

## The Impact of the Caring

The Grade 8 class at Hamiota Collegiate just completed a writing project focusing on feature articles. They received support from teacher Julie Facey as well as divisional Literacy and Numeracy Facilitator Louise Langevin. For their shared writing experience, the students chose to write about the school's Head Custodian Brad Matiation.

To create a sense of purpose and to make this an authentic learning experience the students discussed who might read this article and where it could be published. At their request, their tribute to Mr. Matiation is shown below:

A school custodian seems to always be overlooked in books, movies and television shows. But, at Hamiota Collegiate Institute the students, staff and parents have discovered there is more than meets the eye with their custodian.

Four years ago, an individual named Mr. Brad Matiation joined the HCI staff and throughout these years he has become a positive role model for all the people he meets.

### *Brad's personality welcomes everyone who enters the school.*

Students and staff can always hear him humming a tune cheerfully while he sweeps up and down the halls, wipes off tables, vacuums carpets, and even when he is taking out the trash. People also notice Brad's friendly and caring attitude when they have a conversation with him.



"He always asks us about our lives and what we did on the weekend," comments Kareena a grade eight student at HCI.

"You can honestly just laugh with him," adds Telyna, another student from grade 8. "He is always so genuine and happy; it is a contagious attitude. He listens to you, giving input and never judging. He just brightens up my mood. He is always asking about how our day is going and cracking jokes or telling stories. It is a real joy for him to be in our school."

When it comes to events happening in our school, Mr. Matiation can be seen preparing the school, making the guests in the building feel welcome, cheering on and supporting the teams, all while continuing to keep the school looking top-notch.

"This year our school hosted JV Boys Volleyball Provincials and Varsity Girls Basketball Provincials. Brad was there to wax and sweep the floor. He spoke to the teams and asked where they were from and he kept updated on how they were making out with their games, and he even extended his kindness to the guests and parents, who were watching, by making sure everything was going well," comments Hailey Chappell, a grade eight sport's fan.

Brady Dziver, a grade eight student at HCI, also explains, "Mr. Matiation can be seen cheering us on (middle years sports teams) and this makes us feel supported."

"Mr. Matiation's connection with the students goes beyond just supporting them," explains Mrs. Facey, a teacher at HCI. "He also teaches them life lessons about treating everyone kindly; not judging others, and taking time to truly listen to what others have to say. If I had to use one phrase to tie it all together, I would say our cheerful custodian is teaching the students to have respect for all things, which includes not only people, but property too."

Emma McConnell of the grade 8 class says, "We weren't always the neatest class," referring to the state of their classroom after lunch, "however, our class really pulled up our socks when we started to recognize the mutual respect needed. If Mr. Matiation was treating us with such great respect, then what were we doing in return?"

One day in language arts class the grade eight students discussed the idea of writing an article about this wonderful person who means so much to them. They wanted to let him know how much they appreciate him, but the students soon realized that they knew very little about the person who knew them so well. Aside from knowing his personality and his strong work ethic, the students learned that they needed a way to find out more. It was time to do some investigating!

Mr. Matiation was born on November 7 in Shoal Lake, Manitoba. He has an older brother and a younger sister. Brad has always been one to keep busy. In fact, he dislikes just sitting around. "He is a jack-of-all-trades," his wife Cindy shares. He has built houses, cottages and camps at Rainy Lake, Ontario, worked at Pinewood Sports and Marina doing maintenance in Fort Frances, ON, and now in addition to his custodial job, he does odd jobs in Shoal Lake and enjoys working on his house in the country. He also likes working on cars and when not working takes time to enjoy a curling game or two.

Brad did not plan to become a custodian, but when he was offered the job, he took the opportunity. The staff and students are glad he did.

Mr. Matiation makes Hamiota Collegiate a brighter place with more than just floor wax. The students appreciate his sense of humour and cheerful personality and the feeling is mutual. When Cindy was asked about what her husband's favourite part of his job is, there was no doubt in her mind. "The kids!"

