

# 'Put Down The Cell': Bus Driver On Distracted Driving

Saint John, NB, Canada / The Wave

Brad Perry

Oct 1, 2020 7:25 AM

Lisa McFarland knows all too well about the growing problem of distracted driving.

As a school bus driver for the past 20 years, it is something she sees every day.

"I've seen cars drive right through our lights, completely distracted, and never even knew what they did," she said.

McFarland is taking part in a new **distracted driving awareness campaign** launched by the Saint John Police Force this week.

As part of the campaign, launched Monday, police are now taking a "zero tolerance" approach when it comes to enforcing the issue.

McFarland, who works for the Anglophone South School District, said she has witnessed a few close calls during her career.

"We see cars coming at us ... and I'm praying to goodness that they stop. Their heads are down, they're texting, they're coming right at us, and the only thing that I can do to keep that student safe is to hit the horn. Hopefully, they'll jump back," she said.

"I'll tell you, that gets right to your heart. It's always in the back of your mind. Every school bus driver out there, that's their biggest fear."

McFarland said students and bus drivers do their part to ensure safety, and she wants other drivers to do the same.



Bill McChesney / CC



## Bus driver implores drivers to pay attention



Play Segment 7:22



Share Segment

School bus drivers don't ever have it easy. But one of the biggest problems in the past number of years has been an increase in distracted drivers on the road. Anglophone South bus driver Lisa McFarland speaks with Julia Wright about what she sees in the run of day.

Aired: Sep. 28, 2020

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-28-information-morning-saint-john/clip/15800288-bus-driver-implores-drivers-pay-attention>



## Teacher recognized by PM



Play Segment 7:55



Share Segment

Michelle Lang-Standring shares some tips and tricks on how to get students interested in science. The Rothesay High teacher recently received a certificate of achievement for teaching excellence in STEM.

Aired: Oct. 7, 2020

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-28-information-morning-saint-john/clip/15801887-teacher-recognized-pm>

EDUCATION

**'I like to sprinkle some flavour': Rothesay teacher recognized for innovation**



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SAINT JOHN • In Mrs. Standring's class, students can diagnose and keep patients from the brink of death – fictitious ones, that is.

The Rothesay High School teacher recently won the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for her creative classroom methods. She was nominated by her principal at the time, Stephanie Underhill Tomilson, who is now the principal of Fredericton High School.

"When you see someone write it out, from their own perspective of everything you do, and how you make the life of the students, of the school better, and how you impact or influence or inspire your colleagues ... that was a very humbling experience because to me, it's just something I do," said Michelle Standring, who teaches biology and human physiology.

Seventy-one award recipients were chosen this year from among 246 nominations across the country. The 71 educators received one of three awards: Teaching Excellence, Teaching Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Excellence in Early Childhood Education

"These dedicated individuals are nurturing a culture of curiosity in Canada and creating an environment where young people are encouraged to reflect, take on challenges and live their dreams," the Government of Canada said in a press release announcing the winners.

Other New Brunswick teachers were also recognized with awards – awards the Government of Canada says are for "Canada's top educators": Stacey Stairs from Sussex Regional High School; David Gopee, Mark Noel and Tyson Theriault from James M. Hill Memorial High School; Lisa Brown from Lisa's Playhouse Inc. and Angela Murphy from North and South Esk Regional High School.

"I congratulate today's award recipients as some of the many educators whose dedication, investments, and sacrifices are making a difference," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in the government's press release.

## Rothesay High Teacher Wins Award For Teaching Excellence

Saint John, NB, Canada / Country 94

Tamara Steele

Oct 13, 2020 9:44 AM

A learning hospital, TED-Ed talks and breakout boxes are just some of the tools used by Michelle Lang Standing to teach her students.

The biology and human physiology teacher at Rothesay High School recently won a **Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence**.

Standing said her approach to teaching involves giving her students authentic situations they can work through.

