



Welcome Package



Table of Contents

Somerset Academy at a Glance

Welcome to Somerset Academy	3
Our Mission	4
Our Goals	4
Our Beliefs	4
Letter from the Principal	5

General Information

Location	6
School Hours	6
Transportation	6
Uniforms	6
Tours	6
Somerset Parents' Association	7

Academic Curriculum

Primary (Grades 1-2)	8
Junior (Grades 3-5)	8
Intermediate (Grades 6-8)	9
Reach Ahead Program	9
Gifted Program	10

French Program	10
Chinese Program	10
Physical Education	11
Computer Studies	11

Arts Curriculum

Music	12
Visual Arts	13
Drama	14

Other Information

Our Second Step Curriculum	15
Extra-Curriculars	16
Our House System	17
Before and After Care Program	17
Registering into Somerset	18

Testimonials

19



Welcome to Somerset Academy

Established in 1974, Somerset Academy is a co-educational, non-denominational, non-profit educational facility committed to service that is result-oriented. The Somerset system was developed specifically for children from Grades 1-8.

Somerset Academy's unique educational system was conceived and developed by educators daring to be different. Daring because they are always challenged by the need to stimulate young minds to excel; different because they are dedicated to the never-ending search for better ways to train young minds to achieve. Their integrity and their work as educators have been widely applauded throughout the years.

The 21st century is a competitive era. Too few children excel in high school, and still fewer are accepted into university. There is something that can be done about this.

Somerset integrates teachers, parents, and their children into joint-action programs that produce success by working together. Somerset encourages children to develop in and thrive on the stimulation of a challenging yet supportive environment. An active parents' association provides additional resources.

The social and academic skills, self-discipline and self-respect taught at Somerset stay with the child throughout his or her life. Somerset builds an exceptional environment in which a student can develop, become creative and be a very productive and well-educated individual.

A Somerset education sets the stage for a successful high school and university experience and a rewarding adult life and career. Somerset students strive for excellence. Somerset excels in preparing students to make a positive contribution to their communities and to society.



Our Mission

At Somerset Academy, we promote intellectual curiosity. We encourage students from Grade 1 to 8 to interpret, evaluate and communicate ideas in a knowledgeable and confident manner within a framework of high academic, artistic and athletic standards. Working one year ahead of their chronological grade level, our students experience an enriched academic program with a balance of Visual Arts, Physical Education, Music, and Computer Study, as well as many diverse extra curricular activities.

Our Goals

At Somerset Academy, we promote intellectual curiosity and encourage students to learn effectively. We also nurture respect for the individual, foster a sense of responsibility towards the environment and instill an awareness of the needs of the community.

Our goals are to enable every child to develop to his or her fullest potential, and to produce students who are not only academically successful, but who are also confident and responsible young people.

Our Beliefs

The administration and staff of Somerset Academy believe that a well-rounded education can only be built on a solid academic foundation, and this is the cornerstone of our approach to learning. However, we are also concerned with the education of the whole child, and so time is spent in helping students to develop self-confidence, independence, respect for themselves and others, and a sense of responsibility towards the world in which we live.

Somerset facilitates the process of fostering an interest in art, music, recreation and physical activity. Our focus on advanced academic skills is already well-established.

The school recognizes the need for structure, yet remains a very warm and supportive environment. There is a strong sense of community, which is evident in the relationship between students and staff, and great emphasis is placed on the concept of the “Somerset Family.”



Letter from the Principal

Welcome to Somerset Academy.



Somerset Academy is a school that establishes a comforting, nurturing and positive environment for your child. By providing an enriched curriculum and a variety of extra curricular activities, we enhance your child's self esteem, physical abilities, and we encourage team building skills. Every child is unique in his or her own way and Somerset is good at finding different ways to reach every child to bring out his/her individuality and reach higher potential.

When people ask what makes Somerset special, I always say that we are members of a "family" that help guide each other to be the best that they can be no matter how old you are, what academic level you may be at, or how good you are in sports or extra curricular activities.

A Somerset education sets the foundation for a successful future. Our students strive for excellence and our educators do a remarkable job in preparing them. I hope you enjoyed your visit to Somerset Academy today.

