



NISKA

NEWS

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A message from Niska: SACS poster contest update

By Sarah Burghardt

Thank you everyone who entered artwork in the Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) poster contest. This year, 60 schools from across Alberta submitted their students' entries to the contest. I was very excited to receive all of your wonderful artwork; you are all terrific artists! I am also very happy to know that everyone has such a wonderful understanding of what it means to be safe and caring in your school, in your home and in your community.

Poster contest, cont'd to page 3

Niska goes to school

By Julia Elaschuk

Niska was invited to Caernarvon School in Edmonton to highlight the school's focus of Safe and Caring principles. Parent volunteer Gwen Stretch took pictures of the excited students as the mascot toured 17 classrooms from kindergarten to grade 6. Parent volunteer Steve Kashman suited up for the occasion.

Led by teacher Lorna Henker, Division II staff Debby Badger, Brenda Metcalfe and Lisa Shemko introduced the Safe and Caring curriculum to assist in focusing students on positive behaviors and good conduct. The program presents a common vocabulary and ideas to address issues within the curriculum. The staff has agreed that the program has had a positive effect on behaviors within the school and the community.

Teachers appreciate the explicit guidance, practical advice and direct relationship to the mandated curriculum. A common language and framework and consistent response from all staff have reduced the number of misconducts in the school and on the playground.



TV-Turnoff Week begins April 23

A blue-eyed toddler sits in front of a television set, fiddling with a stuffed toy.

“By the time this child graduates from high school, her brain will have absorbed 350,000 television commercials, 100,000 alcohol ads and a daily barrage of sex and violence. If that doesn’t turn you off, then nothing will.”

So goes one of the three “uncommercials” the Vancouver-based Adbusters Media Foundation developed for last year’s TV-Turnoff Week. This year, TV-Turnoff Week is slated for April 23-29. Teachers and parents can use the week to encourage children to develop a zest for reading and other mind-engaging activities, thereby helping them reduce the amount of television they watch.

Here are some tips to help children kick the television habit:

1. Place the TV in a “hard-to-get-to” place.
2. Go cold turkey (children adapt within two weeks—if you can handle it!).

3. Phase out cable and then network.
4. “Fix” the TV so it only shows video and then limit videos.
5. Have a yard sale and get rid of the TV and all tapes at the same time.
6. Leave the TV behind every time you move!

National TV-Turnoff Week is organized each year by TV-Turnoff Network, formerly TV-Free America, which encourages children and adults to watch less television in order to promote healthier lives and communities. In addition to National TV-Turnoff Week, TV-Turnoff Network’s successful More Reading, Less TV program helps teachers fight the influence of excessive television viewing and helps students to acquire a deep and longlasting enjoyment of reading.

Teachers who would like additional information on TV-Turnoff Week are encouraged to visit the network’s website at <www.tvturnoff.org>. Information is also available on the Adbusters website at <adbusters.org/campaigns/tvturnoff>.

Throne speech highlights strong and safe communities

Governor General Adrienne Clarkson delivered the speech from the throne January 30. Below is an excerpt from the speech focusing on the federal government’s plans for ensuring strong and safe communities:

“Strong and safe communities are an essential part of the fabric of our society. They are critical to providing Canadians with the security to build a better future for themselves and their families. They are also important to attracting talented people from around the world to come and make their home here. . . .

“The Government of Canada will continue to work with provinces and territories, communities and all its partners to implement a balanced approach to addressing crime—focusing on prevention as much as punishment, strengthening

penalties for serious crime and considering the needs of victims.

“The Government will focus on safeguarding Canadians from new and emerging forms of crime. It will take aggressive steps to combat organized crime, including the creation of stronger anti-gang laws and measures to protect members of the justice system from intimidation. It will provide enhanced law enforcement tools to deal with emerging threats to security, such as cybercrime and terrorism. It will act to safeguard children from crime, including criminals on the Internet. The Government will take steps to ensure that our laws protect children from those who would prey on their vulnerability.”

The full text of the throne speech is available at <www.sft-ddt.gc.ca/sftddt_e.htm>.

Poster contest, cont'd from page 1

With so many great posters, it was very difficult to select only a few winners. So I called in some of my friends, who are professional artists and graphic designers, to help me to select the finalists.

There were a total of 12 students whose posters were selected as winners in the Niska poster contest; their names are published below. These students will receive a SACS tee-shirt and a Niska certificate of excellence for their achievements. We intend to showcase the

winning posters on our new full-color poster series and on the SACS promotional display board.

Even if you did not win, keep looking for your artwork on other SACS promotional materials, brochures and publications. We will use as much of your wonderful artwork as we can!

Thank you everyone, and congratulations winners!

Poster contest winners:

Student	School	Community	Grade
Amin, Aditi	Tom Baines Junior High School	Calgary	Grade 8
Baker, Jessica	Tipaskan School	Edmonton	Grade 1
Boucher, Lacey	Vera M Welsh School	Lac La Biche	Grade 3
Gerry, Melissa	Holy Cross Catholic School	Grande Prairie	Grade 6
Ha, Andrew, and Zoltan Solyom	Kenilworth Junior High School	Edmonton	Grade 8
Hausauer, Michelle	Blackfalds School	Blackfalds	Grade 1
Kugler, Jennifer	Fort Saskatchewan Christian School	Fort Saskatchewan	Grade 6
Smythe, Ashley	Banff Community High School	Banff	Grade 9
Stanton, Nicole	Dr Swift Middle School	Lac La Biche	Grade 6
Tanner, Jamie	Allendale School	Edmonton	Grade 3
Thom, Caitlin	Vera M Welsh School	Lac La Biche	Grade 3
Yap, Carrie	Ecole Madeline D'Houet	Calgary	Grade 7

SACS resources and promotional materials: An excellent way to spread safe and caring messages

Booklets, thank-you cards, tattoos, mouse pads, zipper pulls and coffee mugs are just a few of the resources and promotional items developed by the ATA's Safe and Caring Schools and Communities project to help you spread safe and caring messages. To order, check out the ATA's website at <www.teachers.ab.ca> or contact the SACS office by calling 447-9487 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (from elsewhere in Alberta).

