

CENTRAL NEWS

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Greetings from Stratford Central.

Semester 1 has come to a close at Stratford Central. This past semester has been very successful on all fronts. Over 200 students entered grade 9 in September. Our school began a "Community Central" club where students volunteer in activities that have connections and impact on the community. Our student athletes and students involved in the arts (band, theatre central, dance central and visual arts) continue to participate and demonstrate excellence at high levels despite some obstacles. Academically, most students earned all their credits with excellent results! Please examine the report card carefully and have a conversation with your son/daughter regarding the teacher comments, learning skills and marks earned. Students benefit over time as they reflect on their learning. High medians in courses indicate that the students were very engaged and motivated to perform to the best of their abilities.

At this time, on behalf of the school, I extend thanks to Mr. Gates, Ms. Donaldson, Mr. Baxter, Ms. McDermott, Ms. Hood, Ms. Cressman and Ms. DenBroeder for their services during semester 1. All have moved on to other assignments at different schools for semester 2. I would like to welcome Mr. Johnson, Ms. K. Thompson, Ms. M Thompson, Ms. Fairley, Mr. Fisher and Mr. Lynes to our school. They will be teaching in the Canadian/World Studies, Math, Science and Physical Education Departments.

During this semester, our school hosted over 30 international students. Some of those students have now returned home with some insight into Canadian culture as well as our brand of education. We wish them well and look forward to hosting other international students this semester.

Stratford Central also welcomes a number of students who have arrived from Syria. Our teachers and students have been reaching out to these students helping them adapt to Canadian culture.

School Council has been examining the theme "Empowering Parents....Helping Your Child Reach His/Her Potential" this school year. Topics covered have been varied and have covered areas such as mental health, the impact of screens, technology and the use of ipads in schools etc... This group meets once a month. The next meeting is Tuesday, Feb 16 at 7 pm in the Library. All are welcome to attend.

Our school has engaged in a partnership in the arts involving the Stratford Festival this semester. The Arts Academy is located at the school. This program runs after school several times a week. The focus of the program is on personal development using the arts. Expertise from the Stratford Festival has helped to shape and instruct this program.

Lastly one of the school thrusts this year involves engaging students in the learning process using technology as a tool. All grade 9 students have been bringing their ipads to classes. As a result, most grade 9 teachers in semester 1 have been learning how best

to use this technology in the classroom. Please see the excerpt below from our technology coaches (Mr. Connolly and Mr. Bannerman) describing some of the learning impact to date.

As Principal of this school, I continue to be impressed with the student and staff engagement in education. Students and staff continue to take on leadership roles within the school. Students and staff continue to put new ideas and processes into practice. Please contact the school with any concerns.

Regards,
Kevin Mills, Co-Principal

NGL (New Generation Learning) Grade 9 SCSS

This past semester, our 32 grade nine classes, taught by 30 teachers, had the addition of the New Generation Learning (NGL) iPads for the first time. The influx of technology into the classroom allowed teachers to teach and assess course curriculum in new ways, while at the same time supporting students in developing 21st century skills. These skills include collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, communication, and problem solving.

Students interacted with course content in new ways this semester. In French immersion, Nearpod was integrated to support the study of class novels. Students and teachers worked together sharing ideas, building vocabulary, and checking comprehension in a fun way resulting in as much laughter as learning. In English, students had the tools to learn about media creation in a meaningful way. Students were challenged with creating character archetype documentaries based on three cultures which were filmed on location at the Royal Ontario Museum. Math class could now spend more time analyzing and problem solving key concepts without spending class time entering data before the learning could begin. Science utilized the processing power of the iPads in conjunction with Pasco probes to complete labs in a more engaging way that reflects current industry and academic practices.

In addition, teachers have also begun to utilize the improved student feedback opportunities through a variety of apps like Socrative, PingPong, and Kahoot. Instruction has begun to move beyond the traditional one-way lecture to an interactive conversation where students are critical stakeholders of their own learning. The increased engagement has been a welcome side-effect! With any new initiative, important questions need to be asked. A variety of Central teachers are excited to be part of an AMDSB research initiative to examine key questions around how the NGL initiative has transformed assessment. A second study plans to look at the impact of iPads on inclusion and equity amongst our student body.

We will continue to examine the impact of technology on student and teacher learning moving forward.