"I find students and people, in general, are more engaged when they are tapping into their natural inquisitiveness. If they are asking questions, if they are trying to solve a puzzle, if they are trying to solve a crime," Standing said.

Standing said she always tells her colleagues if students start asking to do it again then you know you have something good.

Another component of Standing's biology class is Genius Hour, which requires students to find something they are passionate about and increase their skills in some way.

"Communication skills, collaboration skills, critical-thinking skills and the third one is that it has to help our biology classroom because that's what I always tell them. 'We are not competing against each other. We are learning together,'" Standing said.

Standing said her teaching style has "absolutely evolved" over the 12 years she has been teaching and she tries to add something new every year.

She said school has been going well during COVID-19 with students and teachers really happy to be back in the classroom, but the way she teaches has changed.



*Michelle Lang Standing, a science teacher at Rothesay High, has won the New Brunswick Certificate of Achievement through the 2020 Prime Minister's Awards. (Twitter)*

## Schools Adjusting To Challenging School Year

Saint John, NB, Canada / The Wave

Tamara Steele

Oct 15, 2020 7:53 AM

Educational curveballs are keeping administrators, staff and students on their toes during this unique and challenging school year.

Principals in the Anglophone South School District normally meet together, which is not possible during the pandemic.

Superintendent Zoe Watson said meetings are all conducted virtually now.

"I think the principals appreciate those opportunities to come together. A lot of questions. We always seem to be trying to figure out how we are going to do things. Exam week at the high school and what will that look like. Kindergarten orientation and all those steps. [We] have to figure it all out," Watson said.

Watson said two high schools, Belleisle Regional and Campobello Island, are able to have students attend every day.

Sir James Dunn Academy in Saint Andrews has grade nine and 10 students in the classroom daily.

During Wednesday night's monthly District Education Council meeting, Watson singled out the hard work by custodians this year.

"A lot of expectations there with enhanced cleaning. They are very visible in the schools doing that work," Watson said.

Watson added the provincial education department provided some funding for more custodians this year.

DEC members observed a moment of silence for a St. Stephen high school student who died after a farming accident on Friday.



*The Anglophone South District Education Council held their monthly meeting virtually on October 14th, 2020. (Facebook)*

## UPDATE: School district releases plan to get through pandemic year



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Caitlin Dutt, Local Journalism Initiative reporter | Telegraph-Journal

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SAINT JOHN • The Anglophone South School District has released its new transitional plan for improvement to reflect the global pandemic.

"Everything has sort of changed in light of the pandemic," said ASD-S superintendent Zoë Watson.

The transitional plan, called the District Education Plan 2020-21, was released and passed Wednesday night at the monthly District Education Council meeting. It is made up of four sections detailing plans to deal with new scenarios related to the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing inclusive education. Some of these practices are in motion now, said Watson.

"In our best opinion right now, these are the things we have to focus on to keep us moving forward."

The first policy of the plan deals with providing a safe, healthy and inclusive learning environment even during the pandemic. Watson said there are about 100 students with health conditions that can't be in school, but the district is providing educational instruction for those students. Even district tutors can visit, if the families are OK with it.

On the other hand, Watson said they are providing some newcomer high school students the opportunity to go to class every day to learn because they are at a "low level of language" understanding.

In addition, Watson said, there were a few teachers who needed to stay home from school and were reassigned to a home learning plan as a result.

She also said they would encourage indoor/outdoor cross-curricular and exploratory learning experiences. She said teachers are looking at the possibilities of outdoor learning.

"We often think about physical education being outdoors, but there are lots of other curriculum that can be outside."

The second policy focused on promoting mental health through social and emotional learning intentionally delivered during curriculum time.

She also said they're looking at what they can do to promote the wellbeing of the district's 1,700 staff, in addition to helping them be "intentional" about embedding positive education.

"There is a lot on people's mind right now and a lot of things are changing and for some people that is very difficult so we do need to promote social and emotional learning."

