



Maple Leaf
International
School

Annual Review 2006-2007

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Maple Leaf International School
2007 Annual Meeting
Principal's Report

Achievements and Highlights of the Year 2006-07

Enrolment and Classes

Our school has continued this year at the enrolment figure of 600. We established one more elementary class to accommodate the number of SKs. The number of elementary classes will stay the same for next year. We will have some reorganization as we will have one less grade 3 and one more Grade 7; one less SK and one more JK.

This year we had 94 different credit courses offered in our secondary program. New ones conducted for the first time were Communication Technology at the Gr. 11 and 12 levels, Tourism at Gr. 12 and Business Organizational Management, at Gr. 12. These new courses all showed good development and enrolment. We have offered the same 94 for next year.

Administration of the School

This was the first year that the school has had 2 vice principals –Michele Riley and Bob Fenton. This year also brought some challenges for the administration of the school with the illness and passing of Janet Goheen followed very soon after with the passing of my husband and my ensuing absence. I thank you for your support through these times. The current administrative team is working very well together –using each other's strengths, knowledge and abilities.

Student Services and Guidance

We were fortunate to recruit a highly qualified guidance counselor, Don Crowder. We are pleased to say that he will be continuing with us. He is busy full time working with students and their parents to ensure that students have the right information about careers, the right courses are taken, the application process is conducted correctly, and that students are supported in their endeavours. Mr. Crowder has also provided sessions for parents whose children are heading to colleges and universities away.

Philippa Talma took on her new role in Student Services quite capably. We appreciate her work in this area. She has revised our intake assessments for these grades to more closely reflect our curriculum.

New Office Procedures

We have recently instituted some new office procedures at MLIS so as to become more efficient in record keeping and report generating. The computer operating system we use is called TREVLAC. This enables us to administer the school, generate report cards and produce records which we store. Previously, staff had been trained on a limited number of functions, putting us in the position where a staff absence at a particular time would not allow us to complete important tasks in a timely fashion. We entered into a contract with TREVLAC and cross trained our office staff so that several people can complete the same task. This is very important around the times we generate report cards.

Until recently, our attendance was completed by hand. This was very time consuming and inefficient when we wished to generate information in a professional manner quickly for parents. We were able to obtain the technical means and the training for our attendance person so that we have computerized the whole procedure. We can now track a student's attendance with a keystroke (or two) and upload it to report cards. The better and faster we can track attendance means we can better support students to develop good punctuality and responsibility. Computer attendance was made possible when the P.T.A. purchased a bank of new computers for student use; we assigned an old one to this task.

To enable us to communicate large amounts of important data quickly to newly hired foreign teachers, we have transferred large amounts of print material and a slide show to compact disc. This was produced by a committee of teachers who met to gather accurate and up to date information which would be essential for newcomers. We are committed to helping new staff settle as well as possible as they take up their duties at Maple Leaf. We have offered these CD'S to the P.T.A. to assist parents new to Trinidad.

Soon we will be training our office staff in the use of a new system from a Canadian company, SYNREVOICE. This works with TREVLAC by giving us the ability to make a computer generated call to any home to report an absence by a student at that number. This system will tell us whether the phone was answered, if it left a message or if a number is valid. It has the ability to send e-mails as well. This will help us to improve communications with parents and keep our records up to date. It also allows us to record a message and send it home. This will permit the school and P.T.A. to keep parents informed of important school activities. We are hopeful this will end the days of school notices to parents and even report cards left in student backpacks! The P.T.A. has generously purchased this system for the school.

In the near future, we will be exploring the next logical step which is a system which would allow teachers to post homework and assignments on a website so parents could monitor homework and the achievement of curriculum. We have yet to cost this out and to see if we have the technical capability to offer this service; however we do believe that communication with parents is too important not to leave every stone unturned. We will report our discoveries to you in upcoming reports.

We are currently planning improvements to our school's website.

Program Improvements

Library

This year, under the stewardship of Librarian, Gisele Hobday our library has made additional improvements for the research and reading by our students.

