



In this issue...

STUDENT DANCE CLUB A SUCCESS

Mallory Clark and Sadie Cochrane teach Grade 6 students how to dance during options time.

THE DIGITAL CLASSROOM

Teachers and students alike speak about their experience with online learning during the November strike.

MS. GIDNEY'S FINAL GOODBYE

Student teacher and founder of The Dragon's Tale says her final goodbye to the Nashwaaksis Middle School Dragons.

STUDENT FACES FEAR OF COMING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

by Emily Lockert and Emma Matchett

Leah Lockert, a Grade 6 student at Nashwaaksis Middle School, said she didn't want the summer to end because she felt "kind of panicked" about going to middle school. She didn't know if the teachers would be nice or not.

Now, after a semester of classes, Lockert said she thinks that





NMS is better than Park Street Elementary School. She said most of her teachers at NMS are nicer and there's clubs she could join.

"Although middle school is a big jump from elementary school, it was not as half bad as I expected," Lockert said.

Along with the clubs and teachers, Lockert said she's also made a few friends who went to different elementary schools.

Grade 6 NMS teacher Rick LaFrance said it's important that his students have the chance to connect with him, and the other teachers, at the beginning of the school year. Students should have an opportunity to laugh with their teachers, he said, and acknowledge that they're not aliens, but humans.

Learning can be fun, and Mr. LaFrance said several students have told him, "Mr. LaFrance, your classes are so fun and you're so cool."

He said he hopes students in Grade 6 will make NMS their home for the rest of the school year and the next two years.

Mr. LaFrance said he believes all the sixth-grade students this year are hard-working and that they're fun and a pleasure to teach. He said he's fortunate to be teaching at NMS.

"Dragons rock!"

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

by Kendra Frizzell

As I think back to last few months together, I can say with all certainty that our students have made us smile, you faced every challenge with resilience, enthusiasm and creativity and you showed the whole Nasis community what remarkable young people you are.

Every day you impressed us with your determination to be successful and how focused you were to make our school family the very best for everyone.

Middle School kids ROCK!

THE BENEFITS AND HARDSHIPS OF ONLINE LEARNING

by *Natalie Iyoha and Sophia Sharp*

When Nashwaaksis Middle School moved to online learning in November, Principal Kendra Frizzell greeted students at the door when they came to pick up their supplies from their lockers. She'd said she'd rather be in-person than online.

"I would rather be in-person because I love giving hugs," she said.

Still, Ms. Frizzell said she was relieved that students already practiced online learning before the strike.

Around 20,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, including bus drivers and educational support staff, went on strike at the beginning of November according to [CBC News](#). As a result, the New Brunswick government moved all schools to at-home learning and locked out some education workers. Schools returned in-person two weeks later.

Ava Paul, a student from NMS, said she also prefers in-person learning because she gets to see her friends.

Paul was absent during online learning because she didn't have a laptop to access Microsoft Teams. She said she thought it was nice to stay home from school for a while. Most of the time, Paul said she read books and played with her sister.

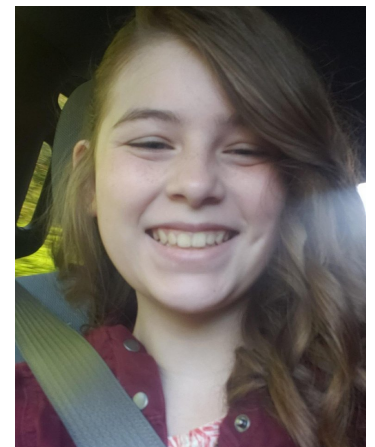
Tori Goguen, another NMS student, also said she prefers in-person classes. At first, Goguen didn't know how to work Microsoft Teams. But shortly after, she got the hang of it.

Goguen's mother was also affected by online learning. She had to stay home during the day then work at night.

Jared Lister, a social studies and science teacher at NMS, work situation also changed. The first thing that came to his mind when he learned classes were moving online was, "How am I going to get my students to learn properly from home?"

Mr. Lister said he found online learning lonely because he taught at home. Still, he did like the change because it was a different experience for his students.

"I thought [online learning] went well."



