooms



Above: Students at Victory Public School are led in a karma yoga class while learning about the Syrian refugee crisis.

Over the past two years the UGDSB Mental Health and Addiction Strategy has been implemented to increase awareness, decrease stigma, create mentally healthy schools and classrooms and effectively connect students to supports. The board introduced *Supporting Minds: An Educator's Guide to Supporting Students' Mental Health and Well-being* to increase awareness among educators and to provide practical classroom strategies for teachers and schools to support students. *Leading Mentally Healthy Schools: A Resource for School Administrators* guides administrators as they work to develop mentally healthy schools, and support staff, students and families.

The board works collaboratively with community mental health partners, police, local hospitals and inpatient psychiatry units to increase information sharing and make transitions more efficient and effective for our students and families. The board focused on increasing awareness around suicide prevention by implementing the Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Protocol. All Social Workers, Psychological Consultants and Child and Youth Counsellors were trained in Applied Suicide

Intervention Skills Training, as were 120 administrators and teachers. More than 270 staff and students were trained in safeTALK, suicide alertness for everyone. All of our administrators, as well as a team of teachers, plus Social Workers, Psychological Consultants and CYCs, were trained in Collaborative Proactive Solutions. This training focuses on staff and students working together when a student is struggling, to determine the underlying unsolved problem and collaboratively develop a plan to build skills and supports.

In early May we held Child and Youth Mental Health Week, a week dedicated to promoting mental wellness, increasing awareness of child and youth mental health, decreasing stigma and promoting the supports that are available. The 2015 theme was "Have a SUPER week" and focused on Social connection, Uplifting emotions, Personal health, Emotional calming and Resilient thinking. Each day concentrated on building skills for positive mental health including daily mental health awareness announcements, assemblies about mental health, walls of hope, dance for mental health and many other activities.

Advancements in technology support equity and enhance student learning

A number of initiatives across the board embedded technology in classrooms as a tool to not only engage but enhance and facilitate learning. The board embarked on an innovative project to bridge the digital divide in Upper Grand communities, making Chromebooks available to students to use at public libraries across the district. This project allows students to access board supports and resources that students use to complete their work. The Chromebooks program aims to provide equity of access to the Internet and technology for all students in the board and also ensures students won't have to wait in line to use a computer in their library. Chromebooks can be used by UGDSB students within the

libraries themselves or loaned out for periods of time. Following the launch at three pilot sites, the project expanded to include all 25 library branches that serve the Upper Grand. Many applications and resources have been introduced to students and teachers to support learning. One of the largest rollouts over the past year has been the introduction of Dreambox to elementary students. This resource allows students to consolidate numeracy concepts and work on improving numeracy skills while at school and home. The powerful component of this resource lies in its ability to provide teachers with a detailed summary of each student's strengths and needs in various strands of the mathematics curriculum.



Above: Students at Westwood Public School use Google Cardboard to go on a virtual journey as part of the Google Expeditions Pioneer Program.

Technology coaches support student learning in the classroom

In order to ensure that Special Education students can use assistive technology fluently, to access the curriculum and demonstrate their knowledge, the Upper Grand District School Board sent our itinerant technology coaches into classrooms that have students using specialized equipment. This has meant that classroom teachers, along with our

Special Education students, have begun to build their capacity and knowledge of relevant programs, such as Google Plus and Google Read & Write. This growth in technical knowledge and regular classroom use is exciting for both teachers and students who can work cooperatively to design assignments that suit both the teacher and the learner.

Indigenous teachings open minds to new ways of learning



Above: A jingle dancer demonstrates a traditional dance during the 2015 Aboriginal Heritage Festival.

2014-15 was an important year for the development of First Nations, Métis and Inuit education in Upper Grand. Twenty-two different Elders or Traditional Knowledge keepers visited 24 Upper Grand schools. These visits have a tremendous impact, not only opening students' minds to new ways of learning, but also by providing teachers with first-hand experience about First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and cultures.

From April to June of 2015, the "Zoongeheshkwaad" student art show was showcased at the Wellington County Museum and Archives. The show featured artwork inspired by Indigenous teachings, culture

and art. The event was so popular guests had to be turned away. More than 100 pieces of stunning student art were featured in the show, from 19 different Upper Grand schools, showcasing the breadth of student talent in the board.

The Aboriginal Heritage Festival is a celebration of First Nations art, music and voice. Last year, the festival was expanded to a two-day event, with more than 600 students attending. Even with the expanded schedule, over 1,000 people were on a waiting list, hoping to attend. This year's festival was extended to a four-day event to accommodate the demand.

Everyday Hero Awards

Parent Involvement Committee develops strategies for supporting achievement in math

The Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) was once again pleased to have representation of parents from across the board. PIC members were represented on various system-level committees including the Safe, Equitable and Inclusive Schools Steering Committee and the Mental Health Committee, and have started having a representative attend the Upper Grand Learning Foundation Committee meetings.

In 2014-15, the work of PIC focused on the implementation of goals stemming from the PRO Regional Grant. The key focus of the grant was to develop and share strategies that School Councils, school communities and parents can use to help support student achievement in mathematics.

In April, teams from each Upper Grand school were invited to the spring event. The theme of this year's event was "Challenge (In) Equity," featuring keynote speaker Chris D'Souza. More than 225 participants attended the event which also saw breakout sessions on effective practices for School Councils,

information from Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, as well as information on mathematics, applying for grants, career pathways and other board resources for parent use.