Sincerely,

Cathy Barogianis
Principal



SOMERSET Academy

Location

Somerset Academy is located at **7700 Brimley Road, Markham** (just south of 14th Avenue and north of Steeles Avenue, between Kennedy & McCowan Road) - 2 km from the 407.

School Hours

Classes begin at 8:45 a.m. Students arrive at school at 8:30 a.m. The regular school day ends at 3:50 p.m. An extended Day Program is available from 7:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. each day.

Transportation

Transportation to and from the school is the responsibility of parents. To assist in the process, the Parents' Association arranges car-pool systems and referrals can be made to local bus services.

Uniforms

Students are required to wear uniforms, sold at Halpern's Limited. Their address is 336 Consumers Road, North York.

Tours

Please visit our website at <http://www.somersetacademy.ca/> for more information about our school. School visits can be arranged by calling our office at (905) 940-8990.



Somerset Parents' Association (S.P.A.)

The Somerset Parents' Association, known as S.P.A., was created to act as a bridge between parents and school staff, and to organize fundraising and special events. In addition, we provide services which will make our children's experience at Somerset a joyful one. S.P.A. prides itself on being a strong, supporting arm of the school.

Part of S.P.A.'s mandate involves creating a friendly atmosphere for all families whose children attend our school, and Somerset's smaller size provides an ideal opportunity for parents to be included without feeling intimidated. In the past, our fundraising efforts have provided gymnasium and playground equipment, computers and software, microscopes, lockers and musical instruments, including a piano. Most recently, we have completed an ambitious three-year playground renovation program, which has provided the school with a running track and playing fields.

We begin each academic year with a complimentary Barbecue in September, to which all of our families, past and present, are invited, which gives parents the opportunity to meet in an informal social setting. Another key aim of the Association is to let our teachers and staff know how much we value their hard work. Our December Staff Appreciation Raffle is an annual success.

Spring heralds our S.P.A. Social, Family Day, Volunteer Appreciation Day, Athletic Awards Banquet, and joint Somerset / S.P.A. events which provide much excitement. The year is rounded off with Celebration / Graduation Night, when we come together to recognize the achievements of all our students and to say goodbye to our graduates.

Part of the registration cost at Somerset Academy includes a nominal fee, payable to S.P.A., which entitles each family to full membership in our Parents' Association. These funds are then used to assist in the costs of the many events in which S.P.A. participates throughout the school year. Each family also receives the regular edition of our school newsletter, minutes of our monthly meetings, and our weekly SPA.N Update email, which keeps everyone advised of significant dates and events.

If you would like more information about S.P.A., or would like an informal chat with a parent about any aspect of life at Somerset Academy, please call the school and leave a message. An S.P.A. representative will be pleased to return your call.



Primary - Grades One & Two

Using an activity-centered approach, our Primary Curriculum includes an emphasis on good listening skills, fine and gross motor development, and fosters an awareness of and appreciation for individual abilities. Subjects include Music, Art, French, Physical Education, Science, Computer Studies, Discussion, and Drama, which are used to encourage individual growth and social development.

In our Primary Program, we help each student develop their skills in the traditional core subjects of Writing, Reading and Mathematics. In addition, through a variety of approaches and resources which cater to individual learning styles. While it is mandatory for students in the Yip's Elementary Education Program to study Mandarin and Putonghua conversation, Somerset students are offered these courses as electives.

Because of the school's accelerated and enriched program, students are working at a level approximately one year above Ministry of Education guidelines.

As in all divisions, the small class size (maximum 18 students per class) allows for maximum attention and encouragement for each student, and the curriculum is supplemented by activities such as field trips, museum visits and special activity days.

Junior - Grades Three to Five

The Junior Program is designed to provide a developmental period of skill consolidation. The curriculum is geared towards giving students a solid foundation in Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, History, Geography, French, Art, Music, Physical Education and Health, as well as Mandarin and Putonghua conversation course electives if enrolled.

Ministry of Education guidelines are enhanced by specific instruction on organization, working independently and following a study and homework log. In addition, high behavioural expectations are set, so that students can get the most out of their school day. Computer lessons are scheduled into the timetable, and the integration of curriculum and technology is emphasized at all times.