Watson said the district is also working on improving its work with Microsoft Teams. There are five technology coaches who are working directly in classrooms with teachers. They also purchased equipment to help teachers with their Teams setup. The district purchased 80 web cams for teachers and also allocated \$100 per teacher to help with online learning needs.

The third policy focuses on diversity and inclusion. It's something the district has been working on for years. The next step, said Watson, is to make a strategic plan to promote diversity and address discrimination and heterosexism made up of district and school leaders in consultation with community representatives.

"We feel that we have made some very good gains in this district and our focus thus far has been on building awareness," said Watson.

The final policy focuses on community outreach and communication, something which, Watson said, has been at a high level never before seen because of the pandemic.

The district is also working on building a new website, as well as new websites for all their schools.

The district is also working on figuring out how to assess their students, whether it be exams or otherwise, said Watson.

"It's all very different."

Professional Learning Day was also flipped from after second semester to Oct. 30 and the council also announced it was accepting applications for the Minister's Excellence in Education Awards on or before Oct. 30.

## Recent Outbreaks Increase Messaging, Prompt Call For PD Day

Saint John, NB, Canada / The Wave

Tamara Steele

Oct 19, 2020 6:08 AM

Recent confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the provincial school system have led to increased and rapidly-changing messaging for students and parents in the Anglophone South School District.

Outbreaks in Zones 1 and 5 prompted a few changes to the rules over the Thanksgiving long weekend and last week.

Superintendent Zoe Watson thanked parents for their patience, adding she appreciates that it is complicated when things change.

"We have certainly heightened our reminders to all of our staff and our families about the importance of hand-washing, sanitizing, keeping two metres apart, wearing a clean face mask and, of course, always monitoring for symptoms," Watson said.

Watson says increasing case numbers including some in school communities prompted a call for a professional development day covering this year's unique challenges.

"Given that the virus is in our province and the situation with Anglophone North, that it would be very helpful for us to have a professional development day very focused on technology and learning from home," Watson said.

The professional development day is scheduled for October 30th.

Watson said the outbreaks in the Campbellton and Moncton regions certainly remind everyone that it could happen here.



*Anglophone South Superintendent Zoe Watson.*

*(Photo: Tamara Steele)*

## How do you practise English during a pandemic? It's tricky, say newcomers



Jingyi (Claire) Hou has lived in Canada for eight years but took English classes at the Greater Saint John YMCA because she wanted to refine her English.

Photo: Caitlin Dutt/Telegraph-Journal

Published an hour ago



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**Caitlin Dutt, Local Journalism Initiative reporter | Telegraph-Journal**

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SAINT JOHN • Jingyi (Claire) Hou says there are pros and cons to refining her English online during a pandemic.

On one hand, she doesn't have to take the bus to get to classes, but on the other hand, the internet buffering can make conversations and presentations hard.

Hou has lived in Canada for eight years but has been taking English classes at the YMCA of Greater Saint John because she wanted to refine her English. She's originally from China.



About 3,400 newcomers are served through the YMCA of Greater Saint John, which offers a variety of language level classes morning, noon and night. Some are in-person for those facing the highest barriers and some are online. On average, about 170 students a week attend their Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes.

Kathryn Melvin, general manager of the YMCA's Newcomer and Community Connections, said it's harder for students to be online on a screen for hours at a time. Teachers are helping with extra homework and assignments, and sometimes they break off into smaller groups.

Melvin said the situation has allowed greater flexibility for students and the YMCA has been able to supply some students with laptops, but she said it's hard to see if people have been impacted yet in their language learning capabilities.

Hou, who is taking LINC classes, said her teacher has been organized at the YMCA, and while it may be less easy to find opportunities to practise English, students have to take initiative.

"If you want practice, there's still opportunities there."

But with public events largely cancelled and people encouraged to stick to themselves due to the pandemic, Hou said she doesn't have as many opportunities to go out and practise her English in public.

