



ELORA PUBLIC SCHOOL

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Curt McQueen, Principal

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November 2020 Newsletter

Principal's Message

Hello Elora Families!! This first 10 weeks of school has been unlike any other. Much of the information we have needed to share with you has immediately been added to our website. However, we have had a lot going on recently and have several important items to communicate, so I thought I would wrap it all up in a newsletter.

We have all had to adapt to many different changes at school given the COVID-19 circumstances. I must put a thank you out to all staff members for their admirable efforts to create an environment that is not only safe and compliant with Public Health standards but also welcoming and supportive. As well, I am very impressed with the resilience and flexibility the students have shown. They have been patient with all of the changes and have done their best to follow all of the new rules (ie. masks, slower transitions, etc.).

We all have to continue to demonstrate patience, resilience and flexibility over the coming weeks while we navigate through these difficult times. I hope you are all doing well. Continue to be strong....there has to be a light at the end of the tunnel soon!!

Please take some time to review all of the information in this newsletter. If you have any questions at all don't hesitate to contact us.

Curt McQueen
Principal

Progress Reports and Communication of Learning - November 19th

Parents of students in Grade 1 to Grade 8 will receive formal documentation of how their child is doing on three occasions during the school year: a Progress Report in the fall and a Provincial Report Card at the end of Term 1 (February) and the end of Term 2 (June). The Progress Report will come home this Thursday, November 19th.

As a reminder, on the Progress Report, you will notice that Learning Skills are on the first page because of the recognition that good work habits are crucial in order for children to be successful in school and later in life. There are no marks on the Progress Report because it is not an evaluative document. It is meant to give students and parents early feedback regarding general progress during the first two months of the school year. Marks will be included on the Term 1 and 2 Report Cards in February and June.

KINDERGARTEN PARENTS - The Kindergarten reporting document is entitled "*Communication of Learning*". This document will be going home with all JK and SK students at the end of Term 1 in

February and at the end of Term 2 in June. Prior to this, a report called "*Communication of Learning - Initial Observations*" which will come home on November 19th. It is intended to provide parents with an overview of initial observations of their child's learning and early evidence of growth in learning in relation to the overall expectations in The Kindergarten Program.

Parent Teacher Interviews

There has been a PA Day set aside (November 27th) specifically for parent-teacher interviews to review the Progress Reports and Initial Observations. Teachers are also coordinating interviews after school and during the evening of Thursday, November 26th, and at various other times during the week leading up to the PA Day.

As of 3:00 PM on this Thursday, November 19th, parents will be able to book an appointment for an interview. Visit the website at www.ugdsb.ca/pti/. We **recommend Chrome browser**. Internet Explorer is incompatible with this application.

You will need your child's Ontario Education Number (OEN) and date of birth in order to book an appointment. The OEN can be found on the progress report or on any previous report card.

For full instructions about booking an interview appointment, please see this link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1knwkh0apBCUj8_YU62Ve2u4piwY_dO7r9fNLz4X2qAg/edit?usp=sharing

PLEASE NOTE: Due the circumstances with COVID-19, we cannot do any in-person parent-teacher interviews. The majority of the interviews conducted will be through Google Meet. These instructions are also provided in the link above. Where a Google Meet is not possible, teachers will be doing phone interviews.

Upcoming Changes between Elora PS and Elementary Remote School

In August, prior to the start of the school year, we committed to ensuring parents/guardians had the opportunity to change their child's school placement between in-person and remote learning. Since then, we let families know that a change would align with the end of the fall reporting period. As a result of the parent/guardian survey we have had some families across the system decide to relocate to our Elementary Remote School and some families chose to return to in-person learning.

At Elora, we have some families who are moving to the Elementary Remote School and others who are returning to in-school learning. New class organizations could involve some changes that may include an increase or decrease in the number of students in a class.

Where changes are going to occur, schools will communicate with parents to inform them of the change and provide support to ensure a smooth transition for staff and students. If there are changes, we will send this communication to parents during the week of Nov. 23.

For full details please see the letter from our Director, Martha Rogers, posted on our website.

Staff Update

We have had some staff changes since our school year started back in September.

Mr. John Rupnow has decided to retire. As a science and technology teacher for many years, he has been a tremendous asset not only to Elora PS but the whole UGDSB. He provided an engaging hands-on program for students and trained many, many teachers so that they could set up similar programs in other schools. Mr. Rupnow will be missed and we hope to recognize his contributions to the school and wish him well on his retirement on one of the brighter days ahead of us. Stay tuned!

Mr. Jude Fletcher will be eventually joining us at Elora. He was hired following Mr. Rupnow's retirement. Mr. Fletcher is currently teaching with the Elementary Remote School and will shift to Elora when the remote school is finished.

We wish all of the best to Mrs. Gillian Siegwart. She was the successful candidate for a board program position as an Elementary Inclusion Technology Coach. She is providing lots of support right now for the remote school but we hope to have her visit soon and help us as a teaching coach with integrating technology into everyday learning. With Mrs. Siegwart's departure, Mrs. Youngblood shifted into the grade 6/7 and library position. Ms. Breanne Philips was hired to take over Mrs. Youngblood's grade 5/6 class.

We started the school year needing to hire a math teacher for two of our grade 7 classes. We welcomed Mrs. Megan Coutu partway into September to teach in this role.

Finally, there was an ECE reallocation process partway into the school year which resulted in us saying goodbye to Ms. Chantelle Arseneau in Kindergarten B and welcoming Ms. Teena Taylor.