As in the Primary Division, small class sizes continue to provide the opportunity for individual attention and encouragement, to enable all students to maximize their potential.



Intermediate - Grades Six to Eight

As the students progress towards the top of the school, the core academic subjects continue to be the mainstay of the program. Students' abilities are refined and extended during this period, and focus is placed on problem-solving, reasoning skills and the development of good study habits.



There is an emphasis on preparation for High School, whether public or private. To this end, students are challenged to extend themselves, as our goal is for them to leave Somerset Academy feeling confident about their skills and their ability to work independently. Formal examinations begin in Grade Six.

A homework agenda continues to be used and study schedules are organized as necessary. Students are challenged to extend themselves.

As in all other grades, class size never exceeds eighteen, and the curriculum is enriched by special activities, studies and field trips. Students in Grades Seven and Eight are also offered the opportunity to take part in a three- or four-day visit to either Ottawa or Quebec (alternating each year, so that all students get to visit both cities), which builds team spirit and encourages personal independence.

Somerset graduates have been accepted by such high schools as Upper Canada College, Havergal, Branksome Hall, St. Andrew's College, Country Day School and many others.

Reach Ahead Program

Once again, Somerset Academy in conjunction with Yips Collegiate, will be offering a number of credits towards your child's Highschool Diploma. The Reach Ahead programme is designed to allow your child to participate in one (if not all) of the following Highschool Courses:

- a. English – ENG1D
- b. Mathematics – MPM1D
- c. Chinese (Mandarin) – LKAAD

Once they have completed all aspects of the course, they may apply that course work to their





high school diploma. Each course will be made up of an online component as well as classroom requirements. An information meeting will be held early in the school term to answer any questions you may have in regards to the programme.

Gifted Program

For the first time in a number of years, Somerset Academy will be offering a Gifted Programme for students in the Grades Three to Seven. This programme will be designed to challenge the students who meet the criteria in the following areas:

1. Language
2. Mathematics
3. Science and History

Running on a term based schedule, the year will be divided into three basic areas in which the students will research, experiment, write and design under each of the above headings. If you have any questions about the Gifted Programme please feel free to contact us at 905-940-8990.

French Program

At Somerset Academy, standard French is taught by experienced teachers. The objective of our French Language Program is to instill in our students a positive outlook towards French culture and an understanding of the Quebecois in our bilingual society.

French instruction begins in Grade 1. Some written work is introduced and a balance of oral and written French is in place by Grade 3.

Following the Ontario Curriculum Guidelines, we provide a solid foundation for our students, and give them the opportunity to approach all high school programs with knowledge and confidence. In recognition of their academic skills, a number of Somerset Academy graduates have been granted advanced standing in high school French programs.

Chinese Program

Our new Chinese Language Course (Putonghua Mandarin) is aimed to provide a well-rounded, thorough approach to learning Chinese while also cultivating knowledge and appreciation for the culture it expresses. Through a variety of short stories, novels, plays, poetry, art and cultural activities, students learn to listen, speak, read and write.

Classroom instructions are reinforced by homework assignments and the use of other teaching

aids. This approach is designed to facilitate a practical working knowledge of the Chinese language as well as an understanding of Chinese culture, history, geography and philosophy. The basic curriculum also includes cultural classes e.g. brush painting, calligraphy, chess, etc. as well as public speaking and essay competitions involving other schools and organizations.

The written language instruction is based on standard modern Chinese (Fan Ti - traditional Chinese), although senior students are given exposure to “simplified” characters (Jian Ti - simplified Chinese) as well.

Putonghua Mandarin curriculum is based on the Yip’s Chinese Language Textbook (K1 to Grade 8) using pin-yin romanization (all elementary levels).

The Chinese Language Course is mandatory for all Yip’s Elementary Education students; Somerset students may choose this course as an elective.



