

FALL 2019

DIRECTOR'S DISPATCH

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AT THE RCDSB



In such a rapidly changing and increasingly complex global environment, it is tremendously beneficial for our students, staff and school communities to be provided with opportunities to celebrate diversity and experience learning about and from other cultures and educational systems. For our students, most specifically, initiatives related to international education broaden horizons and perspectives, promote inclusivity and respect for others, and develop a wide array of knowledge and skills that will serve them well as they become responsible global citizens. It is for these reasons, as Director of Education, I am excited to share that our District has established a series of partnerships and projects – both at home and abroad – in order to provide genuine, engaging, teaching and learning opportunities in an international context for staff and students alike.



Visiting delegation from Central Connecticut State University and Duke University at the Mindiwin Manido in April 2019

The RCDSB's approach to international education is multi-faceted and includes student and staff exchanges (short-term and long-term), as well as visiting delegations with international counterparts in order to share best practices and to learn from one another. To begin, under the leadership of Superintendent Stephen Blok, the District has established a partnership with l'Académie de Clermont-Ferrand, a school academy located in South-Central France. As it evolves over time, the partnership may include: student exchanges at the intermediate and secondary levels (including short-term exchanges of one-to-two weeks in length and long-term exchanges of two-to-four months in duration); staff exchanges as an opportunity for educators to work abroad (for one academic school year); and, collaboration amongst senior staff and trustees with the governing authorities and political representatives of the academy (to discuss aspects of governance and strategic planning). Further, the RCDSB has contracted Muskoka Language International (MLI), a national organization that supports travel and study in Canada, to facilitate the coordination of homestay for international students who will be studying in the county. For the very first time this school year, the District will host ten international students from a number of countries world-wide, including France, Italy, Japan and Norway!



A cohort of International Education students are met by RCDSB students and staff at the MacDonald-Cartier International Airport in Ottawa on September 2019. The students are from Italy, Japan and France.

"The purpose [of international education] is to enable students to develop the competencies they will need to thrive as citizens in an increasingly globalized world." ~ Global Education for Ontario Learners: Practical Strategies, Ministry of Education Ontario (2018)

The District will also be encouraging its principals, vice-principals and managers to continue to seek opportunities to learn and grow from international counterparts in schools and central administration through exchanges coordinated by the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC), as well as to participate in the International Confederation of Principals (ICP) annual conventions.

In addition, the RCDSB has begun to host visiting delegations from abroad, including a week-long visit from educators of Central Connecticut State University and Duke University of the United States of America. The delegation was comprised of new and experienced teachers and administrators, as well as university professors from Connecticut and North Carolina, observing the high-quality programs and/or services offered in our school board, including the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Program, Special Services, as well as our vibrant partnership with the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation. As an ongoing project, the District looks forward to expanding upon this delegation's visit this school year, including a return trip to the United States, and, to establishing new partnerships with educators in jurisdictions elsewhere around the globe.



Queen Elizabeth Public School Principal Angie McCrae (pictured right) participated in a principal exchange through the Ontario Principal Council. She visited peers in Trondheim, Norway in the Spring of 2017.

The partnerships and projects described above align with the guiding principles and key actions outlined in the [RCDSB's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan](#) and aim to create authentic and contemporary learning and life experiences for students and staff, deepening our collective understanding of, and respect for, both local community and global citizenship.

I am inspired to experience these international education initiatives along with each and every one of you!

Sincerely,

Pino Buffone
Director of Education