

Principal's Report

SJAM School Council Meeting - Tuesday, April 3rd

SJAM staff professional learning –

One of the current professional learning opportunities that SJAM staff are participating in involves grade team partners working collaboratively through a process called the 4 C's model – to co-plan, co-teach, co-debrief and co-reflect on the teaching of mathematics. The intent is for educators to work together to improve their understanding of what Mathematical learning is (or could be) and how to differentiate a lesson to support all learners.

Parents math resources – see [Supporting your Child in Mathematics](#)

Well-Being, Student Leadership

We have recently secured the programs and services of [YOUTH WELLNESS NETWORK](#) through the founder - Michael Eisen to help support our continued learning journey of well-being and student leadership.

Michael will be joining us at SJAM on May 7th for 2 kick-off inspirational assemblies:

- K-4 students from 1:00 – 1:30
- Grade 5-8 students from 1:45 – 2:30 PM.

Michael will then join our staff meeting after school on the same date for a teacher workshop of self-care strategies as May is a month of focus for well-being.

In the fall, we will begin the student **Wellness Leader Training** in October where we will be training 20 - 30 students (grades 6-8) to lead wellness initiatives throughout the school. You can read about the student leadership training [here](#). Through the **Youth Wellness Network**, Michael brings to us an opportunity to train a group of students to begin our wellness network at SJAM who will co-create specific initiatives within our school based on our school needs through student voice and student choice.

We will run a [parent presentation](#) in October or November (date to be determined).

The programs through **Youth Wellness Network** will bridge this school year and next. The thinking is that having the keynote assemblies booked for all this May – all of our students will benefit. In the fall we will then be ready to select and train our student leaders to begin our student wellness network.

Youth Wellness Network comes to us with very strong recommendations – and we look forward to this new opportunity for our entire SJAM school community!

Homework Policy Concerns –

Our [YRDSB Homework Policy](#)#320.0 outlines the responsibilities for all of the stakeholders, including staff, parents/guardians, and students.

- Some parents wonder if their children will be at a disadvantage compared to the children who are given more homework; although, some students who are given more homework may be put at a disadvantage in other regards
- homework is assigned based on individual strength and need
- Are children struggling or experiencing difficulty in their learning by not having homework?
- there isn't necessarily a more relaxed message from elementary to secondary, but rather one that is informed by a number of factors, including age, grade, subject, and individual strengths and needs. Some students may need more homework than others based on their learning progress. Certain subjects may necessitate more practice and preparation than others. In a similar manner, higher grade levels may involve more review and study given the greater complexity of the content learned.
- the homework policy states that teachers are to “teach the necessary skills for autonomous homework completion”, which is a shared responsibility between both elementary and secondary panels.
- teachers are addressing what these skills are and how they are used rather than just assigned homework without this support.
- the daily maximum number of minutes spent on homework should not exceed 50 minutes for students in grades 7 through 9 across all subject and courses.
- the policy is designed to establish some consistent expectations across both panels students should not be experiencing an overwhelming work load and late nights
- if there are concerns – we encourage parents/guardians to contact the teachers
- parents/guardians have the responsibility to encourage and support homework completion
- homework being assigned will not necessarily prevent excessive screen time without some sort of monitoring at home
- while textbooks may not be available for all subject areas, there are other resources in place that teachers can direct parent/guardians towards for support at home. This may include student work created in class and brought home to be shared with families. There may be digital resources, such as games or tools, which may also be useful to encourage practice
- ultimately, teachers work to establish partnerships and communication with families to support their students' learning at home

NOTE: Recent research identified parents/guardians talking to their children about their learning is a more effective practice of supporting that learning at home than simply completing questions assigned from a textbook.

Curriculum Consultant: Elementary Transitions, Pathways, and Mathematics (Michael Minchella)- helps to support these kinds of conversations with school staff and parents. If we need to learn more, we may consider inviting Michael as a guest to a future Council meeting or parent information session.

Teacher Transitions and Regulation 274–

SJAM teaching staff may not be at SJAM for a variety of reasons (professional learning opportunities, Union business, maternity leave, sick leave, other medical/personal leaves, etc). The office will communicate (when we can) to the families of children who are affected by a change in teaching staff. Currently, there is a shortage of qualified French teachers in our board

(and across the Province) – so it has been increasingly challenging to hire and secure qualified French teachers as needed when our FI staff are away from school.

[Ontario Regulation 274/12](#) was filed by the provincial government on September 11, 2012 under the Education Act. The regulation establishes steps all publicly funded school boards are required to follow when hiring for long-term occasional (LTO) and new permanent teaching positions. The government has indicated that the purpose of Ontario Regulation 274/12 is “to promote a consistent, transparent and fair hiring process for long-term and permanent occasional teachers.” The process includes posting a job for 3 days, interviewing the top 5 qualified candidates with the most seniority, checking references and then offering a placement. The process of securing a teacher can take over a week. During this time, we have occasional teachers in place on a day-to-day basis until we secure the long term occasional teacher (when more than 11 days).

Roseneath Theatre, Grades 4-8, March 28th

[Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls](#) –

Recommended for Grades 4-8

Curriculum Connections: Drama, Language Arts, Health, Physical Education

Character Education Connections: Respect, Empathy, Integrity

Themes: Gender Identity, Diversity, Equity

ABOUT THE PLAY

SYNOPSIS:

Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls follows the story of 9-year-old Fiona who comes out as a boy and wants to be called Fin. Fin has always had this feeling – knowing something is different but not knowing what it was or how to say it. As Fin cuts his hair short and changes his name, his family works to understand and adjust to Fin’s gender identity. Dad is accepting of the change right away, but Mom doesn’t quite get it at first. Always from a place of good intentions, we see Fin’s family struggle with this change and through the course of the play ultimately begin to accept and embrace Fin for who he is.



In response to a parent concern that was raised...At SJAM we do have washrooms on both floors open for all to use.

School drop-off and pick-up

York Regional Police presence has been requested by us to help ensure all parents follow the mandatory safety practices in our school community. We are not in charge of the by-laws that may be different around SJAM vs SWL. As the weather continues to get better, we encourage students to walk to school with their friends and/or families and guardians.

Thank you for your attention to helping ensure your children arrive to school on-time. As a reminder, school supervision begins at 7:50 AM. School opens for children to come in at the bell at 7:55 AM and classroom instruction begins with O'Canada being played at 8:05 AM. Children who arrive to class after the anthem are marked late. Again – we THANK YOU as our school community has made a significant improvement in students arriving to school on time for instruction.

Upcoming Events/Highlights at SJAM -

- ✓ Every Wednesday in April is 'walking Wednesday' – the Kiss N Ride is still open – but we strongly encourage ALL students to walk to school. Our Eco Team will be running a variety of contests throughout the month to help reinforce positive behaviours.
- ✓ April 5th – Grade 8 Graduation Photos
- ✓ April 10th – Music Alive – Choir
- ✓ April 12th – SJAM Dance-a-thon
- ✓ April 20th – Eco-Spirit Day and Earth Week Assembly, 1:00 PM
- ✓ April 27th – final day for parents to make any class placement requests in writing
- ✓ April 30 – May 4th – Scholastic Book Fair
- ✓ April 30th – Spring Concert Dress Rehearsal
- ✓ May 1 – Spring Concert
- ✓ May 3rd – Jump Rope for Heart
- ✓ May 7th – Youth Wellness Network Kick-Off Assemblies

(more details are shared through our monthly newsletter – The Prime)