"You can go outside to do stuff so you have to speak English. Now you have to stay home," she said. "Especially for my work, I just use my computer the whole day and don't talk to anybody. My English class is kind of my social time after work."

The Saint John Newcomers Centre offers newcomers English and French language classes to help them learn local lingo and be more conversational – many can already speak English – but the uncertainty of the pandemic has added another level of stress to those seeking to improve their language skills, according to its managing director Mohamed Bagha.

"Learning a language and even speaking a language and even acquired a language and having speaking it, is difficult in the first place," Bagha said.

Classes are now mostly online due to COVID-19, which takes away from the personal touch, he said. He anticipates they likely won't go in-person again until it is "safe."

"This is a challenge that is broad, across the country," he said.

Meanwhile, the Anglophone South District School has taken the approach of providing some newcomer high school students the opportunity to go to class every day – as opposed to the every-other-day model – because they're facing a "low level of language" understanding, according to Zoë Watson, superintendent for Anglophone School District South.

She reported this out at a district education council meeting this month.

Lynn MacDonald is the newcomers and international student coordinator for the Anglophone South School District, while Melissa Gavin is an English-as-an-additional-language teacher with the Language Learning Centre. Both say supporting newcomers is happening just as it was before if not better due to a new pilot project.

The project brings together students in Grades 3 to 8 with a low level of language into one bubble at Prince Charles School. The program allows them to start learning the language and get used to the Canadian school environment. The project just coincidentally started during the pandemic.

Gavin said the program is working well for students and she's seen progress in their language capabilities.

"They're still getting that experience of what it's like to be in school just in a sheltered setting where they're not afraid to make mistakes because they're all in the same boat," she said.

"They're learning together."

EDUCATION

## Sussex students explore global approach to learning



Tanya Warman's Grade 4 class at Sussex Elementary reads a magazine created by their new friends in Latvia as part of a partnership program organized by the Multicultural Association of Sussex.  
Photo: Submitted

Published 19 hours ago



**Justin Samanski-Langille | Kings County Record**

Students at Sussex Elementary are quickly becoming a lot more knowledgeable about life in northern Europe, as well as sparking new friendships, thanks to a new multiculturalism partnership.

The project, organized by the Multicultural Association of Sussex, has paired one Grade 4 class at Sussex elementary with a similar class at Riga 6th Secondary School in Latvia. Students on both sides of the Atlantic are exchanging videos and other projects documenting daily life.

"It's really kind of neat," said Tanya Warman, who teaches the class at Sussex Elementary. "It fits in perfectly with our social studies curriculum. In Grade 4, we talk about exploration ... the world and Canadian landforms and physical features, so this project is cross-curricular. Not only are we using our social studies skills, but also our language arts skills."

Warman said her students started off by sending videos of them introducing themselves to their peers in the Latvian capital, then a few days later they received similar videos, with the exchanges continuing regularly and expanding to show what life is like in each country.

So far, the kids in Sussex have been loving researching and learning about their own country in order to make their videos, and are amazed at the similarities between their lives and their new friends' lives in Latvia, said Warman.

"Hopefully it develops a sense of exploration where they want to learn more about different places," she said. "And they are developing their empathy skills because they are learning what other kids are like from a different place ... they are really enjoying learning how similar we are, even though we are an ocean away."

## EDUCATION

### UPDATE: Students shine spotlight on special teachers



Shannon Fredericks was one of the first people who bought eight-year-old Adele Wright's, above, homemade earrings during the pandemic.

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**Caitlin Dutt, Local Journalism Initiative reporter | Telegraph-Journal**

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SAINT JOHN • When eight-year-old Adele Wright started making earrings during the pandemic, she had no idea her teacher Shannon Fredericks would be one of her first customers. She also helped spread the word about Adele's business, constantly sharing her posts about earrings too.

