



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 20, 2021

SPS Virtual Academy Offers Students an Opportunity to Learn in a Virtual Class Setting with Peers in Gibbons School



STURGEON COUNTY – The term *Virtual Learning* can stir up images of students working alone in isolation in front of a computer. The new Sturgeon Public **Virtual Academy (SPVA)**, located inside Gibbons School, is changing the way students experience on-line learning. Having an online school inside a physical school provides amazing cross school opportunities as both Gibbons School and SPVA offer programming for Grades 5-9. SPVA staff, under the leadership of Christy Filgate, have created an alternative education option class to create a community of learners that include both SPVA students and Gibbons students.

With smaller class sizes, and the potential for more individualized attention, the **Virtual Academy** bridges gaps between those in online classes and those in person classes through a collection of rich learning experiences designed to encourage communication, creativity and collaboration as students complete a series of build challenges. Together, Gibbons and SPVA students will plan, problem solve, and construct in the virtual world of Minecraft Education Edition.

“This is an exciting opportunity,” shared Amanda Dorosh, SPVA teacher and creator of the learning experience, “to be able to connect students together in a collaborative virtual world -by pooling and sharing resources while planning together. The Gibbons and SPVA students will learn to work together positively to achieve their common goals in the Minecraft option!”

Christy Filgate, Principal of the Virtual Academy, “This option class allows students to build relationships with not only their online peers, but also engage with those in Brick & Mortar classes! Smaller online classes can be very beneficial to students, however, online students can also benefit from these kinds of socialization opportunities, bringing both groups of learners together.”

“Gibbons School is excited to pair up with the new Sturgeon Virtual Learning Academy to offer “Minecraft”! Shared Deborah Clark, Principal of Gibbons School, “This is an exciting new CTF course for junior high students! Connecting our students with the Virtual Academy students to collaborate, have challenges, and work as a united team within the Sturgeon Public School Division. Minecraft allows students to learn basic coding as well as create 3D worlds. This connects many different skills that are applicable to future careers! “

- 30 -

For further information, contact:

Christy Filgate, Principal of the Sturgeon Public Virtual Academy
Sturgeon Public Schools, 780.203.3584

To register to join the Academy <https://www.sturgeonpva.ca/registration>