Physical Education

The Physical Education Program at Somerset Academy provides a healthy balance and broad selection of activities. Somerset requires all students to participate in its Physical Education program, unless excused for medical reasons. Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines are followed in our programming. In addition, Somerset students have the use of the skating arena, soccer/football fields, and baseball diamonds at the Milliken Mills Community Centre and a running track and playing fields on-site.

The program ensures that the concepts and skills taught are appropriate to the students’ ages, stages of development, prior knowledge, attitudes, learning styles and interests. It is Somerset Academy’s goal to offer an effective program that allows all students the opportunity to learn and perform at their optimum level. Emphasis is placed on participation, healthy competition and sportsmanship. Traditionally, we meet with other private schools for events such as cross-country running, basketball, volleyball, track and field, soccer baseball.

Somerset Academy requires that students commit their time to each individual sport while maintaining high academic standards of Somerset and its teachers. As S.S.A.F. (Small School Athletic Federation) policy, league games are scheduled at 4:00 p.m. ensuring students miss only minimal amount of class time, a policy with which Somerset Academy is in strong agreement. As well as holding membership in S.S.A.F., Somerset also convene a number of very successful events and our Somerset Scorpions compete in many different sports over the school year.

Computer Studies

Our Information and Communication Technology program utilizes the challenges and solutions of the outside world as basis for pupils to learn applicable skills to operate in an increasingly technology-driven world. Pupils are encouraged to use problem-solving skills and to master a number of educationally rich scenarios and situations. In addition, pupils model successful team-working and team-building skills by working in pairs or groups with each member fulfilling an important role.

The primary objective for our program is to appropriately integrate technology into our curriculum. Subsequently, Somerset offers additional computer access for all our pupils in distinct



classes. In these classes, the focus is on developing appropriate skills to enable pupils to utilize technology confidently in all areas of the curriculum. We are preparing our students to be able to use a laptop computer in high school with confidence. A variety of age-appropriate software is used to encourage the development of skills in Word Processing, Graphics, Spreadsheets, Databases, and Communications. Finally, a love of learning and an appreciation for the advantage of utilizing technology is stressed at all times.

Music

The goal of the Music Program at Somerset Academy is to enhance each student’s appreciation of music through the following approaches: study, practice and performance. Through the course of the curriculum, the students learn the language of music by studying a variety of rhythms, reciting notations and phrasing and performing in a classroom setting.

At Somerset Academy we are well aware of the different levels and attempt to maximize student potential based on age and experience. The Program varies greatly depending on student development.

Junior Choir:	Grades 1-3
Senior Choir:	Grades 4-6
Hand Bells Ensemble:	Grade 4
Jr. School Band:	Grades 5-6
Sr. School Band:	Grades 7 & 8

Grades 1-4

Music at Somerset begins in Grade 1 with an intense program of class singing and movement. Elements of aural training are added and single elements of theory and musical appreciation are incorporated throughout the primary grades.

Through choral and recorder performance, students will explore Classical, Folk and World Music. During recorder units students will learn to refine their tone quality and technical playing skills.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the basic elements of music (melody, rhythm, texture and instrumentation) and read, notate and perform simple music notation. Listening skills



and music appreciation will be developed. Each student will record their musical learning and progress through portfolio exercises.

Grades 5-8

The School Music Program at Somerset Academy is based upon the Ontario Curriculum. Students in Grade 5 to 8 will select and learn how to play a band instrument (flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone). Emphasis will be placed on individual and ensemble performance.



In the band program students will develop and refine their tone quality, technical playing ability, and skill to assess and critique their performance. Through listening exercises, music appreciation studies, band performance and composition projects, students will read simple music notation and demonstrate an understanding of basic elements of music: Rhythm, Pitch, Melody, Harmony, Instrumentation/timbre, Texture, Articulation, Dynamics. Students will develop a repertoire of musical terminology, which they will utilize in listening exercises and performance assessment (self and ensemble).

Visual Arts

Somerset Academy's Visual Arts Program contributes to the quality of education and builds a child's skills in critical thinking. It provides multi-sensory experiences, and encourages intuitive understanding. The art program promotes high achievement, tolerance, alternative choices, cross discipline generic skills, importance of quality, standards in excellence, cultural diversity all within the context of real engagement in the learning activity.

