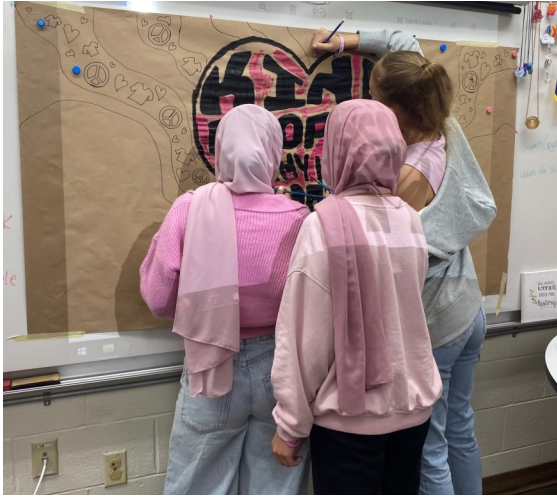


# ST. AGNES JUNIOR HIGH PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

## Principals Report

As the Principal of St. Agnes Junior High School, I am pleased to be able to provide you with the Principal's report for September. I am happy to announce that our school year is off to an encouraging start and I look forward to the beginning of what I believe will be a great year for our students, staff, and school community. With a renewed enthusiasm and hope for this school year, St. Agnes is full steam ahead with school-based initiatives and extracurricular activities.



## Pink Day:

Stand Up Against Bullying Day was held on Thursday, September 14th. Students took part in activities throughout the morning that allowed for discussion and reflection on how we can support inclusive and welcoming behaviours at St. Agnes. Each homeroom met to complete several themed activities, including the creation of a class kindness banner. Our morning concluded with all students and staff gathered in the gymnasium to showcase their work and to take a school photo.





# School News

## Student of the Month

To promote success in and out of the classroom, St. Agnes promotes a student of the month award. This award is designed for staff to nominate and select students who promote and take pride in St. Agnes Junior High School and in themselves. The student of the month for September is Younis Abas.

Younis is consistently kind, respectful and helpful around the school. He greets every student and staff member with a smile and goes out of his way to support newcomer students with interpretation as well as friendship.



## Truth & Reconciliation Day

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, St. Agnes observed Truth and Reconciliation Day. Students engaged in various learning opportunities about Canada's history of residential schools supporting opportunities for solidarity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Throughout the day, students engaged in reflective conversation and participated in a variety of activities. Activities included an art based chain activity, the design of orange shirts to be considered for next year's Truth & Reconciliation day and an activity on residential schools. Grade 7 students were fortunate to engage in in a smudging ceremony facilitated by our Indigenous Arts Specialist. We hope that the day continues to encourage acknowledgement, growth & change within our school community.



# School News

## **Lockdown Drill**

On September 23rd students participated in the first of two lock down drills with the help of the Halifax Regional Police and lead by our School Liaison Officer. St. Agnes practices these drills to ensure our school remains a safe place for teaching and learning. Staff thoroughly prepared our students by discussing the importance of this procedure with students prior to the drill.

## **Class Caps**

In the Spring of 2023, St. Agnes received its annual class configuration from HRCE. At that time initial configurations for Grade 9 classes indicated that each homeroom was at or approaching the soft cap. For reference a soft cap for grades 7-9 is 28 students while the hard cap is defined as the stated cap + 2 students. Following the Summer registration process, class caps for Grade 9 grew and merged toward the hard cap of 30.

In circumstances where grade levels reach hard cap, a principal must follow a pre-determined process which includes:

- Reviewing enrollment with the area supervisor.
- Reviews school's situation with the affected teachers.
- Review the situation with the School Advisory Council Chair
- In situation where there is not agreement, the Principal contacts the supervisor to discuss grade level reconfiguration.

While not ideal for supporting learning needs and minimizing disruptions, all parties were aligned in maintaining the current configuration.

