

# CONNECTIONS

## NEWSLETTER

February 2024

### Important Dates

- February 1: Semester 2 Begins
- February 6: Board Meeting
- February 8: School-based Administrators' Meeting
- February 12-16: Staff Appreciation Week
- February 17: Random Acts of Kindness Day
- February 19: Family Day (stat holiday)
- February 19-23: No School
- February 27: Board Planning Meeting
- February 28: Pink Shirt Day

Help us choose a name for the  
**New South Hill School**  
in Moose Jaw!



The new joint-use school will replace four schools: Empire and Westmount in Prairie South and St. Mary's and Sacred Heart in Holy Trinity.

This name suggestion will be for the public school in Prairie South.

**Visit our website to complete the survey.  
Submissions due by 1:00 pm on Friday, February 23.**



*Staff Appreciation Week is coming up February 12-16 and the theme this year is "Shaping the Future Together." We want to thank all our wonderful employees who help make Prairie South a great place to work.*



**Congratulations to Robin Heshka, Principal at William Grayson School, who was featured in an article in the STF Bulletin. The article is below.**

# Teachers Share Learning

## During International Volunteer Experience

BY ROD DRABBLE, STF COMMUNICATIONS

**Professional learning involves a journey. That's something Robin Heshka experienced firsthand while collaborating with a group of Guyanese teachers through Project Overseas.**

"One thing I noticed is how badly the participants wanted to learn," says Heshka, who spent 17 days in the South American country in July. "They gave up two weeks of their one-month summer holiday and travelled hours and hours by boat, walking or bicycle. Some left their family to participate, while others brought them with them and crammed into a dorm room with over 100 other participants."

Heshka, the principal at William Grayson School in Moose Jaw, was among a group of Canadian educators who shared their knowledge and experience with Guyanese teachers seeking ways to teach core subjects and deliver a new curriculum through differentiation, classroom management, inclusion and leadership.

Delivered through the Canadian Teachers' Federation, Project Overseas supports educational partners

in developing countries to co-plan and co-deliver professional learning to teachers. The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation sponsors members' participation. Applications are accepted each fall for summer programs that run the following year.

"I have been involved with the STF in various ways and this was another way I could be a part of all the STF has to offer," Heshka says. "The STF and partnerships like CTF provide opportunities like Project Overseas and I was immediately drawn to the project."

Teachers who made up Project Overseas' contingents during the summer of 2023 were chosen from applicants from across Canada. Preparations for their trips began in March with online meetings and collaboration. A three-day, in-person orientation in early July prepared participants ahead of departure.

For Lynda Gellner, serving as leader of a Canadian contingent to Ghana was an outgrowth of her previous international experience, including a Project Overseas trip to Ghana in 2017 and an opportunity with Professional Development Program - India from 2018 to 2020. She believes international collaboration provides educators with opportunities to "walk the walk" rather than just imagine.

◀ Guyanese teachers who participated in the two-week professional learning experience offered through Project Overseas and the Guyana Teachers' Union.



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▶ Robin Heshka (left) collaborates with a Guyanese educator during her two-week Project Overseas experience.

“Involving Canadian educators provides a different perspective for the topics,” says Gellner, who has worked in classroom and consultant roles with Regina Public Schools and as a University of Regina instructor. “We were able to share successful instructional and presentation practices with our [Ghanaian] colleagues as well as provide them with scenarios describing how the topics might look and sound in our classrooms. It was also beneficial for us to learn about the topics from a Ghanaian point of view. It is vital to learn about other worldviews.”

Heshka said her time in Guyana was a reciprocal learning experience. Guyanese teachers gained ideas and strategies for teaching and were able to deepen their educational philosophy, while Canadian teachers had the opportunity to experience a different perspective on education and their role as teachers in their own school communities.

“I learned how passionate educators are no matter where in the world they are. Educators are creative, inquisitive and hardworking no matter what resources they have and/or the environment they have to work with. They worked hard and did whatever it took to participate and grow professionally. This really made me think about my role and school; the whole, ‘it takes a village’ never rang truer,” Heshka recalls.

Experiencing the connections shared by Ghanaian and Canadian teachers and their commitment to education was inspiring for Gellner, whose project saw two teams of Canadian teachers deliver eight workshops serving 800 educators.

“We all work creatively and remain hopeful that what we do today will impact the world tomorrow. We are united in our commitment to education,” she says. “I appreciate what I have at a deeper level. It is easy to get sidetracked about the resources you wish you had, or the size of your room. Now if I catch myself going down the path of complaints, I remind myself of all that I do have.”

Both acknowledge that a Project Overseas trip is a challenging experience – “it’s not a holiday, although it



▲ Lynda Gellner (top right) shares with Ghanaian educators during the Project Overseas volunteer experience last July.

is an adventure,” Gellner notes – but both consider it a highlight of their teaching careers.