Charlotte Little from grade eight explains it best, *"Mr. Matiation is not just our custodian. He is a friend and someone to look up to. I couldn't imagine our school without him."*

Mrs. Facey agrees with Charlotte and adds, "The staff appreciates everything Brad does – the difficult task of keeping the building clean, the extra help with odd jobs, the kind smile and caring words, but especially the daily reminder to respect all."

Thanks Mr. Matiation!

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LEARNERS TODAY, LEADERS TOMORROW

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A Message from Our Vice Chair  
Newell Johnston

As the days get longer and the leaves come back our students, teachers, administrators, staff and their families begin to think about summer and the end of another school year. It always seems to happen so fast. As a father of two, each year appears to have come and gone with increasing speed, culminating with the graduation of our youngest this June. Where has the time gone?

For the students and teachers it must feel like so much is yet to do. There are lessons to complete, tests and finals to write and to mark, and report cards to prepare and receive.

The things that we learn in school are important but I feel some of the things we learn along the way are perhaps the most valuable. The ability to be resilient like the trees that lose their leaves in Autumn and stand against the cold winds through the winter only to return again to new life each spring. This continued growth teaches us that difficult times will pass and we will emerge the same but somehow stronger on the other side. The lesson that sneaks up on us through and between all our hard work in our school years - the ability to learn how to learn. This makes us strong and capable throughout our lives as we continue to learn new skills and build on skills that we have already developed.

Take the time to enjoy the change of seasons as the school year wraps up. Sit by a fire, play a game with family, take a walk after supper, or simply visit with friends and enjoy the fullness of life. After all, each of you as a teacher, parent, grandparent, student, or friend deserves happiness. Besides, what else is there, really?

## Happy Summer!

Stephen David, Superintendent/CEO

It's hard to believe that it is June already. It doesn't seem like that long ago when I was writing my opening message for the first newsletter of the year.

Back in September, I stated how fortunate I was to be part of a professional community that approaches its work with such optimism and dedication. My first year in my new position has affirmed that perspective. I am so grateful to be a part of Park West School Division. It is an honour to work with such high quality board members, teachers, support staff, administrators, families, and community members.

I continue to be amazed by the wonderful students that we have in the schools across our division. They have accomplished so much in their classrooms, schools, and communities. On a daily basis our students are enthusiastic, active, and engaged learners. Much credit for this goes to our educators whose innovative approaches and thoughtful insights enable us to deliver a high quality education to our students.

While students and staff are looking forward to a well-deserved summer break, I want to express my gratitude for your incredible energy and commitment to our schools and our students. You all have a lot to be proud of this year. Each one of you made the education and welfare of our students our collective priority.

Before you leave for the summer, I encourage each of you to think of two things. Firstly, reflect upon your individual impact on the students in our school division. Secondly, think about what you will do as an individual to have an even greater impact next year.

Thanks to all of you for helping to make 2016-17 a successful school year in Park West. For those retiring or moving on to something else, I wish you nothing but the best. For everyone else, have a safe and relaxing summer. I can't wait to see what we can do together in 2017-18.

We will bring the world to our

students

to prepare our students for

the world.



### DIVISION OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

PO Box 68      1126 St. Clare Street      Birtle, MB R0M 0C0      Phone: 204-842-2100      Fax: 204-842-2110  
Email: pwsdoffice@pwsd.ca      www.pwsd.ca



## Provincial Group Category Winner: *Bashful Boys*

The Bashful Boys were chosen by the Manitoba School Boards Association as the Provincial Group Category Winner for the 2017 Student Citizenship Awards.

Members of the group are Jayden Cloud, Nick Alexson, Blade Shingoose, and Raoul Gambler-Robb.

The Bashful Boys were recognized for volunteering their time to help the younger students at Waywayseecappo School.

## Trees, Trees, Trees!

~submitted by Mrs. Kyle, Principal Birtle Elementary School



Birtle Elementary School has been working hard this year to make its playground a better place for students to live, learn and enjoy for years to come. Along with many of the projects that are presently underway, a very exciting one kicked off in May. With the hard work and help of Ryan Canart from the Upper Assiniboine River Conservation District, we applied for a grant in the Fall through Manitoba Hydro to add trees to our playground. Part of this application process was to demonstrate a need to naturally beautify our playground but also to have an educational component for the students. We were very fortunate to have obtained a grant for approximately \$7,000 worth of trees for our playground that the students helped to plant!