"Even though she's not (Adele's) teacher this year, she still checks in on her and makes sure she's doing OK. She felt Mrs. Fredericks was really the type of teacher who cared about her and her learning," said Melissa Wright, her mother.

The Wright family nominated Fredericks, who works at Westfield Elementary School, for a Teacher Appreciation Day contest in early October. The contest, sponsored by Subway franchisees, awarded \$18,000 in gift cards to 180 teachers in Atlantic Canada. Ten teachers in the greater Saint John region were recognized, each receiving a gift card and a free lunch for themselves and their teaching colleagues.

Winning Saint John-area teachers are Fredericks, Anne Smith, of Lakewood Heights Elementary; Nikki Comeau, of Simonds High School; Krista Turnbull, of Seaside Elementary School; Nancy Butler, of Harbourview High School; Ashley Creamer, of Fairvale Elementary School; Kyra Marks, of St. Malachy's High School; Joanna Urdang, of Kennebecasis Park Elementary School; Cameron Badger, of Harry Miller Middle School; and Bob Fife, of River Valley Middle School.

Fredericks described the recognition as a big surprise.

"To be recognized and loved by a kid is the biggest gift you can get and when they're parents recognize it, it's kind of an added bonus," she said.

Teaching during the pandemic has been the same and different at once, she said, noting it hasn't been easy, with more workload and a little less time.

She's also missing school assemblies and hugs from students, but as a teacher who highly values connection, she's finding a way to make it work, even if it's through social media.

She said kids were lonely spending such a long time away from school and she was happy to welcome them back. She also reached out ahead of time to parents of students who would be entering her class in September 2020.

"We're doing a really good job I think," she said.

Cheryl Reid, mom to six-year-old Carter Lennan, said Fredericks convinced her to send her son back to school while she was questioning it in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Reid also nominated Fredericks in the contest.

"Before school started she personally called all the parents to let us know she was going to be our [kids'] teacher," Reid said. "She made us feel like it was going to be fine."

Reid was worried about children making fun of her son who has a speech impediment, but Fredericks reassured the family she would draw attention to herself and normalize it as a person who has a lisp herself.

"She makes you feel comfortable about anything going on," Reid said.

Fredericks said she values connecting with both parents and kids, and also teaching students to grow and learn from mistakes.

"My most important two principles are that you connect and they feel welcome and good."

EDUCATION

## Spreading messages, not COVID: Students' poster campaign promotes mask-wearing



Sunny Freill, a grade eight student at Millidgeville North School, was one of the participants in the poster campaign. The artwork in this photo is not her poster.  
Photo: Emma McPhee/Telegraph-Journal

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Emma McPhee | Telegraph-Journal

SAINT JOHN • Colourful posters promoting mask-wearing will be coming to a Saint John Transit bus near you in the next few weeks.

Grade 4 to 8 students at Princess Elizabeth School, Forest Hills School and Millidgeville North School have been putting their artistic talents to work to create approximately 200 posters for the campaign.

The campaign was dreamed up by Saint John Transit bus driver Doug Creamer.

"When they said that masks were mandatory, I thought a good way to get that message across without being too strict was to have some artwork," Creamer said. "I thought the kids in middle school would be a good way to get some artwork and put it in the advertising space on our buses."

Pretty much all the buses will have three or four posters in them, Creamer said, and should be in the buses by next week.

Sunny Freill, a Grade 8 student at Millidgeville North, said she will definitely be looking for her poster on the bus once it gets put up.

"I did a rainbow and everything to show people that it's important to wear masks and it's for everyone," Freill said. "It's not just for certain people."

Freill said she got involved with the campaign after her art teacher told her class about it.

"We thought that'd be a cool idea," she said.

Students were given creative freedom to come up with their own designs.

"A lot them were pretty good, pretty creative," Creamer said, adding that one of the posters had a bus that was wearing a mask.

"They loved the idea of having their artwork displayed in a public space," said Sue Moore, the middle school art teacher at Millidgeville North.

