



Eastern Ontario Math League

The Eastern Ontario Math League Tournaments engage students in critical mathematical thinking and friendly competition in an academic environment. An extension of the Kingston Math League, the CDSBEO has hosted tournaments for students since 2015.

Over the course of the school year, three math tournaments take place in partnership with the Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic School Board, two of which are hosted by CDSBEO. The Senior Math Tournament takes place in the fall, and the Elementary Math Tournament takes place in June.

Principal of Curriculum Dawn Finnegan and Numeracy Consultant Stephanie Koekkoek, presented information to the Board on the tournaments, which are intended to create a culture of friendly academic competition. Interest in the event is growing across Eastern Ontario.

"We believe that all students deserve the opportunity to engage in competition beyond the athletic realm," explained Finnegan. "The Eastern Ontario Math League Tournaments provide a competitive opportunity in an academic setting. These tournaments offer the same elements of any regular sport's team competition, preparing as a team, strategic and critical thinking, communication skills, and developing their resiliency skills in the face of challenge."

Students who participate in the Eastern Ontario Math League develop important skills including imagination, collaboration and persistence. Students work both independently and in groups, to solve new and unique challenging math problems. Students answer challenging problems over the course of the math competition, including problems that combine a variety of math disciplines such as algebra, geometry, measurement and number sense, in both team and individual challenges.

"This can be a task in itself as most students are familiar with solving problems that involve one topic at a time," noted Finnegan. "Students have provided feedback indicating that they have enjoyed this challenge and that it "stretched" their thinking in a good way."

"There are two aspects to the competition," explained Koekkoek. "The event begins with the team rounds, or group competition, in addition to an individual round. In the Team Sprint round, teams complete questions as quickly as they can with a time limit. The event is hosted in a Jeopardy style format."

Over the past four years, the number of CDSBEO students achieving top scores in these competitions has increased. Their success is a testament to the numeracy strategies, supports, and programs that are taking place within CDSBEO school communities.

Several students from St. Thomas Aquinas CHS, along with Principal Danny Palumbo, were in attendance at the meeting to speak to trustees about their experience at the Eastern Ontario Math League.



"A number of factors that contribute to our success include both things that are tangible, and things that are intangible," began Principal Palumbo. "Some of the tangible things that we focus on are essential skills, and in fact our grade nine teachers outline a number of essential skills that we want students to have at the end of grade 8. At the end of grade 8 we have a math test to help to assess these essential skills. Another strategy that we use is that we embed EQAO questions in grade 7, 8, and 9 tests, which helps to familiarize students with the type of question they will see when they write their EQAO in grade 9."

Palumbo continued, "The most important piece of our success exists in the intangible things – the things you can't measure. This includes belief and confidence from our students, who have growth mindset, and who know that making mistakes is okay. These are the most important factors in attaining success."

St. Thomas Aquinas CHS has a history of success with respect to Grade 9 EQAO Mathematics assessment scores, and this past year, 100 per cent of the grade 9 Academic cohort achieved Level 3 or 4 on the EQAO math assessment.

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank you for coming to present this evening. To Mr. Palumbo, the tools you have provided to students go beyond any expectations, and we are extremely proud of the students and their outstanding success. I love that students have an opportunity to compete in the intellectual realm through this competition," concluded Trustee Sue Wilson.

Adult and Continuing Education Update

The School of Alternative and Continuing Education is working to increase growth mindset in students through wellness programming, equity and inclusion, and credit accumulation through improved pathway planning in all schools that it oversees.

Vice-Principal of St. James Catholic Education Centre Jennifer Lentz, presented information to the Board about the course offerings in the Adult and Continuing Education program. The school currently oversees an abundance of education options including: the Alternative Education Program (Turning Points/ABLE), eLearning, Continuing Education Adult Day School, Continuing Education Adult Night School, Summer School, Personal Support Worker Accredited Program, and PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition). The school also offers Dual-Credit learning opportunities, Cooperative Education programs, and OYAP apprenticeship career pathways.

"Our PSW accredited program allows students to earn 6 high school credits in addition to their PSW certification," noted Lentz. "We graduated 92 students this past year, with five receiving their OSSD, and we are on track to have the same number of PSW program graduates again this year."



"In Cornwall, we are working with community partners to identify areas of need and to help adults achieve their OSSD in the areas of safe food handling and hairstyling."

This year, St. James Catholic Education Centre offered three summer programs for students in grades 7 through 10. The program included a literacy and numeracy component, as well as fun sports and art activities. In addition, the Connections Summer Program was offered to serve youth at-risk of not graduating, or who are disengaged with school.

"We had 11 at-risk students that looked to gain either three or four credits through the summer," noted Lentz. "The environment in this program is highly supportive, and these students can work through volunteer programs to gain credits, dedicating their time at movie nights, and helping to run summer camps. We had three students graduate at the end of the summer, and 38 credits granted. We are very excited about this program and the opportunities it provides to our students."

"eLearning is another portfolio which falls under our school. We had 37 online course offerings, and 168 program applicants for the 2017-2018 school year," explained Lentz. "During the summer session we had 37 teachers and 45 courses running. At the end of the summer 593.5 credit courses were granted."

The school is very excited to be part of the Ministry of Education Adult Education Strategy, which began in the 2016-2017 school year. The three year project brings focus to regional programs and the existing need for adult education. The committee, which is made up of nine regional boards, aims to create awareness, build capacity and develop and implement innovative practice around adult education strategies.

"Our goal is to continue to grow, and to support people in our communities that are looking to further their education, change careers, or simply discover new interests," concluded Lentz.