These trees include a wide variety of species and the students will be creating a walking path in the future with stepping stones along with signs to mark each unique tree on our school ground. We are excited to also have planted some beautiful mature maple trees along our sandbox fence

line to help provide shade for our kids while they enjoy the nice weather.

A huge **thank you** to Ryan Canart, Janet Sandstrom and Jeff Howard; along with the amazing student summer workers that came out to help plant these trees with the kids. It was a great day! They learned about caring for trees, how to plant them properly and the new specifics within the playground.

We would also like to give a huge thank-you to the Upper Assiniboine Conservation District for volunteering their time and donation of adding irrigation to our playground around the trees to help make sure they grow big and beautiful for years to come. Thank you to Manitoba Hydro for helping us to reach our goal of adding some beauty to our playground as well! We are forever grateful for everyone's kindness and generosity!



## Student Focus Groups

*One of the priority areas of Park West School Division is positive communication and relationships.*



It is the Board's goal to enhance learning by developing and fostering effective open communication between students, staff, parents, and community to build positive relationships

This year we focused on improving communication with students. To that end, we held focus groups in all divisional schools the first week of May. Principals were asked to identify approximately 15 students to be involved in the consultation and to organize a space for us to meet.

The Board and divisional administration met with over 200 Park West students and collected feedback on two questions. We asked students:

- What are some highlights from your school experience?
- What can the Division do to make your educational experience even better?

Students indicated that they liked school and felt that they were being supported and respected. There was considerable positive feedback on the quality of programs, the teachers, and the resources available for learning.

While there was a consistent high level of satisfaction with the overall school experience, there was some valuable suggestions regarding how to improve the school experience. For example, there was a desire by many students to be even further engaged through relevant hands-on learning experiences. Every high school had students who asked for even more course options, both in regular academic and vocational areas.

There was more than a fair share of early year's students who asked for more recess. But it wasn't simply about free time. One young gentleman stated that "kids need recess to give their bodies a break...plus playing makes more oxygen go to the brain so we can learn better".

*We were extremely impressed with the insight of the students during the focus group sessions.*

Our goal is to use the student feedback both at an individual school and divisional level to help inform our planning.

## Divisional Budget

In March, the Board of Trustees approved our budget for 2017-18. The budget for next year reflects a 2% decrease in provincial funding, a 6.9% increase in the local levy, and approximately \$500,000 in cuts or reductions.

Our main focus was minimizing the impact to students in the classroom while limiting the level of support required from our ratepayers. We looked at divisional programs that served the fewest numbers of students. We also found efficiencies with staffing, mainly focusing on schools which had been staffed above our formula.

Thanks to all individuals and communities that provided guidance and feedback during the budget process.

## A Note from the Assistant Superintendent

As the year winds down, I hope all of our students and staff have enjoyed a great year at Park West. I was thinking of what I should write about in this article and I recalled that when I went with trustees to visit some of our schools I asked some of the students what it is they think I do. Outside of a few, "you're second in command", most people did not know. So I thought this might be a good opportunity to talk about what I do in Park West.

I do a variety of things on different days but my biggest responsibility is staffing and human resources. I am responsible for our teaching staff when it comes to hiring, evaluations, leaves, and all things related to staffing. Part of that responsibility is getting the projections for next year ready for budgeting and working with schools on their staffing plans and hiring of new staff. I also work with the Park West Teachers' Association on the professional development (PD) of our teaching staff. We organize the direction that we want the division to take with PD. Part of this responsibility includes overseeing the assessment pilot committee which looks at assessment in our division and where we are headed. Working with staff also includes the principals and I am responsible for organizing principals' meetings.

Another responsibility is working with our Numeracy and Literacy Facilitators on curriculum, our Student

Services Coordinator with student services and our new Technology Resource teaching position. Part of my role is talking with these leaders on their own growth and touching base on issues when they come up and the direction we are headed. I am also the head of our accessibility committee which examines all the accessibility issues within our schools and keeps our division up to date with direction on accessibility from the province. Finally I am slowly taking over the vocational aspect of Park West School Division from Stephen and helping to plan all the activities that relate to vocational programming.