"I would say more than half of the students were really quite engaged and wanted to take the projects home because they only had two weeks to work on it," Moore said. "They put a lot of extra work into them."

Creamer said he wasn't sure how long the posters will be displayed in the buses, but that some of the leftover posters might go on display at City Hall and the City Market, with the possibility of having high school students take part as well.

Art teachers Annie McLaughlin at Princess Elizabeth and Kayla Brown at Forest Hills and their students were also involved in the campaign.

## Local Transit Operator's Mask Campaign Encourages Creativity And Safety

Saint John, NB, Canada / The Wave

[Elizabeth MacLeod](#)

Nov 7, 2020 10:10 AM

Saint John Transit has collaborated with students and teachers in multiple schools to promote the importance of wearing masks on all city buses.

The idea originated from transit operator Doug Creamer. "I had the idea and was encouraged to run with it and reach out to schools," he said. "The schools were very receptive to the initiative because of the fun and educational components."

Under the current provincial Mandatory Order, masks must be worn in most indoor spaces, including all City buses.

Students from Millidgeville North, Princess Elizabeth and Forest Hills schools have created over 200 eye-popping and colourful posters, which will be displayed on City buses beginning the week of November 9.

Marc Dionne, General Manager of Saint John Transit, said compliance and feedback from riders has been positive.

"This creative partnership with local schools will add a fun new visual to our standard signage and messaging," said Dionne. "We were pleased to have one of our operators come forward with the idea, and really impressed with how quickly the students were able to produce amazing artwork. It's a true community art project."



Students from Millidgeville North School and Saint John Transit Operator, Doug Creamer (Credit: City of Saint John)

NEWS

## Garden sprouts new learning opportunity for students



Hampton High School Grade 12 student Griffin Thompson, 17, centre, rakes mulch to cover the ground around a young fruit tree at the school's garden.  
Photo: Justin Samanski-Langille/Kings County Record

### Justin Samanski-Langille | Kings County Record

Hampton High School's garden enjoyed a successful second year, and it is well on its way to providing a sustainable source of fresh fruit for students.

Volunteer Chris Rendell said despite a very dry summer and issues with a newly built solar-powered water source, students, staff and volunteers have done a lot of good work in year two of what will ultimately be five years of building before any fruit is ready to be picked.

"All of the work that we did in the last year has been successful," said Rendell. "The investment we have made in all the fruit trees and the nut trees and the bushes has all survived the first year."

Created in 2019 and building on the success of the school's greenhouse, the garden features a mix of more than 50 fruit trees and berry bushes, all in the early stages of their lives.

Cared for by a mixture of volunteers, including Rendell and the students themselves, the goal of the garden is to provide fruit for the school's culinary tech classes and cafeteria, as well as students who happen to stroll through while on break.

While the trees and bushes are small right now and a long way from bearing fruit, the garden was filled with students on Nov. 6, who prepared the ground around the trees and bushes for winter, placing manure, lime, wood chips, and fallen leaves around them to enrich the soil.

"It's nice to get out here and do some work, it brings me home," said Grade 12 student Griffin Thompson, as he took a break from raking mulch. "I think it's good for the community to have fruit and a garden like this."

The students' work is part of the Adopt a Tree initiative the garden and school has started, which sees classes select a tree they will care for and study, Rendell said.

"Each class has chosen a tree to adopt, and they are going to care for and document that tree over the next few years," he said. "We are getting pictures and measurements for each of the trees."

In addition to ensuring important work is done to help the garden prosper, the students are also getting the opportunity to enhance their learning, said teacher Laura Myers.

"The students are learning everything from building a fence to basic gardening," said Myers.

"This Adopt a Tree Program, I think is great because they are going to get attached to the tree, they are going to track its progress, and they are going to want to care for it."

This year especially with the pandemic, Myers said the garden is offering an important opportunity for the students to simply get outside while learning.

"When you get outside and do a good job, it's a good feeling, and we all need that right now."