1. EBSCO, an online database for research has been purchased.
2. We added to the following collections:
 - Caribbean
 - Picture books for primary
 - Junior and Intermediate with particular attention to fiction for teens
 - Senior fiction
 - Graphic novels for reluctant readers particularly male.
 - Non-fiction for research purposes
 - Professional books for teacher resources
3. DVDs and videos as teacher resources to enhance lessons and units of work for students were increased. We now have over 150.
4. We catalogued the books from the classroom libraries from JK to Grade 3 and novel studies from the Intermediate grades.
5. Classes on how to use the Dewey Decimal system and how to cite works for research were conducted with the Grade 3, 4, 5 and 6 classes.
6. Collaboration took place between teachers and the teacher-librarian for research projects for Grades 3-6
7. Author studies were organized for Grade 5.
8. Classes were conducted on how to do PowerPoint presentations with Grade 6 and 8.
9. Websites were prepared for the Grade 8s to conduct debate through private chat rooms and private blog sites.
10. Grade 9 classes received instruction on how to develop a thesis statement and how to avoid plagiarism.
11. The library environment was enhanced in the following ways:
 - Recovered the soft furniture for quiet reading
 - Placed picture books for primary in colorful baskets for easier access.
 - Added two benches/library shelves for the primary section.
 - Organized a parent volunteer to decorate the library in cultural themes.
12. A book fair with Nigel R. Khan Ltd was held that awarded us \$800 in new books.
13. Read aloud were done with all the classes at the primary campus twice a week for the school year and for classes from grade 3 to 6 on an informal basis.
14. Workshops in First Steps Reading were conducted for the elementary teachers.
15. Fiction and non-fiction books from the Forest of Books program were purchased and promoted in the elementary grades as part of our literacy drive.

Technology

We have extended our use of computers in classroom applications. We have 2 full computer labs, and 2 half labs that may be booked by teachers for their classes and we continue to have demand for more. We have just over 115 computers located in the school, 95 for student use.

Technology –more and more of our students, especially in grades 11 and 12 are finding that having their own laptop is becoming an essential part of their learning. This year we have had to develop a process by which students may access the wireless hubs in the school.

One of our courses, Gr12 World History was supported by an online course binder. Ms Henry was one of the developers of this course resource when she worked in Ontario. All assignments, lectures, and handouts are posted where all the students in the province of Ontario have access. The use of the site promotes computer technical skills; provides experience in using new software such as Adobe Photoshop, Ipod podcasts, Breeze and PowerPoint to complete assignments; supports independent student driven learning; gives opportunities for collaboration with students in Ontario taking the course; and encourages the global attitudes and technical skill necessary for today's world.

We have purchased software and licenses to support programs. –licenses for Photoshop, access to the Rubric Builder and School Net websites that support the Ontario Curriculum, access to EBSCO Host which is a online journal repository particularly valuable for research in secondary courses.

Elementary

A great deal of assistance is required by the new teachers to our school and this year we had nine new teachers in our elementary classrooms. New teachers are familiarizing themselves with our school's procedures and expectations for long range planning, lesson planning, instructional methods, resources, assessments and reporting. We wish to compliment our elementary teaching staffs who have left the local system to take up the challenge of Maple Leaf. We are told that it takes 2-3 years to bridge that gap and these teachers have cheerfully accepted the task. The teachers who join us have several characteristics in common – a passion for teaching, commitment for service to children and their families, and a desire for the opportunity to demonstrate excellence in teaching.

All of our elementary language teachers have been trained in First Steps, the choice of teaching methodology for reading in Ontario schools. As well, this year all of the elementary students have been assessed in reading and comprehension using the Developmental Reading Assessment. These two resources work hand in hand in providing the teacher with the direction for instruction required by the students in the class.

Math manipulatives have been recently acquired for our grades 6-8. and a mathematics learning mat has been purchased for grades 3-5.