“I would 100 percent recommend it,” Heshka says. “Teachers need to understand there can be hard times on trips like this – long flights, spending 24/7 with strangers, facing new challenges – however, the CTF spends time preparing you for these challenges and creates an environment for you to feel safe to share feelings. If you are open, honest, patient and a bit of a risktaker this project is for you!”

Gellner affirms the experience provides a valuable opportunity to develop personally and professionally.

“It is a time to share your knowledge and understandings about teaching and planning and it is also a time to learn,” she says. “You can learn from your colleagues overseas but also from your Canadian teammates.” ▲



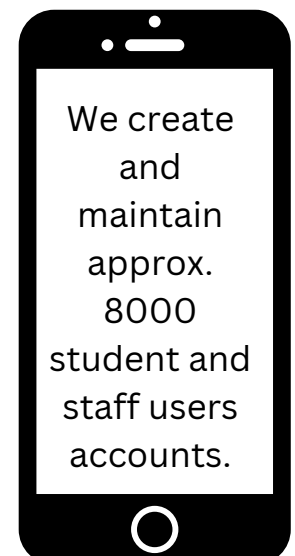
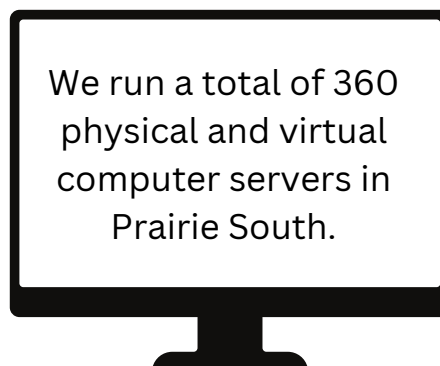
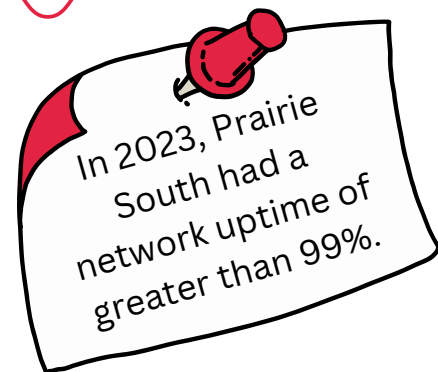
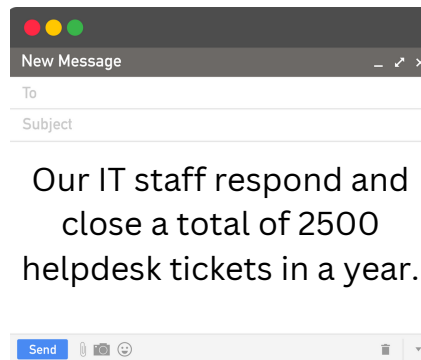
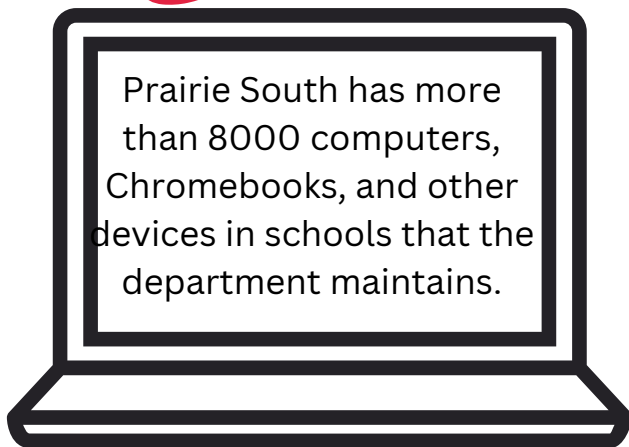
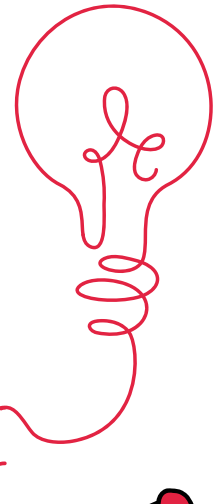
# SPOTLIGHT ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

The IT department at Prairie South plays a crucial role in ensuring staff and students have access to technology, data, and communications needed for learning. Over the last few decades, learning, and school operations rely more and more on technology to support work and learning. Our IT team includes seven members that all have important roles. Our team consists of:

- Network Administrators: Mark Dunne, Glen Munro, and David MacLachlan
- Network Analyst: Cole Evans
- Database Administrator: Vijay Behl
- Computer Technologists: Jason Breton, Shari Braun
- IT Manager: Dustin Swanson

*Did*

YOU KNOW?





Each person plays a vital role in keeping technology working in Prairie South. Whether it is helping ensure email access, backing up important files, solving a technical problem, or ensuring the school phones and bells are working, everyone on the IT team is important to supporting schools and the division. The team is committed to keeping all technology running smoothly and to keeping us safe from cyber crime and is constantly learning and finding solutions to challenges. The scope of work that each IT member does is quite broad. However, here is a quick summary of what each role in our department plays.

