

SciTech program coming to Macville

By Bill Rea

Science represents a wave of the future, with many young students anxious to learn more about it.

The Peel District School Board is ready with its SciTech program for Grade 6 students, and Macville Public School is going to be where it's taught for students in Caledon and parts of north Brampton.

The program is slated to start at Macville in September. The plan is to provide an interactive approach to learning about science and technology.

Macville Principal Kelly Kawabe said it's going to be a regional program open to any student currently in Grade 5.

Those who are interested in more information are invited to an information night planned for next Thursday (Jan. 22) at Humberview Secondary School in Bolton. It will run from 7 until 9 p.m.

Kawabe said Macville is an ideal location for this program for a number of reasons, including the fact they have an outdoor classroom, which she said is "very science based."

"We're adding to it every year," she remarked, pointing out they now have a rocks and minerals unit in the curriculum.

Superintendent of Schools Joy Uniac agreed, pointing to the surrounding forests and farms.

"This is such a perfect property for that," she remarked, adding Kawabe and her staff were enthused. "We really just moved forward ever since."

Trustee Stan Cameron, Caledon's representative on the Board, said there are three schools in Peel offering the program, with the other two in Brampton and Mississauga.

"The beauty of this coming to Macville is for the first time, Caledon students will have the opportunity to go to a SciTech program that's in Caledon," he commented.

He also said the school has the space and staff "to bring things home."

"It's a much-needed program in our area," he added.

Kawabe said applications for the program will open Jan. 23, and close Feb. 6. It will start with two classes, meaning openings for 56 students.

Cameron added it's open to students currently in other boards. "We would welcome all applicants because we welcome the world," he observed.

The program is offered at Centennial Senior Public School in Brampton, and Kawabe said there were about 450 applicants last year. That meant there was a screening process, which looked at such things as marks and learning skills.

The plan is to attract young people who are creative and who enjoy problem solving. It will start with Grade 6 this coming school year, with students passing through to Grades 7 and 8

There's already a lot of interest.

"The phone's been ringing off the hook," Kawabe declared. "The parents are really, really keen. There's definitely a high demand."

Kawabe said they are in the process of acquiring the equipment that will be needed. They are hoping to have a robotics component, working with the program at Humberview, and there are hopes to integrate music into technology. "That's a passion of mine," she said.

She also said parents are concerned about extra-curricular activities. She said SciTech students will be able to take part in sports teams, as well as the band program, "which is something unique for such a small school.

There will be a \$40 application fee (non-refundable), and the students who are selected will be an annual \$200 fee to cover program costs.

Although there will only be 56 students in the program, Uniac stressed the who school will benefit from the equipment and the enhancements from the program.

Kawabe added the materials and staff expertise will enhance the curriculum for the rest of the school, "bringing up the level for all the students."

For more information on the program, go to <http://schools.peelschools.org/1466/Pages/default.aspx/> or call the school at (905) 857-3448.