Dates to Remember

Mon., Feb. 15	- Family Day Holiday
Tues., Feb. 16	- Parent Council 7:00-8:30pm
Tues., Feb. 16	- Immunization Clinic
Thurs., Mar. 10	- Interim Report Card
Mar. 14-18	- March Break
Tues., Mar. 22	- Parent Council 7:00-8:30pm
Mar. 25-28	- Easter Holiday
Thurs., Mar. 31	- Gr. 10 Literacy Test
Thurs., Mar. 31	- Gr. 9-12 Parent's Night 6:30-8:30pm
Tues., Apr. 19	- Parent Council 7:00-8:30pm
Fri., Apr. 22	- Professional Development Day
Fri., Apr. 29	- First Provincial Report Card
Mon., May 9	- Professional Development Day



Please note:

Additional PA DAY
Monday, May 9th,
2016

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT for Parents and Guardians from AMDSB's Board of Directors:

A key term of the settlements that were negotiated recently with employee groups was the provision of an additional PA day each school year. The requirement for an additional PA day is effective immediately and, as such, applies to the current school year.

The School Year Calendar committee met on January 5, 2016, and following that meeting contact was made with Huron Perth Catholic DSB. Both committees have selected **Monday, May 9, 2016** as the additional PA Day for all schools in Huron and Perth counties.

Please see AMDSB's printable School Year calendar:

<http://yourschools.ca/.../school.../2015-2016-SchoolCalendar.pdf>

Please also see AMDSB's Events calendar:

<http://yourschools.ca/avon-maitland-events/>

Student Services

Course Selections 2016/17 - ONLINE REGISTRATION

Registration information sessions for grade 9-12 will take place between February 11-19. A list of all the courses offered next year has been distributed to students in mid-January to give students an opportunity to plan ahead. The course calendar is available online at <http://scss.amdsb.ca/>. The link is located in the middle of the school web page. Students are encouraged to submit on time and return the sign-off sheet so they are not considered a 'late' registrant.

Students will be selecting courses online again this year. Every student in grade 9-11 will attend an information session in early February. Students will learn how to navigate around the online site and be provided with information about post-secondary course requirements. The site that parents and students will use in order to submit their course selections is <http://www.myblueprint.ca/>. Students will need their OEN (Ontario Education Number) in order to login the first time and this number will be provided during the information session. Counsellors will be available during some lunch breaks to assist students who have questions.

Parent Night: Information Session for Grade 10 and 11 Parents

March 31 is Parent Night for semester two classes. During Parent Night, guidance counsellors will offer an information session in room 209 at 6:30 p.m. The session is intended for parents who wish to learn more about some of the research tools available for post-secondary destinations.

Summer School- Make-Up Credits

Summer School for "Make Up" Credits will be available in July 2016 but registration forms will not be available in Student Services until late May. The one 'new credit' course available online through AMDSB has been ENG3U but other Boards offer courses that are available to our students as well. Students interested in earning new credits should book an appointment with their counsellor.

Community Service Hours

As part of their diploma requirement, all students are required to accumulate forty hours of community service outside of class time. Students who are intending to graduate this year should submit their hours to Student Services by May 15. Grade nine and ten students are encouraged to complete most of their hours prior to grade eleven. Many volunteer opportunities come to the school and are announced and posted for students.

From the Library

To those students who have not returned overdue books or paid outstanding fines and are on THE LIST, we would really appreciate if you would return materials and settle your accounts. No new materials will be signed out 2nd semester until your account is in order.

On a more positive note, we encourage everyone to stop in and pick up a new read. Ask the librarians for help in choosing the right book for you, or take a look at one of our displays: "New Year - New Semester - New You", "Entertaining Reads" and "New Books." Finally, as you start your new semester, remember that Ms. McManus is always available to assist you with your research skills, including how to efficiently access the databases for the most reliable information.

Immunization Clinic

The Perth District Health Unit will be at Stratford Central Secondary School on Tuesday, February 16, 2016 to offer an immunization clinic.

If it has been 10 years since a student's last needle against tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis, or they missed pertussis in their tetanus-diphtheria booster, they will be offered an Adacel or Boostrix vaccination. According to the *Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA)*, students without a tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis booster, or a properly commissioned exemption, will be suspended from school.

While high school students are able to consent for themselves, we ask that parents/legal guardians discuss this vaccine with their child and encourage them to take advantage of the opportunity to get this vaccination at the school clinic. Should you decide to receive the Adacel or Boostrix vaccination at your doctor's office, please call the Health Unit at 519-271-7600 ext 223 to report the vaccine given. You may also report vaccines by email to immunization@pdhu.on.ca

For more information, call Health Line at 519-271-7600 ext 267 or toll-free at 1-877-271-7348 ex 267 or visit www.pdhu.on.ca.