



# InTouch

## Math Plan Update

During the 2014/2015 school year, a three-year math plan was created to improve the ways we are teaching Mathematics in our schools. An update presented to the Board on April 11th highlighted the actions that have been taken to date.

They include:

- 6 days of professional development with Dr. A. Lawson, LU, for half of our Gr 1 and 2 teachers
- an Additional Qualifications Course in Primary – Junior Math for our teachers, offered by Lakehead University (9 teachers will receive their qualifications!)
- 6 days of professional development with Instructors Heather Wark and Susan Girardin, Lakehead University, with Gr 7, 8, 9 Applied teachers and Secondary Instructional Leaders
- a full day workshop for principals with Dr. A. Lawson
- sustained support in classrooms by Math Resource Teachers

Next steps involve expanding the professional development plan. This includes:

- 6 days for the other half of the Gr 1 and 2 teachers,
- 6 days for half of the Gr 3 and 4 teachers
- 6 days for the Gr 7, 8, 9 teachers and Instructional Leaders
- 1 full day workshop for principals
- continued partnership with Lakehead University staff

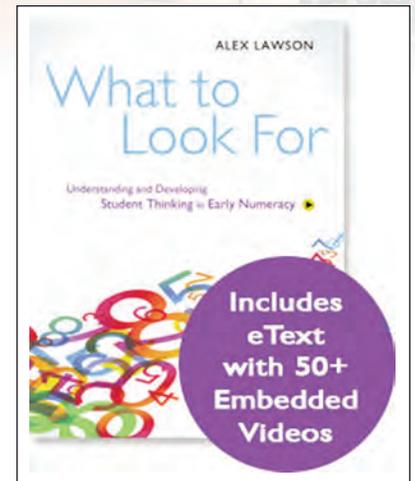
“Teachers report that they have changed the way they are teaching math, they understand the developmental stages the students are presenting and feel that their students’ understanding of math concepts has increased immensely,” explained Charlene Cavanagh, Co-ordinator of Elementary programs.

## New Student Trustees Welcomed

It was a bit of “something old and something new” at Monday night’s Board meeting.

The Board welcomed next year’s student trustees; Riley Yesno (St. Patrick High School and Shea Niemi (St. Ignatius High School).

“On behalf of my fellow Trustees, I welcome you to our Board and I also wish to take this opportunity to thank your two predecessors Michael Coccimiglio and Nicole Miniely on doing such a fine job this year,” said Board Chair, Bob Hupka.



Book by Dr. Alex Lawson



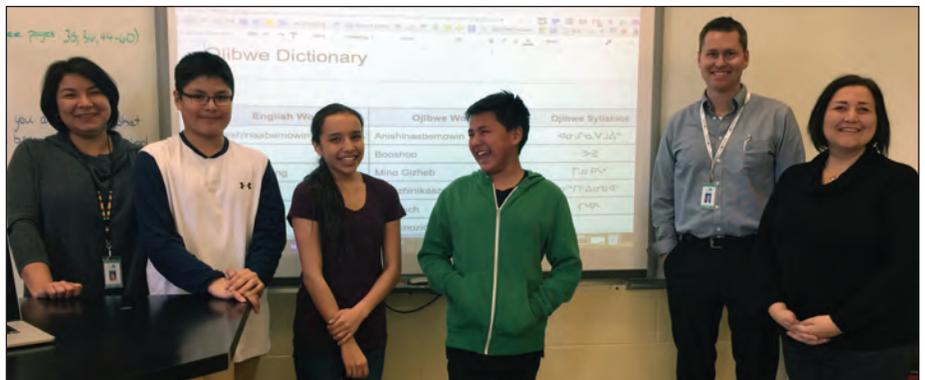
*Student Trustees: from left, Michael Coccimiglio (current) Shea Niemi (incoming), Riley Yesno (incoming) and Nicole Miniely (current).*

## Preserving the Ojibwe Language using Modern Tools

In an effort to support the preservation of the Ojibwe language, a group of students at Bishop EQ Jennings, with the support of their Ojibwe language teacher Joan Esquega and principal Mike Filipetti, created a keyboard that could transliterate the Ojibwe language into a syllabics keyboard that is compatible with Mac computers. Realizing that technology is key to preserving language, the first year Native Language program at the school was looking for different methods of recording and documenting the Ojibwe language. Tarcisius Tibishkogijig (Gr. 8), Rayne Meekis and Gene Mendowagan (Gr. 7) discovered that there was not a computer program that would support MacBooks with the Ojibwe syllabics orthography. It was a perfect learning opportunity for the students. The students gathered for a few hours each week to work on the computer programming. The keyboard computer program is available as a free download for anyone.

On Monday, May 16, the students and their teacher had the opportunity to present the Ojibwe language syllabics keyboard program to the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board Trustees. Gene Mendowagan shared with the trustees that he felt that the project was important because “Our language wouldn't fade away, which would ruin our culture.” Rayne Meekis also shared that “It's my language and it's really interesting because of the history and the culture and the background..” The Ojibwe language

syllabics keyboard project is one method of preserving the Ojibwe language which is a vital part of our territory's history and culture.



## Safety Initiatives Unveiled

Karen McKissick, Safety Officer updated the Board of Trustees with this year's health and safety initiatives. The Board obtained compliance with the new Global Harmonization System (previously WHMIS) and launched a new web-based MSDS online portal. All schools now have an e-binder with electronic Safety Data Sheets which staff can access through the main webpage. Work continues with the Non-Traditional classrooms to ensure compliance with health and safety. A hearing audit was recently completed as well as noise audit on the equipment used. We continue to roll out the health and safety guidelines with policies being brought forward by the Administration team on a monthly basis to staff.

Every year the Board receives employee injury statistics based on each employee group. During the year 2014/15, we saw a decrease in lost time injuries and a slight increase in no-lost time injuries (due to good, immediate, modified return to work practices). The most common type of incident was slips, trips and falls accounting for 29% of all total incidents.

There has been lots of movement with Violence Prevention at our Board this year. A Risk-Assessment review of our school facilities has been completed. This was a collaborative effort with the Principal and Worker Representative at each location as well as the CJOHSC. This risk assessment identifies areas of concerns with respect to our facilities. In addition, the Workplace Violence Policy has been updated to reflect the importance of risk assessment and the inclusion of domestic violence.

Finally, Ms. McKissick reported on the Accessibility Multi-Year plan. She mentioned that the plan is in its final year and will be updated in 2017. The biggest addition this past year was the installation of accessible playgrounds across our school board.