As well, our program connects our students to themselves, their culture and their civilization. It not only focuses on materials and methods, but also includes skill development, Art appreciation and Art History which all enable students to add depth to their own compositions. Above all, the students at Somerset Academy learn how to enjoy and appreciate Art.

There are no mistakes in Art, only opportunities to create. The process and focus in class are most important. Listening to directions, becoming adept in using the materials and attempting new concepts are the most important elements of the program. No one is judged on the final product; it is the effort that is more important.



Drama

Over the past fifteen years, the students of Somerset Academy have had the opportunity to produce a number of wonderful dramatic performances. Beginning in 1999 with a stage adaptation of *Tuck Everlasting*, our drama department has worked to improve the quality of productions on a yearly basis. Our productions are available to all students in Grades 1-8. As well, the students are responsible for the complete musical scores for band and choirs, sound and lighting components and full set design. It is truly a Somerset Academy Event!

Somerset's Yearly Productions

1999	<i>Tuck Everlasting</i>
2000	<i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i>
2001	<i>Anne of Green Gables</i>
2002	<i>Witches</i>
2003	<i>The Jungle Book</i>
2004	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>
2005	<i>Aerial Fowl</i>
2006	<i>Nightmare Before Christmas</i>
2007	<i>The Wizard of Oz</i>
2008	<i>Corpse Bride</i>
2009	<i>Play Time (an original script)</i>
2010	<i>Showdown at the Motown Corral</i>
2011	<i>Disco Fever</i>
2012	<i>The S Factor</i>
2013	<i>Rebel Without a Clue</i>
2014	<i>Shakespeare Comes to Gravel Gulch</i>
2015	<i>Peter Pan</i>



Our Second Step Curriculum

Second Step is a curriculum we use at Somerset that assists our students with developing, as well as handling, certain social and emotional skills. This curriculum is incorporated into our academic courses throughout the school year for all grades. It focuses on empathy training, impulse control and anger management.

Second Step for Primary Level (Grades 1-2)

The Second Step curriculum begins with Skills for Learning and Listening Rules, which set the stage for future academic success and later lessons on identifying feelings, managing strong emotions, solving problems, and getting along with others. Activities, Brain Builder games, Puppets, and partner work keep children engaged and help them practice their skills.

Second Step for Junior Level (Grades 3-5)

In the Junior level, students build on their primary level skills, including Skills for Learning by strengthening their empathy, emotion-management, and problem-solving skills while learning to use them in social and academic settings. They hone their ability to pay attention, listen, ignore distractions, how to respond to others with empathy, calm down, manage strong feelings, and solve problems. The lessons are brought to life by stories filled with situations the students encounter on a daily basis during the school year, from navigating the hallways to taking tests. Videos for every lesson dramatize scenarios that students encounter in school.

Second Step for Intermediate Level (Grades 6-8)

Second Step for our Intermediate level teaches students the protective skills to make good choices and stay engaged in school despite the pitfalls of substance abuse, bullying, cyber bullying, and peer pressure. DVD interviews with real students who talk about real issues demonstrate situations to students; games, exercises, and skill practice make it fun.



Extra-Curriculars

Interest groups are formed annually, depending on the talents and interests of both staff and students. Part of every Friday afternoon is devoted to Clubs, where students are able to select one of a number of different interest groups, aimed at enabling them to experience social enrichment with their peers of all ages.

Some of the clubs offered in the last two years:

- Cooking
- Art
- Drama
- Woodwork
- Science
- Rollerblading
- Ice Skating
- Swimming
- Indoor Rock Climbing
- Cycling
- Triathlon
- Golf
- French
- Debate
- Ski/Snowboarding

Students remain in the same Club for one term, and then make a new selection the following term. Students in Grade Seven and Eight visit Ottawa, Québec, or Montréal to enrich their History curriculum. Additional trips are planned from time to time.



Our House System

All Somerset teachers and students are members of one of the three Houses - Flaming Maples, Beavers and Yellow Lightning - and remain in the same House throughout their time at the school. Siblings are always placed in the same House, unless their parents specifically request otherwise.

