

ST. JEROME WELCOMES EARLY READING STRATEGY FUNDING

The Northeastern Catholic District School Board is pleased to announce that the Ministry of Education has selected St. Jerome School in Kirkland Lake to receive additional assistance through the Ontario Early Reading Strategy. The Early Reading Strategy was established to improve students' reading skills throughout Ontario schools.

In selecting St. Jerome School, the Ministry has made a commitment to provide external literacy experts who will work with the school community to develop a three year plan to improve the reading skills of all students. A yearly monetary commitment of \$5 million has been made to support the schools selected throughout the province. To date, a total of \$15 million has been invested to support 45 schools in Ontario. The funding includes support for the purchase of students' and teachers' guided reading resources, professional development opportunities to build teacher's skills and knowledge in the teaching of reading, as well as training to help teachers structure classroom space and time to support effective teaching.

In addition, primary students throughout the Northeastern Catholic District School Board are benefiting from a new Balanced Literacy English program. Teachers and students have been provided a large selection of texts and resources for all of the primary classrooms in relation to the Ministry of Education's direction presented in The Early Reading Strategy.

The teachers have also benefitted from a variety of professional development workshops regarding effective teaching strategies and excellence in instructional practices. In June, Miriam Trehearne, a well known Canadian early reading expert, presented to all primary teachers strategies and assessment practices directed toward building confident, competent readers. All Kindergarten teachers were provided a copy of Ms. Trehearne's Kindergarten Teachers' Resource Book. Balanced literacy has been established in all Kindergarten to grade 3 classrooms throughout the Northeastern Catholic District School Board and will be continuing into the junior grades by 2004.

The support from the Ministry of Education to St. Jerome School coincides with the restructuring of the two Kirkland Lake Schools. St. Jerome School is now offering both French Immersion and English programs at the Primary level (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3) while Sacred Heart School is providing French Immersion and English programs at the Junior and Intermediate levels (Grades 4 to 8). The Northeastern Catholic District School Board, in initiating the program changes, has provided a number of structural changes to the schools to meet the needs of the select age levels the schools now house. These changes enable teachers to provide enhanced instruction as well as provide a wide variety of age appropriate activities and learning opportunities directly related to the divisions they teach. Together, the restructuring and Ontario Early Reading Strategy will provide a vision of excellence for students.

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