



SEVEN OAKS
SCHOOL DIVISION
community begins here

Community

B E G I N S H E R E

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City Life: Focus on Garden City Collegiate

At Garden City Collegiate, "participation and excellence" is more than a motto. It's a goal that students and staff work toward every day.

The emphasis is on "participation." At Garden City Collegiate, education is an active experience and student involvement is an essential ingredient that adds energy and excitement to high school.

Voice Becomes Choice

At Garden City Collegiate, when students speak, they know they are heard. In fact, some of the most popular classes and programs were implemented in part because students expressed a strong interest in them.

A good example is the school's new hockey program. Garden City has a great legacy in athletic programming, including intramurals and leadership. For some students, there was still something missing.

"Several students had expressed interest in playing hockey, but had to go elsewhere, and they've sort of been

torn in making that decision," explains Rick Stocki, a Garden City Collegiate teacher and manager of the school's new hockey team. "They really wanted to stay for the programs and the culture here. At the same time, they wanted to play hockey."

"Giving them the opportunity to do both is one of the reasons we came up with the program."

In its first year, the hockey team is doing well. The 19 students on the team have just started the second half of their season. Another 19 students are looking forward to participating in an upcoming Rookie Tournament in late April/early May.

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A New View on Student Council

One of the best ways to encourage student participation is to show students that their voices are valued. Giving students a stronger say in their school gives them a good reason to care about what goes on.

Student voice at Garden City Collegiate is unmistakably strong, as shown by the participation in the school's Student Council. While traditionally student councils consist of only a handful of representatives, the student council at Garden City consists of more than 20 members – and that's before the official school elections.

Darlene Andruchuk says the interest in student council stems from the unique structure used at Garden City Collegiate. There are four committees, which play distinct roles within the school.

"There is the Dance committee, Entertainment committee, Activist committee and student council (addressing student concerns) in general," explains Andruchuk. "There is a chairperson that heads the committee, a secretary and then other members that share their ideas."

"They all get involved and are delegated certain jobs within each committee. Each member is respected and helps out where they are best suited and most interested."





Teaching Through Travel

Garden City Collegiate explores different ways of bringing lessons to life for students, promoting education through experience.

A great example of this can be found in the school's upcoming Prairie Expedition. For the Prairie Expedition, a group of English and History students will go on what is essentially a "Western Canadian Tour" this coming May.

Students spend the year exploring different regions of Canada from a classroom perspective. Then in May, the group and its teachers head out on a weeklong bus trip through some of those very regions. It gives them the opportunity to get a first-hand look at the differences that exist within their own country and what those regions have to offer.

Not only does this kind of trip bring the classroom lessons to life, but it also creates a memory that the students will keep with them long after their graduation. It is an opportunity to bond with their teachers, getting to know them as people and learning to respect them on a different level.

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"Sport, in this particular case hockey, is a great way to teach teamwork, skill development and to get students to understand that hard work will pay

off," says Stocki. They may not always be in the win column, but they are building character and life long friendships."

Giving the Students What They Want

Another way Garden City Collegiate encourages participation is simply by providing programs and lessons in which students want to be involved.

The school's well-known choir, band, theatre and visual arts programs continue to be extremely popular with students who want to explore their more artistic or musical side. Garden City has six different choirs (ranging from Chamber to Jazz) and several bands (Senior One, Symphonic and Jazz), all of which require heartfelt dedication and practice from students. Added to that is this year's production of the musical Pippin, which will give the school's aspiring actors and actresses an opportunity to shine.

A relatively new program that's proving extremely popular among students is Computer Multimedia. Far from the more traditional "typing tutorial" courses of years past, the Computer Multimedia program provides a different outlet for student creativity by providing a fairly comprehensive introduction to various forms of media: computer-based (i.e. web), television, print, radio and even film.

The program promotes participation in the community by offering services to local business, developing radio spots, web pages or promotional DVDs. This opens the door for lessons on production, consumerism, business and marketing development.

Paul Stewart, one of the Computer Multimedia teachers, points out how it is the more "behind the scenes" skills that are emphasized since they are what ultimately enable students to create a better final product. "Even when we get into video, we show them how just a change in lighting can create different moods," says Stewart.

For example, when students develop a video commercial, they are expected to do research, scripts and storyboards. They plot out their sound and camera angles completely so that they have an understanding of why something is done – or needs to be done – a certain way.

School Spirit, Student Pride

By giving students a stronger voice and making them active participants in their own education, Garden City Collegiate succeeds in having students care about their school. It's not just a place where they go to class. It's a place where they explore their interests and discover their abilities. It's a place where they can participate in a variety of things and where they learn how to define excellence for themselves.

At Garden City Collegiate, students take pride in their school...and their school takes pride in them.



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