

## May-June 2019 Newsletter

(The final Newsletter of the year will be e-mailed at the end of June)

EQAO 2019 is coming up: May 21 to June 3<sup>rd</sup> inclusively.

Parents often have questions about EQAO. Following, is a simple explanation of the Education Quality and Accountability Office and the test. If you would like more information, please visit the EQAO website <http://www.eqao.com/Pages/launch.aspx>.

The **Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)** is an arm's-length crown agency of the Government of Ontario. It was legislated into creation in 1996 in response to recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Learning in February 1995. EQAO is governed by a board of directors appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. million CDN. The purpose of EQAO tests is to ensure that there is accountability between school boards and schools in the publicly funded system in Ontario. Educational accountability is important to three key stakeholders: taxpayers, elected officials, and teachers. By providing these yearly standardized tests, the Ministry of Education aims to increase the quality of education in Ontario, while also using the tests to make plans for future improvement. EQAO tests are intended to measure the students' ability to:

- Make sense of what they read in different kinds of texts
- Express their thoughts in writing using appropriate grammar, spelling and punctuation
- use appropriate math skills to solve problems

### **EQAO vs Classroom tests.**

It is important to note that EQAO tests have different goals and intentions than normal classroom evaluations. These tests are not the same, but when considering the EQAO test results along with the classroom results, they can provide a meaningful picture of the students' overall learning.

Classroom evaluations:

- measure how well students have learned specific information
- provide quick results teachers can use to modify teaching strategies
- may have subjective components, based on the teacher's knowledge of each student
- provide results that may not be comparable across the school, board or province

EQAO tests:

- measure students' cumulative knowledge and skills in relation to a provincial standard
- are given at key stages of students' education
- are administered, scored and reported on in a consistent and objective manner and
- provide results that are comparable across the school, board, and province from year to year

### **Information for parents**

EQAO tests are based on The Ontario Curriculum, which is the foundation for what is taught in classrooms every day. Therefore, students should not need to study or do extra preparation for the test. All of the information in the test will have been covered by the classroom teacher throughout the entire school year. The best way for parents to support their children in writing the test is simply to be supportive and play an active role in their children's learning every day of the school year. This support includes being aware of what the students are learning, being in constant communication with the classroom teacher about the student's learning development and needs, and providing a welcoming environment at home where students are able to complete any homework or assignments they may have. An additional way that parents can help students in preparing for the test is to visit the EQAO website ([eqao.com](http://www.eqao.com)) in order to find links explaining the format and sample test items, a result guide that explains how to interpret the marks, as well as a parent bulletin regarding the test. The school boards also provide parents with information sessions regarding the tests, to ensure that the parents are fully aware of the purpose, format and implementation of the test.

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### **Parent Requests for Class Placements**

Teachers will soon be sitting together with in teams to build classes for next year. Making a request for a specific class placement for your child (-ren) is an **extraordinary** step which must be supported by specific and detailed reasons. If you are going to make a request please outline in detail the **extraordinary circumstances and needs** of your child. This must be done in writing and addressed directly to the Principal.

Please note that when school staff draft class lists, a variety of factors are taken into consideration and some of these are as follows:

- total number of students
- balance of male/female
- balance of ability
- number of exceptional students and programming
- positive and negative combinations of students
- formation of interactive learning groups

We welcome any helpful information that you wish to provide us and will make every effort to place students appropriately.

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### **JK Orientation**

There will be a Junior Kindergarten Orientation on Monday, June 10th from 5:30 - 6:30 PM. Children will have a chance to visit classrooms and there will be information for parents. All registered families will receive an invitation in the mail shortly. Please mark this date on your calendar if you have a JK student who will be joining our school family in September. And spread the word if you know of a family who will be joining us!



### **New Grade 7 Orientation**

Likewise, the families of the grade 7 students who will be new to EPS next year, are invited to an Orientation evening where some information about the school will be shared as well as a tour of the building. Parents will have an opportunity to ask questions and meet each other.

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The EPS Parent Council is sponsoring Popcorn Day May 21th! It will be sold at 2<sup>nd</sup> recess for \$2/ bag.

### **A big thank-you to the supporters of our Breakfast Club Program -**

- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- Breakfast Clubs of Canada
- President's Choice Children's Charity
- Children's Foundation of Guelph and
- Wellington- Food and Friends
- Danone for yogurt donations
- Minute Maid for juice donations
- Parents for volunteering and donations

Breakfast Club runs every morning from 8:20-8:45 and provides healthy food and snacks to students in our school. Donations are always welcome - please contact Ms. Lebon at [Michelle.Lebon@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:Michelle.Lebon@ugdsb.on.ca) if you would like to donate or volunteer.