Websites

Child Abuse: Changing Attitudes, Actions Key to Preventing Child Abuse:

www.cha.ab.ca/healthsite/pk3049sh.asp

The Capital Health Authority's website features a page on the prevention of child abuse. The page includes a list of child-abuse programs and resources.

Effective Behavior Support:

brt.uoregon.edu/ebs

The Effective Behavior Support approach provides a process and structure for enhancing the adoption and sustained use of research-validated, school-wide discipline practices.

An Environmental Scan of Programs and Resources for Dealing with Serious Learning Disruptive Behaviour and Violence in Alberta Schools:

www.educ.ucalgary.ca/scan

The Scan is a compilation of resources that teachers, administrators and parents have either created or found useful in dealing with the problems of disruption in school settings. Programs, curricula, resource personnel, sources of funding, research projects and other materials currently in use in Alberta are described in summary form, along with contact information.

The Network:

www.nicr.ca

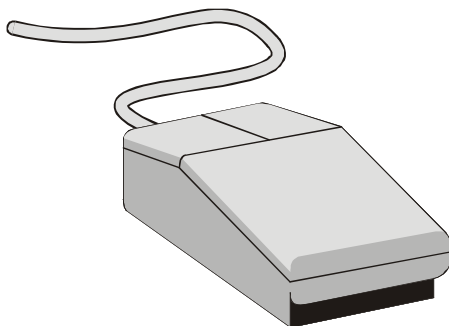
The Network is a national charitable association dedicated to promoting constructive, nonviolent conflict resolution. Since its inception in 1985, the Network has become the preeminent source

in Canada for conflict resolution connections, information and resources.

OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports:

www.pbis.org

The Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports has been established by the Office of Special Education Programs, US Department of Education, to give schools capacity-building information and technical assistance for identifying, adapting and sustaining effective school-wide disciplinary practices.



School Health Information Centre:

www.schoolhealth.ab.ca

The School Health Information Centre website is a joint initiative between the Capital Health Authority and Edmonton Public Schools. The website involves the sharing, development and distribution

of health information and resources to support teachers and other school staff in providing relevant health education to children, ultimately leading to a safer and stronger family and community. The website includes a section on family violence; click on Health Resources and then on Family Violence.

Teachers' Resource Centre:

www.safekidscanada.ca

Looking for safety information to teach your students? Find lesson plans, children's activities and other resources that match your curriculum by grade (kindergarten to grade 8) and province.

Niska News is a newsletter produced by the ATA's Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) Project for school and community members. The goal of the SACS Project is to encourage practices that model and reinforce socially responsible and respectful behaviors so that learning and teaching can take place in a safe and caring environment. Achieving this goal requires the involvement of not just parents and teachers but also all the important adults in a young person's life. This newsletter is designed to provide timely, up-to-date information about the project. For more information, contact the SACS office by phoning 447-9487 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (from elsewhere in Alberta). Copying and distributing Niska News is permitted as long as the source is credited. The newsletter is available online through the SACS Project website at www.teachers.ab.ca/safe/index.html.

AGAPE: A sexual orientation and schooling focus group in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta

Agape is disinterested love. . . . Agape does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people, or any qualities people possess. It begins by loving others for their sakes. . . . It springs from the need of the other person.

—Martin Luther King, Jr (1958)

AGAPE is a new focus group set up to consider issues in relation to sexual orientation and schooling. It is designed to meet the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff in the Faculty of Education. We also invite practising teachers and educational professionals in the local community to attend our meetings. Straight allies are welcome as well.

The focus group will provide opportunities for members to

- share and discuss narratives of schooling
- address issues that concern job searches and working in schools
- examine policies and practices in schools, districts and teachers' associations/federations
- provide space to network and socialize in a welcoming and supportive setting.

And yes, we can have a potluck or two as well!

Date: Every Thursday during the Winter school term (except February 22, 2001)

Time: 5 - 6 pm

Location: Faculty of Education, University of Alberta, Student Lounge, 4-110C Education North Building

If you have a question, please email Dr André Grace at <andre.grace@ualberta.ca> or Kris Wells at <wellsk@icrossroads.com.>

Learning resources

Teaching Students with Emotional Disorders and/or Mental Illnesses, Book 8 of the Programming for Students with Special Needs series

The intent of this resource is to build a better understanding of common emotional disorders and/or mental illnesses in the classroom and to provide teachers with practical strategies. The topics covered in the resource include anxiety disorder, depression, eating disorders, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder and schizophrenia.

Teaching Students Who Are Gifted and Talented, Book 7 of the Programming for Students with Special Needs series

Teaching Students Who Are Gifted and Talented was developed by Alberta Learning in collaboration with the Calgary Board of Education and the University of Calgary's Centre for Gifted Education. It replaces the Alberta Learning resource *Educating Our Gifted and Talented Students in Alberta: A Resource Manual for Teachers* (1986).

Teaching Students Who Are Gifted and Talented provides practical strategies for designing and implementing programs; addresses administration of programs; and discusses conceptions of giftedness, identification of gifted and talented students, giftedness in the visual and performing arts, and postmodernism and gifted education.

To order these resources, please contact the Learning Resources Distributing Centre (LRDC) in Edmonton by calling (780) 427-5775 or faxing (780) 422-9750. The LRDC also offers online Internet ordering at <www.lrdc.edc.gov.ab.ca>.