Reporters *Natalie Iyoha and Sophia Sharp*

GRADE 6 DANCE CLUB MAKES EXERCISE FUN

by Leah Lockert and Ella Russell



The fieldhouse of Nashwaaksis Middle School was packed with about 20 sixth-graders. All members signed a list for COVID-19 safety when they went upstairs.

Sydney Swindail, a Grade 6 student and member of the club, said she thought the dance club was fun.

“I like the dance club because it’s relaxed, but [it’s] exercise at the same time,” she said.

Mallory Clark and Sadie Cochrane, two sixth-grade students, created the club. They begin each club with fun stretches and exercise. Music blasts in the background and most people participate. When the dancing begins, everyone had smiles on their face.

Clark and Cocrane began doing dance moves, and everyone else followed along. There are different kinds of dance moves from moving your arms to leaping across the room. Yet, the two girls found a fun and easy way to teach their club members.

“It’s a lot of fun to teach,” Clark said.

Grade 6 math teacher and club supervisor Natalie Cormier makes sure everyone is safe and happy. Without her, the dance club wouldn’t happen.

Mme. Cormier said she likes the dance club

because it’s 100 per cent student-led, and she loves dancing and listening to music.

“The girls approached me with a plan, a desire to work hard and willingness to run a good club,” Mme. Cormier said. “They were respectful of my time and organized. I was impressed.”

But nothing is perfect. Mme. Cormier and Swindail had a couple of suggestions for Clark and Cochrane.

Swindail said the club should use different music because the same songs are repetitive.

Mme. Cormier said Clark and Cochrane should stop letting everyone come to the club. Instead, they should make a list of members that come weekly. The constant members should be recognized and appreciated too.

So far, Grades 7 and 8 can’t join the dance club. Having different option times is one reason, but not the only.

“I don’t think the seventh and eighth-graders wouldn’t listen to use ‘cuz we’re younger,” Clark said.

Mme. Cormier agrees that it wouldn’t be good to mix the grades. She said there should be a safe place for students to try new things, and a mix of grades wouldn’t create that atmosphere.

Still, Clark and Cocrane said they plan to keep the club up and running for the rest of the year if possible. They also said they might continue the club when they reach Grade 7, and possibly Grade 8 as well.



NMS CYBER TITANS PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE

by Jakob Ryan and Michael Tselichtchev

Nashwaaksis Middle School's Cyber Titans won first and second place in the 2019-20 Canadian Middle School Division Competitions.

Mila Dickison, a student at NMS, joined the Cyber Titans this year.

"I [joined] Cyber Titans because my sister joined when she was in seventh grade," she said.

Cyber Titans is a competitive club that focuses on cyber security, according to the club's official website. The teams are made of two to six members who compete against other middle schools around the world. The club puts members in the role of an IT professional.

Students learn how to deactivate accounts, keep hackers out and prevent malware.

The website also said the competition gives the team an operating system with holes in

security, and the team's job is to fix the holes to keep all the services online. The team with the most secure system scores the most points.

Graydon Andrews, another member of the NMS Cyber Titans, said the club will help him in his future.

"There's a lot of tech work, and [the club] can really help you get a good future job."



Reporters Jakob Ryan and Michael Tselichtchev

Q & A WITH TANYA CARR

Reporters Mallory Clark, Sydney Swindail and Gavin Nason interviewed Tanya Carr, a Grade 6 math teacher and JV Girls Basketball coach at Nashwaaksis Middle School. Here is their Q & A.

Q: Are you happy with your team?

Yes, I'm happy with the team. We noticed a lot of dedication towards basketball in the practices.

Q: How do you think the team will do during games?

I think the team will do great during [the] games. We have some students that have played basketball, so I'm excited to see how we match up against the other Grade 6 teams.

Q: Who chose the teams and why did they choose who they chose?

It was a combination of me, Ms. Reid, Mr. Chiasson and Mrs. Davis. We all were at the tryouts and we chose students based on their basketball ability.

Q: How does, and how will, COVID affect the teams?

