

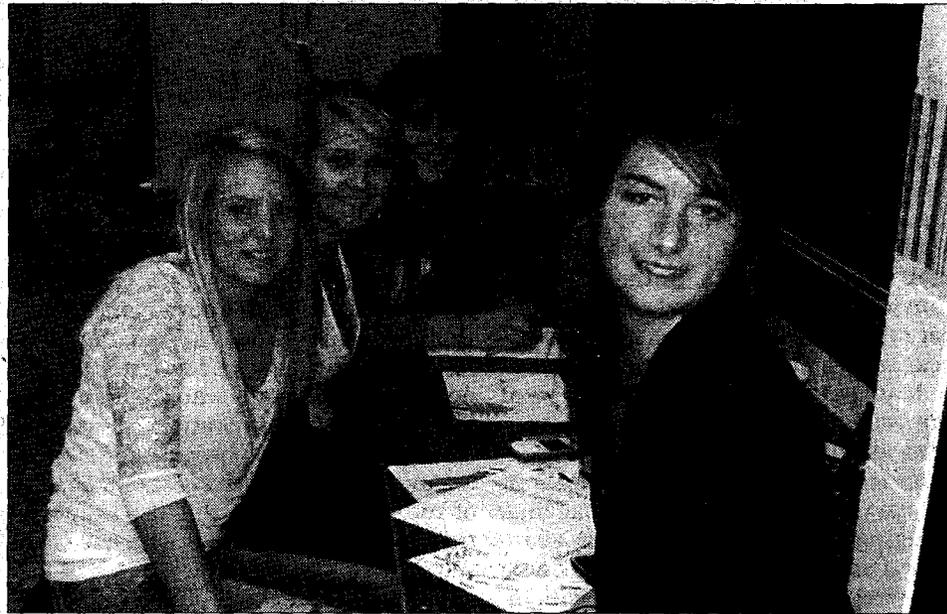
NEWS FROM RICHMOND REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

RRHS is hooked on school

Hooked on School Days is now in its third year in the Estrie region. It is a program partnered with Partners for Educational Success that is focused on keeping high school students in school. Their philosophy is that school perseverance is the best approach to encourage young people to pursue their studies and to succeed, and their role is to improve school success rates among the Estrie youth.

High dropout rates affect everyone in society, since dropouts generally participate less in society, hence the reason an effort is needed to keep kids in school. Dropouts are also more affected by unemployment, they represent the majority of people on social assistance, and they form the core of the prison population (Savoir pour pouvoir). Hooked on School Days have been targeted in February since young peoples' interest in school may decline after the Christmas holidays and before spring break. It is an occasion to encourage youth, congratulate them, and motivate their perseverance.

It does not just target schools, but parents, employers, local and regional leaders, municipalities, and social organizations. RRHS has been participating in Hooked on School Days for the last three years. The first year, postcards giving students encouraging messages



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were circulated to the student population, free pens were distributed to the entire school, and teachers wore white and green ribbons to support staying in school.

Last year, along with the pens and postcards, there was an art competition. Six paintings were done by RRHS students representing school perseverance that would later be hung in the li-

brary. In her French class, Ms. Cote has her level 5 students write encouraging messages to her level 1 students about staying in school and not giving up. "The majority of the level 5's write about how quickly time goes and they send messages to hang in there. They tell the level 1's that they remember being in level 1, and thinking school would never

end, but that in reality, time goes quickly," said Ms. Cote. The math department in cycle 1 will be doing math puzzles, and the answer to the math puzzles are encouraging messages to stay in school.

On February 13 there will be a special homeroom for all students where free pens will be distributed as well as messages to keep working hard and to motivate students to keep going. Carmen Ingraham (co-coordinator of school to work balance) will be visiting the level 4 and 5 students to talk about balancing school and work. Students are recommended to only work 10-15 hours per week. If they work more than 20 hours per week, it is detrimental to their school success. Many employers in the area have been visited by Ingraham and they are now respecting the work hours, as well as allowing accommodations for students during exam periods.

Being hooked on school is not the sole responsibility of teachers and administrators, but like Hooked on School Days promotes, it is the responsibility of the whole student population, schools, and communities.

Submitted by Laurie Hannan, Richmond Regional High School teacher.

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