



HEADLINES

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Back to Basics

There is never a dull moment in the life of a school. No matter how much you prepare, things never go quite according to plan.

This fall we had a number of surprise staffing changes at all levels. Work permit issues, injury and illness, and even a teacher “following her heart” all left us reorganizing right into the first week of school.

If that wasn't enough, we also hit two major technological crises. To begin with, as a result of the collapse of our network and servers last winter, we initiated a complete upgrade and expansion of our IT infrastructure to radically improve our ability to operate at high speeds, make optimum use of our laptop carts, double our computer lab access and triple our number of SmartBoards and student workstations.

Work started as soon as the students left in June and the infrastructure that was under our control—our new labs, SmartBoards and workstations were expanded, serviced, and upgraded right on schedule. We were supremely (and falsely!) confident heading into August that everything would be up and running with weeks to spare.

As the summer progressed, the wheels began to fall off of this plan. To begin with, the problems with our servers, files and backups were greater than anticipated. File and data transfer took considerably longer than we thought that it would, and hardware delays offshore pushed our activation dates perilously close to Labour Day.

In spite of all of that, by the first week of school, everything was in place and up and running—and then it all collapsed.

The new system that we had installed, recommended by both the IT consultant which the school had used for years and our outgoing IT specialist, proved to be more than problematic! Our new virtual servers began crashing almost daily and signals became more and more crossed—to the point that one teacher found that the programme and activity that she had loaded on her computer was

appearing on the SmartBoard in another classroom two buildings away! In spite of the excellent and tireless work by both our own staff and our outside service provider, it soon became clear that the problem was in the hardware and not on the technical side. Even the manufacturer admitted the short-coming. Firmware was being updated almost every week (as opposed to once a year) and our new system was proving incapable of carrying the load. Frustrated teachers, students and administrators soldiered on but we have been applying band-aids to a serious systemic wound.

The good news is that we have not turned a corner, circumvented our new equipment, ordered more dependable replacements and should be stable from here on in. We still have to wait for the bells and whistles but the end is definitely in sight on that front!

While all of this has been going on, we got blindsided from the other direction by offshore technical problems with PCR, our Portal service provider. In spite of many promises and guarantees of quick fixes they have still not rectified our problems. You know the result! Parents and teachers can't get dependable access to the Portal and we have experienced continued frustrations at all levels. The upside is that we have begun to work with a few outside companies to switch over to a more stable, user friendly web-based platform that will give each family a home page through which we can communicate relevant information without you receiving a barrage of emails.

So, on behalf of our internal community, please accept our collective apology for all of the hassles and false starts in our communications efforts this fall. Although we have been experiencing the same frustrations internally, at least we can walk across the hall and speak to one another.

In the interim, please fall back on the basics. Call us, drop in to see us, check your child's agenda and reminisce about schooling in the '90s! We will get back to this century as soon as we can.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Discovery Groups

November 13th and 20th

MYP

Parent-Teacher Interviews

November 15/16th

Bio-Diversity Week

November 15th to 19th

Bio-Diversity Open House

November 18th

Somersfield Golf Tournament

November 26th

Holiday Spirit Week 6—11

December 6 to 10th

End of Term

December 17th