Secondary

As you know, our secondary programs are inspected annually by the Ministry of Education for the Province of Ontario. Our inspector, June Merkley was with us during the month of January. She inspected curriculum plans, the classroom instruction, assessment procedures, the resources/ textbooks, the reporting of student achievement as well as procedures for tracking attendance, and student record keeping. We passed with flying colours. Some of you may recall the Ministry had not visited the school for the last two years as the inspection procedures and criteria were reviewed and revised by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Our inspections for those years were based on the paper submissions of course plans and other documents. To have such a positive evaluation of the credit courses that we provide for our secondary students is truly affirming of the state of MLIS and the quality of education that the school provides. When asked how MLIS compared in curriculum to other prestige private schools in Ontario, the response was, “second to none”.

We thank the teachers for so capably demonstrating our school’s success.

Social, Cultural and Extra Curricula Activities of the School

We continue to place a strong emphasis on providing a safe environment for our students. Bullying in its many forms is addressed. Drug awareness and education have been provided for secondary students in assemblies. A member of the police spoke at another assembly on theft. These have and will continue to be on-going emphases for the school.

We had our carnival Jump-Up for the elementary students. Secondary student, under the leadership of their Student Council, held a number of spirit raising activities including theme dress down days, scavenger hunt, a football tournament held during lunch breaks over three months, a Mr. and Miss Maple Leaf contest and very successful Sports and Adventure Days were held.

An emphasis this year was to increase the range and number of extra-curricular activities. A good number of our teachers give of their time to make the school an active community.

- Ms. Barillari and Mr. Rickwood coached our girls’ football, Ms Sell coaches our boys’ rugby team.
- Mrs. Chuckaree encouraged students to demonstrate their social awareness and responsibility by organizing the Christmas collection for charities,
- Mr. Ragbeer coached the cricket teams as well as refereeing nearly all the lunch break football games.
- Mr. Charlerie had students join him in an after school pan group. This group was also part the superb concert highlighting the many talents of our students.
- Just recently Mrs. Sanders and Mrs. Liverpool established the Short Story Contest. We look forward to more literacy activities by this duo.
- Mrs. Eligon gave of her time to be a Cub Leader during the first term. I understand that the troop had a wonderful camp out last weekend up at Toco and saw lots of newly hatched little turtles.
- Ms Grover has supported and advised the Student Council through their activities.

- Mrs. Qudurrah worked long hours with the yearbook committee to produce a wonderful record of the year.
- Ms. Leacock addressed a need of some students and made an after school homework room available two nights a week for students who need some assistance, a quiet place, or time to get work done.
- Mrs. Johnson led the committee in the planning of the grade 12 graduation activities –the grad breakfast and the evening ceremony.
- Ms. Duplisea prepared and accompanied student teams to the Model United Nations Assembly in Montreal. She organized our team which participated in the Young Leaders debate here in Trinidad.
- Mrs. Clark has kept her art room open every noon hour all year for the senior students who are working on their portfolios for submission to colleges and universities or preparing for one of our own art shows.

In addition, we have coaches and leaders for a number of activities and sports who are paid by the participating students for their services. For others we identified a coach or leader but unfortunately not enough students signed up to make the activity viable. One of our incoming teachers next year will be offering choir as an activity and we hope that students will join –especially since next year is festival year. We hope to maintain and expand the breadth of activities for students.

We have plans for sports and athletic activities during the lunch breaks next year. Plans are also in place for the implementation of Character Education from junior kindergarten through grade 12. Parents will be involved in the planning process to identify which character traits will be taught.

Next year we will expand our student leadership program to involve as many students as possible.

Many parents also help our school in achieving its goals. Parents have been guest speakers in our classes, another parent decorates our library in celebration of the nation's special events, a good number of parents have accompanied classes on field trips, many parents are behind the scenes to provide the extra assistance that the Christmas Concert, Graduations and the yearbooks require.

And, of course, there is our PTA who welcomes the staff back to school, assists with grade 8 and 12 graduations, provide food and refreshments at concerts, fund raise to provide additional library books and nine computers for our school.

Our school is gaining a reputation beyond Trinidad. A number of students have come to attend MLIS from other Caribbean islands. As well, and very importantly, Colleges and Universities know that our students are well prepared for their programmes and courses.