This is a brief synopsis of some of the bigger things I do during the year. I work with Stephen and schools on many issues as they come up during the year and trying to solve them when they arise. We are fortunate to have a great divisional team that works well together and does a fantastic job. One of my favorite aspects is getting out of the office and I really enjoy going to our schools and visiting and getting to talk with staff and students about things in Park West.

Well I hope that helps with you getting an idea of some of the things that I do at Park West. As I said earlier it is a great place to work and I also feel a great place to raise kids. All the best this summer!

~Jon Zilkey

## Makerspaces

If you were to visit one of our schools, you might encounter a bunch of students, often from different grades, spread out on the floor or in the hallway working on some collaborative project. This reflects a new spin on an old practice, giving kids places to make things where they can be creative. These new areas are called Makerspaces.

During a recent visit to one of our Elementary Schools, a young lady explained that Makerspaces are "when kids get to be creative and work together to make whatever they want". She went on to state "sometimes you start with the plan, but that changes, and then you end up with something better than what you thought".



Makerspaces can have a significant impact on student learning and development. They are increasingly being looked to as a method for engaging learners in creative, higher-order problem-solving through hands-on design, and construction. Using Makerspaces, young inventors, tinkerers, builders and budding entrepreneurs can prototype and build whatever they can imagine.

If you want to learn more about Makerspaces, ask any kid for more information.

## Thoughts from Dorelle Fulton, Park West Secretary-Treasurer

*I've been in my role as Secretary-Treasurer for almost a year now and would like to share a bit about my responsibilities in case you ever wondered what a Secretary-Treasurer does.*

There are three main annual milestones in my job:

- Preparing financial statements for the division's June 30th year-end, which are audited and submitted to the Province
- Coordinating the development of next year's budget
- Preparing financial statements for the Province's March 31st year-end, which are audited and submitted to the Province

Other significant responsibilities include monitoring spending against budgets and attending board meetings to keep the Board of Trustees updated on the division's financial position.

I have really enjoyed being involved with principals' meetings throughout the year and attending student focus group meetings at schools in early May with Trustees. Another exciting aspect of my job is supporting divisional leaders by summarizing divisional numeracy and literacy assessment results. Manitoba's Secretary-Treasurers are part of MASBO (Manitoba Association of School Business Officials) along with leaders of Maintenance, Transportation, and Workplace Safety and Health. This network has been a very important resource for me this past year as I've been learning my job.

If you are a student and all of this sounds very exciting, then I encourage you to consider a career

in accounting! Check out: [cpamb.ca](http://cpamb.ca) to learn about how to become a CPA. The Chartered Professional Accountants of Manitoba (CPA Manitoba) is a regulatory body that represents more than 9000 members, candidates and students. CPA Manitoba protects the public interest through rigorous educational and certification programs and ensures its members uphold the highest professional and ethics standards.

Job markets are always changing, but businesses will always need someone to be responsible for their finances. Please feel free to contact me at the Division Office if you'd like to learn more. Have a great summer!

## Nature Studies Program

In an earlier newsletter, the new Nature Studies program for high school students was highlighted. Much has happened since the program began in February.

This semester, Park West School Division introduced the Nature Studies program to complement existing vocational programming for building construction, health care aide, and cosmetology. Students from all division schools can attend any program.



The program, which runs five days a week, is broken into four components, each a credit toward graduation. Students focus on outdoor education, resource and habitat management, wildlife management, and tourism.

In total, 13 students are in Alan Wilson's nature studies class, with 16 people capping the list for the introductory year.

The class is all encompassing. Students are kayaking and backpacking, planting trees, working with GPS programs, tracking habitat populations and promoting local habitats like a tourism official.



The program has been so successful, that two students have already left for jobs in related fields. One student accepted a full-time position with Prairie View Municipality, while another student is employed as a surveyor for the province's highways department. Both positions are seasonal.