I'm hoping we won't have much interruptions for our teams. We'll have to wait and see how COVID goes, and if there's cases in other schools that could change things. So it could prevent us from going to other schools to play games, but hopefully, it won't.

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

by Jasmine Gidney

Each home room teacher at Nashwaaksis Middle School selects one student from their class each month for student of the month. These students are role models for their class and have shown great personal growth.

Here are the list of students who received the Student of the Month Award for November.

Grade 6

- Annina A. (6A)
- Peyton M. (6B)
- Avery R. (6C)
- Jaidy J.-D. (6D)
- Mila M. (6E)
- Michael T. (6F)
- Liam F. (6G)
- Jack C. (6H)
- William F. (6I)
- Noura H. (6/7 J)

Grade 7

- Jacob M. (7A)
- Avery P. (7B)
- Zayaan A. (7C)
- Noah E. (7D)
- Ella M. (7E)
- Jillian M. (7F)
- David G. (7G)
- Gerard (7H)
- Andrew S. (7/8 I)

Grade 8

- Judah R. (8A)
- Yaretzi B. G. (8D)
- Jennifer L. (8E)
- Sarah B. (8F)
- Maddox D. (8G)
- Emily T. (8H)



COMMENTARY: STUMBLING THROUGH LIFE BRINGS UNEXPECTED JOY

by Jasmine Gidney

When I was a kid, I used to think I'd have my life together by the time I was 20. I'd have a house with a big lawn and a cat who liked to cuddle. I'd work a steady job where I'd earn enough money to travel to Europe every summer. Though, most of all, I'd be happy.

But at 22, I took a different path.

I always thought I'd be a journalist. Writing was my passion and I loved listening to others tell me about their small business or culture. The idea of having the ability to tell their stories excited me, and I decided to go to St. Thomas University to pursue a major in journalism.

While attending STU, I joined the student-led newspaper, *The Aquinian*. I spent the first two years working as a volunteer writer. I chased students and professors around campus for interviews, went to student musicals to write reviews, and attended live events to keep the community up to date. By the start of my third year, I became the features editor. A year later, I took a leadership role as the managing editor.

Working as the features editor and the managing editor made me realize how much I enjoy helping others. There's no greater feeling than watching a first-year student grow in their writing and knowing that I had some part in the process.

But even though I did everything I could to set myself up with a career in journalism, my passion for the industry fizzled out by the time I graduated.

Not knowing what else to do, I returned to STU in the fall to pursue a bachelor of education.

I wasn't sure what I was getting myself into. I was always the type of student who sat in the front of the class but never said a word. The thought of me standing in front of twenty students and teaching them about adverbs made my stomach twist with nerves. But I knew I made the right decision the moment I walked through the doors of Nashwaaksis Middle School.

The sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach faded away after I met Principal Kendra Frizzell, Vice-Principal Marcie Conners, and my mentor teacher, Cindy Farrell. The three of them, along with the other staff I met, welcomed me to NMS with open arms. Still, what really made me fall in love with the Dragons and the idea of teaching were the students. No matter where I go after NMS, I'll never forget how loved and appreciated I felt here.

I knew I wanted to contribute to the welcoming atmosphere at NMS. After some thinking, I decided to combine my major with my love of teaching to create *The Dragon's Tale* journalism club.

I spent countless nights staying up until 12 a.m., writing PowerPoints to give students crash courses in interviewing, writing stories, and picking out good story ideas. I sat with students and talked about where they wanted the story to go, and who they should interview. Every time I spoke with a student, I found myself becoming more and more impressed with what they came up with.

Words cannot describe how proud I am of these students. They came to the meetings with a drive to learn, a willingness to go out to interview students and teachers, and notebooks to write their stories. These students reignited my love of journalism. The stories included in this first newsletter are fantastic, and I know that the future is in great hands with students like these. I can't wait to see what *The Dragon's Tale* does next.

My life didn't go the way I planned. I'm not a journalist who backpacks through Europe and lives in a big house with a cat. Instead, I'm an aspiring teacher who takes long walks along Fredericton's waterfront and lives alone in a bachelor apartment because of allergies. Though, most importantly, I'm happier than ever and it's all thanks to you, Dragons.