In the fall, PIC held a workshop for parents called "A Gazillion is not a Number." Dr. Lynda Colgan, an associate professor and author from Queen's University, highlighted ways that parents can help support student success in numeracy and help increase their child's confidence in mathematics. Dr. Colgan shared with parents how to find exciting math opportunities in everyday places and encouraged everyone to use these moments as golden learning opportunities. The session was very well attended and appreciated by all who came.

Upper Grand is very appreciative of the efforts of our parents who willingly give their time to help build relationships between schools and their communities and help facilitate the involvement of parents in our school system.

The Upper Grand District School Board celebrates the unsung heroes of the school system who go out of their way to make a difference in the lives, learning and well-being of students through the Everyday Hero Awards. The program is sponsored by the board's trustees. The key criteria for the awards are:

- Performance of duties of a high level at all times
- A significant school and/or system-related achievement
- A specific innovation or achievement of significant value or importance to the system
- A unique circumstance considered worthy of recognition by the board

2014-15 AWARD RECIPIENTS:

- **ConnectHEAR**, an initiative for students with hearing loss, coordinated by **Trudy COUNTER**, Coordinator of Communication, Language and Speech Services, **Sonya White** and **Stacey Giffen**, Itinerant Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, **Ashley Champ**, Speech-Language Pathologist and **Lesley Anne Jordan**, Special Education Consultant, Orangeville Board Office
- **Sheila Parker**, Manager of Budget and Financial Reporting, Guelph Board Office
- **Cheryl VanOoteghem**, Principal of Program, Orangeville Board Office
- **Alana Lefebvre**, Coordinator of Nutrition Program, Rockwood Centennial PS
- **Deb Kortleve**, Teacher, Erin District High School, various locations
- **Philip Hinton**, Crossing Guard, École Harris Mill and Rockwood Centennial PS
- **Andy Speers**, Teacher, Drayton Heights PS
- **Lois and Matthew Metzger**, Volunteers, Drayton Heights PS
- **Angie Tersigni**, Volunteer, Gateway Drive PS
- **Neil Blair**, Volunteer, Guelph Collegiate Vocational Institute



From top left: Community volunteer Peter communicates with Hamoudi, a Syrian newcomer, using Google Translate at Princess Elizabeth Public School; Construction students at College Heights Secondary School build life-saving dog houses for a First Nations community in northern Ontario; Grade 7 and 8 students at Erin Public School create their own applications.



Environmental Initiatives



Above: Students of GCVI's Grade 12 Green Industries class, along with GCVI staff, are pictured at the "altar" of the willow dome (which they helped to rebuild) situated at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre north of Guelph. Artist Barbara Guy, who conceived the original design and concept for the willow dome, stands far left. One of the intended purposes of the dome is to provide visitors with a place they can come to find clarity in nature.

LIVE GREEN. LEARN GREEN. GO GREEN. SHARING OUR RENEWED VISION

In September 2014, the Upper Grand District School Board launched a new board-wide focus on environmental stewardship. The Environmental Education and Management Committee shared a new vision: "By the 2017-18 school year the Upper Grand District School Board will be a community leader in environmental stewardship and sustainability. Students and staff in all schools and board departments will work together with our community partners to become environmentally responsible citizens in a safe, healthy and sustainable environment."

The board developed a new Environmental Sustainability Action Plan that detailed specific steps on how

to encourage sustainable environmental approaches as general practice at all schools and board offices, via four pillars:

- Incorporating environmental issues into classroom learning
- Increasing staff and student engagement in school-wide initiatives
- Promoting increased collaboration with community partners
- Supporting leadership activities in the form of policies and procedures

The Action Plan built on the success of many unique environmental initiatives already in place and went deeper by incorporating environmental sustainability, leadership and stewardship as an aligned priority within the board's strategic plan. The board's new

environmental vision was shared with diverse members of the school and board communities through formal presentations, workshops, Google Hangouts, school newsletters and more.

SCHOOL GROUND GREENING COMMITTEE FORMED

A new School Ground Greening Committee was formed to meet the demand of the increased interest by schools to create natural playscapes to enhance the learning and well-being of their students. A workbook was created to take the guesswork out of completing a greening project. Once the seeds of a project were created, schools were encouraged to form a School Greening Committee that included a variety of stakeholders from the school community to ensure that everyone's voice was heard. A record number of "Green Up Your School Grants" were awarded in 2014-15. Funds were used to plant trees, improve shade gardens, start a composting program, and bring in guest speakers.



THE UGDSB SETS A GOAL TO REDUCE PAPER CONSUMPTION

In the 2014-15 school year, the UGDSB launched a Less Paper Campaign to reduce paper consumption. Schools and board offices looked at their paper consumption habits and set paper reduction targets. Resources were provided to help inspire everyone to find new ways to reduce their dependency on paper. Best practices include using an electronic filing system, creating paperless invoicing and record keeping, setting computers and photocopiers to double-sided

printing as the default and creating a GOOS bin (for paper that is still Good On One Side).

UGDSB ACHIEVES A RECORD NUMBER OF SCHOOLS WINNING ECOSCHOOLS CERTIFICATION



Ontario EcoSchools is an environmental education and certification program that helps school communities develop both ecological literacy and environmentally responsible citizenship and reduce their environmental footprint. Student participation and leadership are integral to the EcoSchool program. Thirty-three Upper Grand elementary and secondary schools were certified as EcoSchools during the 2014-2015 school year. This is a record number of winning schools, and includes seven schools that participated for the first time. Two schools deserve a special mention for achieving the prized platinum level. Victoria Terrace Public School and Centennial CVI have been EcoSchools for at least five years, and in the 2014-15 school year achieved a high level of points in six key areas, including an additional special platinum section.





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