

King George Public School

Near North District School Board North Bay, Ontario

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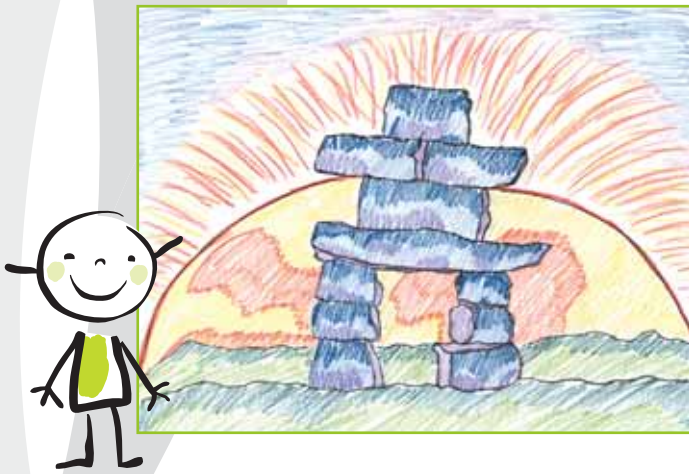
Some Snapshots

Students ...

- participate in the Green Earth Club, a volunteer-run, student-driven group that recycles in every classroom and charts weekly litter-less lunches
- perform in a multi-generational school choir, which is showcased at special events throughout the community
- are leaders on the playground and help make school routines run smoothly (e.g., delivery of morning announcements)

Parents ...

- support their School Advisory Council, which plans Literacy and Math Nights, Street Fairs, family suppers, as well as ongoing review of the School Improvement Plan
- volunteer in classrooms and work with staff to ensure that students grow to be caring, productive citizens



About the school ...

King George Public School is located in the downtown core of North Bay, a city on the shore of Lake Nipissing and symbolic gateway to the rugged country of northern Ontario. The school has deep roots in the community, describing itself, with pride, as Northern Ontario's "oldest school." This Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6 has 200 students.

"Setting the bar high for student achievement is our driving force," says the principal. This is coupled with an emphasis on character development. "We forged ahead with character development, consolidating relationships with parents and reinforcing caring and productive behaviour at our school with monthly student recognition ceremonies." The staff has embraced many evidence-based approaches to teaching and learning - among them, engaging students in higher-order thinking and using data to track and inform student progress.

Ongoing improvement ...

Significant improvement in all six assessment areas is reflected in 2007-08 EQAO results. Over the past three years, all of the Grade 3 assessments results have improved by at least 14 percentage points, while all of the Grade 6 assessment results have improved by at least 38 percentage points over the last four years. The school's results are significantly above the EQAO achievement results for the board.

Success after struggle ...

"We're a caring, sharing school," in the words of King George staff. "We coordinate with each other by division, as a staff, as a whole community, and we work as a team to deliver balanced literacy and mathematics programming." The teachers see themselves as EQAO teachers, so the significant drop in numbers of students achieving at or above the provincial expectations in 2006-07 was a great concern for them. They addressed their concern first by attending board workshops to reflect on and improve their instruction and then by moving their learning into practice - immediately! The workshops they attended focused on critical literacy, the better-answer formula, the three-part math lesson and the use of EQAO and CASI trends to drive instruction.

The strategies they learned at these workshops had a dramatic effect on improving student engagement and have led to significantly improved results. By examining results and engaging in moderated marking sessions, teachers have learned to set individualized targets for students. They are currently deepening their focus on student engagement and learning through participation in board-supported teaching-learning critical pathways.

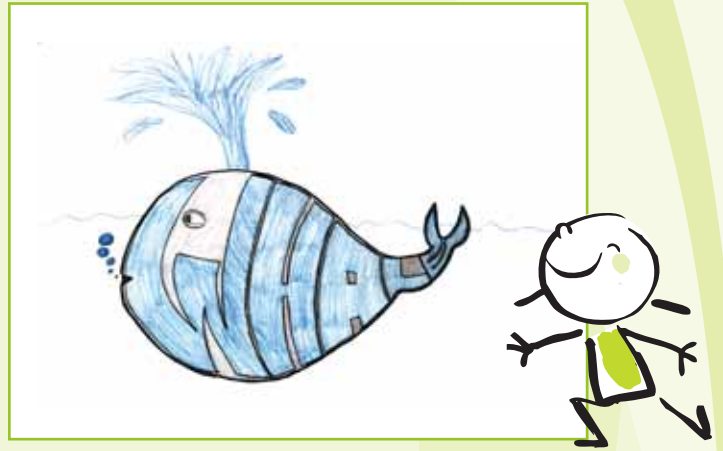
Teaching, learning and leading ...

Gradual release of responsibility. King George teachers deliver a balanced literacy program that involves the gradual release of responsibility for learning to students. Higher-order thinking, critical-questioning techniques and common EQAO terms are used in daily planning of activities that encourage students to make deeper and more personal connections to texts, to themselves and to the world around them. Literature circles, math congresses, and a range of sharing activities provide students with opportunities to understand themselves as learners. When teachers do assessments, they provide feedback in a timely fashion so that students can address areas that need improvement. They post exemplars, distribute rubrics before work is due and provide time for classmates to give input to one another before the assignment is handed in.

Three-part problem-solving-based lesson. King George teachers provide many opportunities for students to work on problem-solving strategies. Three-part lessons include common EQAO language, questioning techniques incorporated into daily lessons and the use of manipulatives. Teachers have agreed upon a school model for solving problems. Students discuss differences in approaches in a math congress session held at the end of the math period. They practise using math language and learn how their classmates can arrive at the same solution through different approaches.

Integration of technology. King George puts assistive technology at the fingertips of all students. Programs, such as Kurzweil 3000 and Co-Writer, have had a profound impact on helping exceptional students independently complete such assessments as CASI and EQAO. This technology has helped them build confidence in their ability to succeed.

Leadership in the school community. King George is fortunate to have within its ranks teachers who routinely take on leadership roles within the school. Commenting on how leadership roles are shared at the school, one teacher said, "I feel like a leader in our school and I'm the newbie!" There is a core group of teachers who spring into action as needed to take on the role of teacher-in-charge when the principal is away. Bi-monthly primary and junior PLCs are chaired by divisional



leaders, and both divisions have lead literacy and numeracy teachers who attend workshops and present new initiatives to staff. There is also a school-based literacy coach who, among other responsibilities, visits classrooms to demonstrate best practices to staff members. The board's current focus on teaching-learning critical pathways has inspired teachers to create "learning triads" where they implement specific literacy and numeracy goals.

"It doesn't matter if they watch TV or play hockey, when they join our music program they sing with joy and pride."
Senior volunteer (Interlink Generational Music Program)

"We have a spider web of relationships that supports everyone."
Parent

"The principal and teachers come over and say hi - even if they see us picking up our kids every day of the year."
Parent

"Now our students stay on task in math because of accountable talk, math congress and the 'Aha' moments provide the relevance they need to succeed."
Teacher

"The community knows that we believe that all students can achieve and that we embrace tradition while we welcome change."
Teacher

Moving into the future

- ◆ continue integrating technology in classrooms, particularly SMART Boards and data projectors
- ◆ increase focus on numeracy
- ◆ provide more time for PLCs, with an emphasis on instructional strategies, resources and grade-level planning for teaching and assessment
- ◆ expand the role of the in-school literacy coach
- ◆ continue to build and strengthen partnerships with parents and community organizations