Remembrance Day

As with most things in 2020, we had to take a different approach to how we could recognize Remembrance Day and pay tribute to our veterans. Rather than have a full school assembly or have classes take part in the ceremony at the Cenotaph, we made a plan that could occur within individual classrooms. Remembrance Day artwork was posted in classrooms and on the wall in our halls. Posters paying tribute to each of our area veterans from WWI and WWII were displayed in the front foyer. Teachers had a selection of activities and video links they could use with their students to help them understand and remember.

We were also fortunate to see a presentation by our newest teacher, Mr. Fletcher, via Youtube live. Mr. Fletcher is also known as 2nd Lieutenant from the Royal Highland Fusiliers of Canada Infantry Regiment. 2nd Lieutenant Fletcher talked to us about his training experiences with the armed forces, domestic deployments he has been on and the connections his regiment has to WWI and WWII. This was an excellent presentation seen by all 4000 staff and students with the remote school and by staff and students at Elora PS.

An Important Message from Kyra Nankivell

Also this past week, we were able to have several Google Meets with Centre Wellington resident Kyra Nankivell. Kyra was a key organizer in the Black Lives Matter march in Fergus this past June. She shared some of her stories and thoughts on being a black person growing up in our community. While she had many negative experiences, she remained strong and developed a solid support network of friends and peers. We appreciate Kyra taking the time to speak to our students and staff and we hope to

continue to work with her as Elora P.S. develops a plan to recognize, talk about and make a plan of action to eliminate racism. Along with the entire UGDSB, we are committed to disrupting systemic racism and oppression in all of its forms. Teachers have been provided with a variety of resources to help guide this teaching and the related discussions.

Special Visitors for the Grade 5/6 Class Last Thursday!

We had a quick “drop in” visit from several special guests last Thursday afternoon. Minister of Education Stephen Lecce, MPP Ted Arnott, our Director of Education Martha Rogers, Trustee Barb Lustgarten Evoy, and Superintendent Cheryl Van Ooteghem spent about 30 minutes with our grade 5/6 class. The intention of the visit was to see outdoor learning in action. At Elora P.S., we are very fortunate to have many options for learning outside. Ms. Philips and her class were doing an engaging activity combining descriptive writing and investigating what can be found in our creek that passes through the property. Thank you Grade 5/6 and Ms. Philips for being respectful, attentive, and welcoming to our guests!



Winter Entry

While for the most part November was a beautiful month in the weather department, winter is now settling in. Because of this we have had to make some changes with regards to entry. Some classes are using different doors now and, in general, we will be doing a slower entry to give groups of students a chance to get their winter clothing items off rather than everyone coming in all at once. We are arranging to use hooks, racks, and lockers in the hallways now, just for the storage of winter clothing items. While this wasn't the case earlier in the year, we are now encouraging all students to have indoor footwear that is left at school. This will diminish the mess in the school and allow our custodial staff to maximize time spent cleaning and disinfecting high traffic areas and contact points.

Grade 7 and 8 Immunization Updates

From Public Health: Attention parents! Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Hepatitis B, HPV and Meningitis immunizations will be offered through booked appointments at Public Health rather than in schools as in past years. Public Health is making automated phone calls to all grade 7 students within the next couple of weeks to notify them. Visit wdgpublichealth.ca/immunizeGr7 for all the details. Public Health is immunizing grade 7 students for Hepatitis B, HPV and Meningitis. Do you have a grade 8

student in your household who missed their Hepatitis B, HPV and/or Meningitis immunizations due to COVID-19 related school closures this past spring?

For full details please visit: <https://www.wdgpulichealth.ca/clinics-classes/high-school-vaccination-clinics>

Information about Communication

For overall communication, information will be put on our website. Please check it often:
<https://www.ugdsb.ca/elora/>

As well, on our website, you will find a link to our school email address: elora.ps@ugdsb.on.ca

Safe Arrival Procedures

If your child is going to be absent for any reason, please phone the school at any time and leave a message on our answering machine at (519)846-5999. If your child is absent at 8:50 AM when morning attendance is taken, or at afternoon attendance, and we have not heard from you, a call home will be made from the school. If we are unable to reach you, we will then try the emergency contact number. If this fails, we must report to the police. When your child returns to class, or before a planned absence, a note of explanation is required. If it is necessary for your child to leave early, or to be absent for a period of time during the day, please send a note.

If your child is coming in late, please call the office. We will meet you at the front door to pick up your child.

Let's Limit the Lost and Found! - Label Clothing Items Please

Please label your child(ren)'s clothing. We have a Lost and Found that grows and grows daily.

PD Days This Year and School Year Calendar

All PD Days are full days this year. The remaining PD Days are November 27, January 29, June 4. Please note that the school year for students goes until Tuesday, June 29th. The full school year calendar can be found at <http://www.ugdsb.ca/schools/school-year-calendars/>

School Council

School Council is an excellent opportunity for parents to become involved in school life. After our first meeting we confirmed our co-chairs for this year - Alison Negrave and Jacquie Corley. Rachel Albano is also continuing on our executive as the secretary. Our next meeting will be virtual and will be held on **Tuesday, December 1st at 6:30 PM**. Meeting access instructions will be posted on our website.

Summary of Upcoming Important Dates

November 19 - Pink Shirt Day
November 19 - Progress Reports go home
November 27 - PA Day - Parent Teacher Interviews
December 1 - School Council meeting
December 18 - Last day before Christmas holidays
December 19 - January 3 - Christmas Holidays