**Network Administrator:** Create and manage all the 8000 user accounts and access division wide. Create, maintain, and run all 365 computer servers and the data backups. They also help to ensure regular software updates on all computers.

**Network Analyst:** Biggest thing a network analyst does is to make sure the internet runs! If your device connects to the internet or network, the network analyst is involved in ensuring it is working. Think of the work as maintaining roads and highways that allow computers and the internet to connect to each other.

**Database Administrator:** Builds and maintains over 40 school and division web sites, Bus Planner software, supports My School Sask, School Messenger, ClevR, Connect, School Cash and more.

**Computer Technicians:** Simply put, they are responsible for ensuring that all 8000 technology devices are working properly. From computers, TVs, phones, and anything that plugs into a computer or network, they fix it all.



Pictured above, left to right: Dustin Swanson, Vijay Behl, Cole Evans, Jason Breton, Mark Dunne, Shari Braun, David MacLachlan. Missing: Glen Munro



# Meet Our Staff

**Vijay Behl** grew up in Jalandhar City, Punjab in India. After moving to Canada, he lived in Estevan, 6 years in Yorkton and he currently lives in Regina with his spouse Madhu. His wife is working as an Educational Assistant with Regina Public Schools and their son Nik is studying and working as a CCA in a Long-Term Care Center at Gravelbourg. Vijay previously worked as a Database Administrator with the Yorkton Tribal Council Child & Family Services Inc. for 5 years, a Cashier & Fulfillment Associate at Walmart, Assistant and then System Manager with India Post. He completed his education in India and CCNA-I from SaskPolytech Regina. Vijay is currently a Database Administrator with Prairie South Schools, a position he's held for more than 2 years. In his spare time, Vijay likes to spend time with family and friends, watch movies, web-series, play video games, watch traveller's vlogs of historical places, mysterious or haunted places, hill stations, highest mountains & famous cities of the world. His favourite food is Subway's footlong, A&W habanero chicken burger, BBQ chicken, Chinese food, Indian dishes, pizza, and he loves to taste different cuisines.



**David MacLachlan** is one of our Network Administrators. David grew up on a farm south of Eyebrow and currently lives in Moose Jaw. He has one brother who also lives in Moose Jaw and his parents moved from Eyebrow into Moose Jaw a few years ago.



David went to Medicine Hat College following high school. In his spare time, David enjoys hiking, biking, auto detailing and gaming in the colder months.

Vijay's favourite vacations are Banff, Jasper, Grand Canyon, Golden City, Revelstoke, Vancouver & Toronto. His most memorable vacation is 19 km trekking to glacier through National Park & visit to mountain pass in India. His dream vacation destinations are Abu Dhabi, Dubai, London, Paris, Cancun, and Disneyland. His advice is "Learn something new everyday."



**Cole Evans** was born and raised in Moose Jaw and graduated from Peacock Collegiate in 2007. Cole has one younger brother. His mom is an Educational Assistant at William Grayson and his dad has worked at the base for 30+ years. Cole is engaged to Kerstin Jensen. He has a 7 year old daughter named Ella who attends Sunningdale School and likes to do gymnastics and play ball. Cole attended SIAST for Business Information Systems in 2009, previously Computer Information Systems. After SIAST he worked casual part-time with SaskTel before moving to a full-time job at Water Security Agency. In 2021 he came to Prairie South and is our Network Analyst. In Cole's spare time, he loves spending time with family and friends, going to the gym, playing sports (especially baseball), camping, hunting, fishing, cooking (Mexican and Asian dishes are his favourites), and just being a dad to a very busy 7 year old. His advice is to just go for it and do it! Don't be afraid of what others may think.





# Glentworth Central School

1st Avenue, Glentworth

Glentworth Central School, home of the Wildcats and in the RM of Glentworth, is a Prek-12 school, with 88 students, 12 staff members, and 5 bus drivers. Our catchment area encompasses students from Glentworth, McCord, Fir Mountain, Flintoft, Wood Mountain, and the Lakota First Nation.



It has been a tradition for many years to kickstart the school year with a school/community pancake breakfast. The SCC, Staff, and students work together to make this a successful way to start the school year. We have an active SRC group within our school, who organize fun activities for our students, ski trips, dress up days, raise money for Terry Fox, Minute-to-Win-It-Activities, curling bonspiels, and much, much more! Another unique part of our school is our Magnet Program which draws students from Kincaid and Mankota to participate in Practical and Applied Arts courses at Mankota once a week.





We field as many sports teams as we are able, including volleyball, curling, badminton, archery, and track and field for our students. High School Rodeo is a highlight for our students in our ranching community. Hockey is also a favourite amongst our students and Glentworth is well known for our rink burgers across the province.



Our Glentworth School motto is, "Caring is the Key" and our hope is that our students feel this as they pass through the doors of our school each and everyday.