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### **Student Arrival Time**

Please be reminded that students should not be arriving at school too early. There is no adult supervision outside until 8:25 (8:30 for Kindergarten) and Breakfast Club starts at 8:30. We don't want to see students without adult supervision.

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A huge **Thank You** to the Westco company for donating funds to help us purchase special lighting for growing seeds to get ready for our teaching gardens!

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### **Talking about Mental Health - May 7-11 is Child and Youth Mental Health and Well-being Week!**

Child and Youth Mental Health and Well-being Week is about promoting mental wellness, increasing awareness of child and youth mental health, decreasing stigma and understanding that support is available. Let's improve everyone's mental health and well-being!

The theme for Child and Youth Mental Health and Well-being at UGDSB is: Have a **SUPER** Week!

**S**ocial Connections

**U**nderstanding Emotions

**P**ersonal Health

**E**mpathy

**R**esilience

Each day of the week will focus on a different aspect of Mental Health and Well Being. The schools will be provided with resources and activities related to each day's theme.

As a parent, you can increase the Mental Health and Well-being of your children, youth and family too! Here are some suggestions:

- **Monday May 7 -Social Connection** - ``Don't be shy. Just say hi!``
  - Say Hi to 3 people that you do not know. Perform a random act of kindness.
- **Tuesday May 8 – Understanding Emotions** – “Sad, glad, happy, mad – just be you”
  - Right now, stop and reflect on how you are feeling. Take a couple of moments as a family to do some deep breathing. <http://youth.anxietybc.com/how-do-it>  
Now, how are you feeling?  
<http://youth.anxietybc.com/how-do-it>
- **Wednesday May 9 – Personal Health** - “Healthy Self. Heal-thy self”.
  - **Wear green today to support Mental Health Awareness.**
  - Did you know that how our bodies feel affects how good we are feeling? Three of the best things you can do to improve your mood is to exercise, sleep well and eat well. Go for a walk or play a game, get outside, turn off the devices an hour before bed and eat fresh food! The more you do to help your body feel good, the better you will feel!
- **Thursday May 10 – Empathy** - “Be somebody who makes everybody feel like a somebody”.
  - When in doubt – be kind. Try seeing something from another person's perspective today.
- **Friday May 11 – Resilience** - “If Plan A doesn't work, the alphabet has 25 more letters!”.



○ Mental Health and Well-being means coping with the ups and downs of day to day life. Building more resilient thoughts and skills can really help. Children and youth can also find support by seeking help from caring adults. Take time now to talk with child or youth about who those caring adults are in their lives.

For more information about Mental Health and Well-being and interactive activities with your children and youth:

**Mind your Mind** (online) [www.mindyourmind.ca/Interactives](http://www.mindyourmind.ca/Interactives)

Fun, interactive options for de-stressing for youth.

**Smiling Mind** (Free App) [smilingmind.com.au/](http://smilingmind.com.au/)

An app that guides you through simple, calming meditations.

**GoNoodle** (Free App) <https://www.gonoodle.com/>

Fun interactive body and mind breaks for kids.

At the end of the week, talk with your child/youth about the things that made them feel more connected, emotionally aware, healthy, empowered and resilient and continue to do those things every day!

Most of all... have a SUPER week!

*Jenny Marino is the Mental Health and Addiction Lead for Upper Grand District School Board*

## Monthly Environmental Activities to help celebrate our planet

**May 22<sup>nd</sup> is International Biodiversity Day!**

### Celebrate Biological Diversity Day on May 22nd!

*The United Nations has proclaimed May 22 The International Day for Biological Diversity to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. Biodiversity simply means: 'A wide range of life'" Some of the things we do are harmful, so we need to learn more about how to protect all the different types of life on our planet.*



International Day for  
Biological Diversity

### Ideas for your family to celebrate Biodiversity Day!

- Visit farmers markets in your local area to try new types of produce. Whether you incorporate heirloom tomatoes into your cooking, or try one of the rainbow of colors of carrots, biodiversity can bring a great new experience to your table.
- View photos of endangered species on the Internet with your child and discuss the reasons why these animals are threatened and why they should be protected.
- Join a community group and help to remove invasive plants from your local environment.
- Get out into the world and enjoy all the different types of life your local area offers. Even your street or a local park can have an amazing variety of life you've never noticed, from insects, birds, chipmunks, to trees and flowers.
- Consider planting a pollinator garden in your yard (or in a flowerpot) to help save the bees and butterflies from declining.