The House system is aimed at building relationships which transcend grade boundaries, and encouraging team spirit. Each term, one House organizes a community outreach project, aimed at raising either awareness of or funds for a local charity. Recent projects have included tree planting in a local conservation area, visiting elderly residents of a Unionville Seniors' Home and organizing letter writing to an orphanage in the Ukraine.

The House system rewards extra effort in non-academic areas and House Points are tallied and reported to students on a weekly basis. Each term, there is a special Civi Day for the winning House, when students in that House may come to school in "civi" clothes. At the end of the year, the overall winning House is presented with the highly-contested House Cup.

Before and After Care Program

Our Before and After Care Program is offered to parents who require supervision for their children for 1-5 regularly scheduled days.

Our extended hours:

Monday to Thursday	7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
--------------------	--

Friday	7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. 3:10 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
--------	--

We encourage parents to enroll their child early to ensure a position. Enrollment is limited to 20 students, and places are assigned on a first come first served basis. Preference will be given to those students registering for the whole year.



Registering into Somerset

Students are welcome to apply for entry to any level from Grade 1 to Grade 8.

Yip's Music & Montessori School provides a well-rounded Montessori education to the Toddler, JK, and SK programs; Yip's SK graduates progress to the Ontario Elementary Education Curriculum at Somerset Academy. Grades 1-8 students may apply to the Elementary program at Somerset.

We recommend that applications for classes be submitted at least 2 months in advance of the desired entry date.

We encourage families to apply as early as possible, since space in Grade 1-3 is limited and is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Acceptance into Somerset is determined by means of an academic screening, and the completion of the following preliminary steps:

- Parent and Student interview
- Submission of a deposit
- A completed and original application form
- Birth certificate/passport (photocopy)
- Health insurance card (photocopy)
- Immunization record (photocopy)
- Medic alert card, if applicable (photocopy)
- Custody agreements, if applicable (photocopy)
- 3 Copies of the June report card from the previous year and all report cards from the current year (if applicable)
- A completed and original transportation permission form
- A completed and original media release form
- A completed and original release of information form/OSR request (if applicable)

Completion of these steps does not necessarily guarantee acceptance into Somerset Academy. For further information, please call the school at (905) 940-8990.



Parent Testimonial *Written by: Caroline Lane*

This is our family's seventh year at Somerset. I am often asked why we send our children here, and not to one of the bigger private schools. The answer for me is very simple - the Somerset difference.

Like most private schools, Somerset offers small class sizes, excellent academics and committed teachers. Students learn in a supportive environment where the teacher has more time for each student and more awareness of what is happening in the classroom.

Unlike most private schools, Somerset views this learning process as a joint effort involving the school, the student, and the family. Learning is seen as something which happens not just in the classroom, but as an ongoing process involving the school, the home, and the community at large. Parental involvement is not merely tolerated, it is actually encouraged, and parents can take an active role in many school activities. There is a warm family atmosphere within the school, where even the most shy and reserved child can feel safe, and blossom.

But there's still more to it than that, and here's where the real difference lies. At Somerset, children learn not just how to be good students, but how to be wonderful people. They learn to value themselves and each other, and that trying your hardest is just as important as being the best. They learn to be independent and to help themselves, but also to take the time to help others. They learn the importance of sportsmanship and fair play, and of teamwork and community. Come along to a Scorpions game and you will never see our students—whether they be athletes or spectators—booing the opposition or arguing with the officials. Win or lose, Somerset students act with class. Take a look at our students on a field trip or at any outdoor event. They are well-behaved and polite, and you will never see any litter left behind. At all times, Somerset students' behaviour reflects the ethos of the school. If you had to sum it up in one word, that word would be Respect. Respect for themselves, for other people, for their community, and for the environment.

Academics are important, but they are not everything. Success in life comes not just from what



Parent Testimonial, cont'd

you know, but how you present yourself and how others view you. The lessons that children learn at Somerset will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives - academically, personally, and socially.

And that is why I send my children to Somerset.

