

# Lakeroad Public School

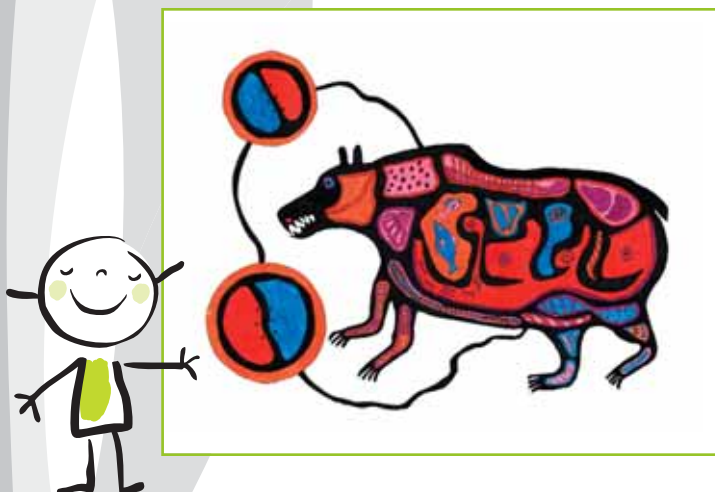
## Lambton Kent District School Board Sarnia, Ontario

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### About the school ...

Lakeroad Public School is a K-8 school in the north end of Sarnia, a busy border city and industrial and research centre on Lake Huron. The school has a population of approximately 190 students, about two-thirds drawn from the local neighbourhood and about one-third bused in from the south end of town.

The school embraces innovation in meeting student needs, recently introducing Palm Pilots, Senteo Clickers and SMART Boards. Teachers have seen how these tools can assist in meeting the differentiated learning needs of students, which has prompted further inquiry into the educational uses of technology. "Teachers here are learners themselves," said one parent. "The culture of learning is everywhere." Another said, "At Lakeroad, they're not afraid to go beyond the curriculum, to take it a step further, to innovate to meet students' needs." While the school emphasizes instructional innovation to meet student needs, it also has a keen interest in implementing character initiatives. During the current school year, the staff has made measurable progress in implementing the board's character development program, focusing monthly on one of the 10 traits (which range from citizenship to responsibility) and integrating character activities with reading and writing practices across the grades.

### Some Snapshots

#### Students ...

- have input into decisions on the issues and policies that affect them – bullying, healthy living, resources and technology
- enjoy house-leagues, sports teams, drama and chess clubs
- participate in the Green Club, Grades 3 to 8, to educate themselves and others about saving our environment

#### Parents ...

- provide input into a range of school activities to support their child's progress
- participate in the School Council and volunteer committees
- enjoy the school's interactive website, which posts tips for parents and points to fun educational websites for students

### Ongoing improvement ...

Very high levels of student achievement are noted in the 2007-08 EQAO achievement results in all six assessment areas. Between 88 and 100 per cent of students achieved at or above the provincial standard in each assessment. These assessment results are well above both the board and provincial results. These levels of achievement reflect a commitment to high student achievement.

### Success after struggle ...

Lakeroad's school improvement journey began with a broad directive from the board – "We have to improve. We have to start to focus." Staff took ownership for student learning, holding tight to two beliefs – that all students can achieve and that teachers can make a positive difference in the lives of students. They also focused on student behaviour, putting in place the Tribes model for classroom community agreements as the foundation for a respectful school culture. And they began to reach out to parents, to help strengthen students' school readiness and ongoing academic development.

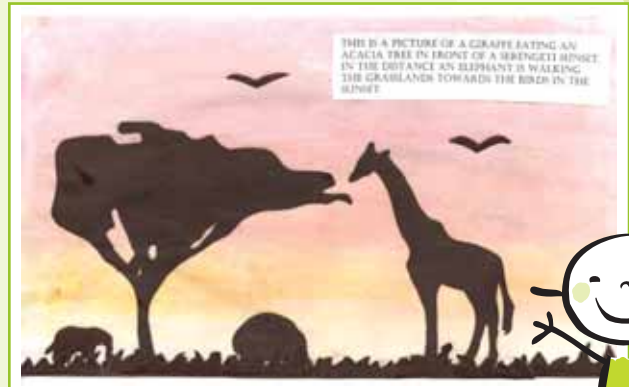
A number of studies show that when parents respond positively to strategies to support student learning, their children meet with greater academic success. This research sparked the school's efforts to build a collective voice for the school, including students, staff, parents and community, and to support the development of a nurturing learning environment at home and school. Many Lakeroad parents are actively engaged in their children's learning, take part in School Council and serve as volunteers, but reaching *all* parents presents an ongoing challenge.

Teachers initially found it difficult to see value in implementing consistency across the grades, especially those at opposite ends of the K-8 spectrum. They did not believe that the academic agenda would be best served by this practice. However, after one year of working together to implement joint strategies, everyone found common ground – in ways to work together and to implement the best strategies to support student learning. “In our PLCs we are embracing change,” said one teacher, “even through the uncomfortable times!”

## Teaching, learning and leading ...

**Consistency across the divisions.** The lead literacy teacher provides guidance and the principal supplies PLC release time. Throughout the school, there is an observable continuity where anchor charts, honour walls, performance walls, interactive word walls, models for better answers, exemplars, interactive displays and visual organizers are displayed to assist students in their transition to new learning.

**Gradual release of responsibility.** A focus on a balanced literacy program based on the gradual release of responsibility has assisted staff in becoming more explicit in their teaching and providing differentiated instruction according to student needs. Teachers support one another with co-teaching, modelling, planning, scaffolding lessons and working with area consultants on best practices. The on-staff lead literacy teacher provides information and support to teachers.



**Assessment of and for learning.** Students are assessed through DRA, running records, check lists, exemplars and other diagnostic tools. Data are used to inform, to differentiate and to drive instruction. Teachers meet regularly by division for teacher moderation sessions to ensure consistent assessment of student work. Students are involved in the development of rubrics, self- and peer-group assessment, portfolio assessment and conferencing as the key components in assisting students to develop next steps.

“This school is giving our children an amazing life skill – how to take their learning beyond the school walls to connect it to their life.” *Parent*

“The school feels like a community.” *Parent*

“It’s great for a parent when your child loves going to school.” *Parent*

“We saw best practices were working and saw the results.” *Teacher*

“Teachers were all there to support one another.” *Teacher*

“Literacy instruction must be driven by equitable ongoing assessment.” *Principal*

“We have used a coaching model for instruction for ourselves and for students.” *Principal*

“We’re learning to replace old habits with new, more effective ones.” *Superintendent*

## Moving into the future

- ◆ pursue further professional learning opportunities with SMART technology
- ◆ learn more about implementing high-yield strategies in the five strands of mathematics
- ◆ continue building on the 10 character traits initiative, integrating the traits into all aspects of the curriculum and building a positive school culture with values-based decision making