Media Release

December 7, 2017 | Attention community and education reporters/editors

Wellington Catholic embraces coding in creative classroom experiences

Local schools celebrating #HourOfCode week by highlighting math

Guelph ON | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE   Computer coding is rapidly changing the world and the Wellington Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) is engaging students to develop necessary problem-solving skills and linking to math.

As the province celebrates #HourOfCode week and Computer Science Education Week (Dec 4-10, 2017) Wellington Catholic is celebrating their innovative programs that integrate math curriculum into coding classes for students from grades 3 to 10. In fact, teachers at WCDSB, alongside world renowned researcher Dr. George Gadanidis (a professor at the faculty of education at Western University) and the Knowledge Network For Applied Education Research (KNAER), have been exploring the educational benefits of linking coding and math for the past 2-years. The positive results are evident.

"Coding is a hands-on tool that enables kids to communicate, explore and be successful, even if they haven't previously felt strong in math," reflected Melanie Drummond a grade 3 teacher at St John Catholic School in Guelph. "I like that coding makes math more accessible so all students are excited to learn. Anything that engages my students the way coding does is a welcome addition to my classroom!

Research shows that this integration is becoming increasingly more important as computer coding relies heavily on math concepts. WCDSB classes are designed so that students are not just learning to code, they are coding to learn. In addition to building mathematical and computational concepts, they also creating life-long strategies for designing and communicating in and out of the classroom.

Learning to code encourages problem solving as it provides real world challenges and immediate feedback. Wellington Catholic students in elementary and secondary are learning first hand that coding is an opportunity to stretch their creative thinking through exploration, experimentation and simulation. A new grade 10 course launched this year, for example, gives students the opportunity to work on their own device (coding is not platform dependent) in an inclusive environment where they work collaboratively on solving problems.

"Students seem to really appreciate the opportunity to learn math in this specialized manner," commented Alan Yeung, grade 10 math and coding teacher from St James CHS. "What impresses me the most is how students with different strengths are helping each other to solve problems."

Momentum for coding at WCDSB is growing thanks to the creativity and leadership of many staff including Jeff Cummings, Technology Enabled Learning Coordinator and Project Champion. "Being a part of a project that is innovative, changes classroom culture and redesigns the learning experience within the curriculum is inspiring" said Cummings. "This program is a great way to engage students in their math courses and provide them the opportunity to use technology at a high-level and connect with their teacher in unique and engaging ways."

-30-

The Wellington Catholic District School Board is committed to supporting student success in all of our 22 schools. Our academic and extracurricular programs give our 7800 students the opportunity to learn, lead and serve. Grounded in faith based teaching, our schools are preparing students with the values and academic skills they need to be successful 21st century citizens.

For more information, please contact:
> Tamara Nugent, Director of Education | 519.821.4640 x214
> tamara.nugent@wellingtoncdsb.ca | @TamaraLNugent

Learn more about
- WCDSB's *Coding For All* initiative here.
- Dr. George Gadanidis and his work at imaginethis.ca
- The KNAER group at knaer-recrae.ca
- The Hour of Code initiative at hourofcode.com/ca

This story would be a great feature piece with a local and provincial lens on how math education is evolving. Call us to arrange interviews with:
- Tamara Nugent, WCDSB director who can speak to how new curriculum development is grounded in best practice research
- Our secondary and primary teachers who can speak to the practical in-class benefits of combining math and coding
- Students in elementary and secondary who are discovering new passion for math and coding and developing their skills