Rhiannon Lane
Christopher Lane
Nicholas Lane

Graduated Grade 8, June 2003
Graduated Grade 8, June 2005
Currently in Grade 4

Student Testimonial *Written by: Aimee Beaubien*

Thinking back on my elementary school years at Somerset bring many enjoyable memories. Coming to Somerset as a Grade Three student, I felt accepted immediately. Although some of the students had already spent a few years together I was welcomed and befriended by them very quickly.

As I progressed through Somerset, I enjoyed being part of the “Somerset family”. I felt challenged by the curriculum, and was offered assistance when any difficulties arose. I made many friends at Somerset that lasted beyond Grade Eight. Many of the teachers at Somerset served as role models for me, providing me with a comfortable learning environment and a personal connection.

I remember the things that were unique about Somerset. The small population made it possible for everyone to know each other’s name. Clubs were a time to learn new hobbies. It was always a surprise to learn some of the teachers’ talents through clubs. Presenting at the weekly assemblies helped me overcome shyness and apprehension when speaking in front of a group. These are some things that I did not encounter at other schools that I attended, and now realize were very unique to Somerset.



Student Testimonial, cont'd

Years later I returned to Somerset as an adult, and was immediately remembered by Mrs. Van Loon, who was eager to know about my life and family. I feel very privileged to have been welcomed back to Somerset as an assistant teacher and after-school program co-ordinator.

Student Testimonial *Written by: Jake W.*

I started the Grade 9 program this past September. Thanks to great preparation from Somerset, I found it to be a relatively easy transition.

I entered Somerset in Grade 5, coming from the public school system. Since Somerset's curriculum was at the Grade 6 level, I had a year to make up and learn the new curriculum at the same time. Thanks to the small class size that allowed for me one-on-one interaction between the teacher and the student as well as tutoring, this allowed me to quickly get up to speed and move ahead in Grades 6 to 8 without any additional tutoring.

The demanding academic program at Somerset required me to develop good organizational skills and study habits. At times, homework assignments and tests were very overwhelming, but my ability to handle it improved over the years as my time management and organizational skills improved. Sports were a big part of your life while at Somerset, both within and outside the school, which again required me to be very organized and use my class time effectively.

Exams were introduced at the end of Grade 6. While I was extremely nervous about this first set of exams, I'm very thankful that exams are not new to me in Grade 9. The biggest lessons I have learned from exams are to lay out a study plan and start studying well in advance of the exams, leaving enough time to work on each subject. Study notes are very important, a skill I learned at Somerset and continue to use today. I can't say I enjoy exams, but at least I know what to expect!

The teachers at Somerset have been great. They were always available to help me when I didn't understand something both before and after school. An added bonus was that they were



Student Testimonial, cont'd

also available by email and responded to my notes both during the evening and over the weekend. They take a personal interest in all their students to help them reach their full potential and I very much appreciated their dedication, ongoing encouragement, and guidance.

Extracurricular activities were also a special part of my Somerset experience. I participated in numerous sports teams as well as the intramurals. As a more senior student, I had the opportunity to referee intramural play at lunch hour, which helped me develop some leadership skills by ensuring safe and fair play.

The music program at Somerset was great and has provided many lasting memories from Christmas concerts and Celebrations Night. The music teachers put a great deal of effort into their program to develop both our individual musical talents as well as to learn to listen and play together. For many of us, this was our first opportunity to play a musical instrument and read a musical score. The music teachers were very patient!

The annual Somerset play was another great opportunity to get involved. I participated as both a cast member and a “behind the scenes” person and thoroughly enjoyed these experiences. The great thing about the plays was that so many of the students at Somerset were involved.

All of this including the academics, the extracurricular activities, and the dedication of both the staff and the parent volunteers made for a very rewarding and fulfilling experience at Somerset. Furthermore, it prepared me well for high school life and made for a smooth transition academically and socially. While academically, much of the Grade 9 program is a repeat, I enjoyed my good first term marks. This has also allowed me to spend time developing some new relationships as most of the Somerset classmates have have dispersed to many different schools.



**7700 BRIMLEY ROAD
MARKHAM, ONTARIO, CANADA L3R 0E5
905-940-8990
[HTTP://WWW.SOMERSETACADEMY.CA](http://www.somersetacademy.ca)**