## **Speak to Lead Club**

St. Agnes is offering a new club! The Speak to Lead club happens every Thursday at lunch in our Schools Plus room led by Nathalie Haidar-Ahmad, our community outreach worker. This club is designed to provide support to new English Language Learners giving them the opportunity to practice their speaking and listening skills through games and activities.

## School News

### **Breakfast Program**

With food insecurity an unfortunate reality for many of our school families, St. Agnes continues to prioritize supporting our students with healthy food options. Through government funding and our generous school community, we continue to have the ability to provide a variety of nutritious items and have the means to purchase equipment to diversify our breakfast options.

After purchasing an express conveyer toaster, we are now offering hot breakfast items on Tuesday & Thursday mornings. Students can enter the school before the first bell and prepare bagels, toast & waffles to start their morning.

We will continue to rely on the support of our community again this year with the goal of enhancing our breakfast program. We welcome any financial contributions, gift cards or food donations, and of course volunteers to lend a hand to this important program.



### **Newcomer Family Information Session**

As part of our goal to increase connections between home & school, St. Agnes will be hosting a newcomer family information session in late October and will be the first of three sessions offered during the school year. This session will be designed to provide more information to families who are new to Nova Scotia or Canada in the last few years. Arabic, Ukrainian and Korean translators will be available to facilitate discussion between staff & families. Topics covered will include an overview of the school system, school/community resources and supports, as well as school and classroom expectations. We look forward to seeing families and supporting their transition to St. Agnes.

### **Parents Night Out Fundraiser**

Back by popular demand our annual Parent's Night Out fundraiser is tentatively scheduled for November 4th at the Brewery by Quinns. Participants will enjoy an evening of great company and east coast music provided by ECMA winner Wendy MacIssac and accompanied by Brennan Macdonald. We will also have some great items on display at our silent auction too! All funds raised will directly support Equipment and Technology purchases for the school.



# School News

## **School Technology**

Over the last several years St. Agnes has been successful in providing a one-to-one student/device ratio.

Unfortunately, the demand of increasing enrollment coupled with the wear and tear of daily use has impacted our Chromebooks availability, requiring us to rethink our technology integration plan.

Early in September I messaged the community encouraging families with personal computers to consider allowing their student to bring the device during school hours. While this has been effective as a short-term solution, a focus on replenishing and replacing our school-based technology will need to be considered. While recent correspondence from HRCE indicates that schools will receive some technology enhancements in the coming weeks, Chromebook purchases may need to be included as part of our fundraising focus.

## **Student Council**

The St. Agnes Student Council has been reimagined. Pivoting away from traditional co-presidents, the council will be using a committee approach.....electing eight grade 9 members to be our leaders for the 2023-24 school year. The Grade 9 leadership group will plan & run Student Council activities, facilitate monthly meetings, represent the student body at SAC meetings, and act as role models throughout the year.

With 18 class reps representing the Grade 7 & 8 homerooms, we have strong representation to support our goals and initiatives.

With the support of teacher advisors, Ms. Keddy & Ms. Clark, students will collaborate on ways to make positive impacts to our school throughout the year. This might include spirit weeks, fundraisers, social events, school improvement projects, and/or providing student voice to challenges that may arise.

## **Teams**

School teams and clubs are up in running! The boys and girls Soccer as well as the Co-ed Cross-Country teams have had tryouts and are beginning their seasons. Ms. Steeves, with the help of Ms. O'Brien, are leading our girls' team while Mr. Starzomski and a parent volunteer are leading the boys' squad. Both teams have just started their season, each finding early success with winning records.

Mr. Ryan will be leading our Cross-Country team that began their running the week of September 18th. The team will take part in their first meet on October 12<sup>th</sup> @ Point Pleasant Park.

Ms. Johnston returns as the head coach of the Girls Volleyball team and the team has just started practices. While we would like to offer a Boys Volleyball team, we are experiencing difficulties finding a coach but are hopeful that our school community will come to our rescue!