Adapted from: <https://www.daysoftheyear.com/days/international-day-for-biological-diversity/>

***Celebrate the diversity of our natural world every day!***

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**Supporting Oral Language Development (from the UGDSB Student Support Services Department)**

"To listen well is as powerful a means of communication and influence as to talk well." — John Marshall

In education, we strive to teach our students how to become effective communicators so that they are successful in their future endeavours whether in English, French or any other language. Oral communication skills in French including listening, speaking, and interacting, are not unlike oral communication skills in your first language, however, oral communication in French does require attention to a different sound system, new vocabulary and at times an understanding of contexts or cultures that may differ from those of your first language.

**How do educators teach oral communication in a second language to a diverse group of students that are at different stages in their oral language development?**

Teachers know that the acquisition of oral language typically follows a developmental sequence. They understand that students need to hear the language repeatedly before they will begin to speak it. When students enter immersion or core programs they typically do not have an oral foundation in French. This foundation is created through an emphasis on listening and speaking in authentic contexts to build vocabulary and learn various forms of the language so that students can understand and convey meaning. Hearing and using high frequency words and expressions, learning vocabulary in context, building phonemic awareness, creating environments rich in talk, as well as engaging students in listening activities are all strategies used by teachers to support students in becoming confident oral communicators.

Teachers also support students by modelling effective oral communication, guiding students through oral communication activities, and providing many opportunities for students to practice oral language. As students enter immersion and core French programs they are beginners in the language and diverse in the skills they bring to school. Teachers provide high structure and meet students at their developmental stage to best support and move students forward in their language learning.

**How can parents support student oral communication at home when they don't speak French?**

One way to do this is to speak with and listen to your child in their first language. In the Ontario Ministry of Education document "Supporting your Child's Success in French Immersion and Extended French - A Parent Guide" it states "Helping your child develop a broad vocabulary in English, or the language you speak at home, has added benefits. It helps develop thinking skills, teaches your child to communicate with precision and provides more opportunities to make connections with French."

Research also shows that oral communication skills are transferable across languages. For example, understanding how to vary volume, pace and vocabulary to suit a purpose and an audience is a skill that is transferable to French.

Another way to support and motivate your child is to help them see that French exists outside of the classroom. Watching French television, listening to French radio, borrowing French DVDs and materials from the library and travelling to French speaking regions are all ways to experience French outside of the educational context.

### **What happens when students are not moving forward in their oral language development or parents have concerns about student progress?**

Discussing your concerns as soon as they arise by speaking with your child's teacher and then examining appropriate courses of action and supports as a team are important first steps.

It is important to remember that a student who struggles to communicate orally in French can achieve a level of proficiency **and that supports should be explored before considering more drastic measures**. French as a second language programs are for all students. Promoting this belief helps to create a supportive environment where students feel more confident and can be successful.

#### **Further Reading:**

1. Capacity Building Series. "Teaching and learning in the Core French Classroom". The Ontario Ministry of Education.

[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS\\_Core\\_French.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_Core_French.pdf)

2. Capacity Building Series. "Let's Talk about Listening". The Ontario Ministry of Education.

[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/Talk\\_about\\_listening.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/Talk_about_listening.pdf)

3. What Works? Research into Practice. "Supporting Early Language and Literacy. Dr. Janette Pelletier OISE, University of Toronto. The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat.

[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW\\_Early\\_Language.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW_Early_Language.pdf)

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## **Wellington County Library presents the 2019 TD Summer Reading Club**

Wellington County Library is proud to participate in the national TD Summer Reading Club. This annual summer programme includes special library activities, themed materials to help kids track their reading habits, and incentives to encourage regular use of books (in print, digital, or audio form). The programme is free to all participants.

Studies have shown that school-aged children experience what is known as the "summer slide" – a decline in reading ability due to a lack of regular exposure to literacy practice over the holidays. As we approach the end of the school year, we would appreciate your support in promoting our summer programmes, which are designed to help children maintain and enhance their reading level for the coming school year.

Michelle Wood, Children's Programmer from the Erin Branch will be contacting you in hopes of arranging a brief presentation to your students. We would also welcome class visits to the library. Promotional materials will be made available for students to take home.

If it is possible, we would love for you to include our summer programme information in your school's newsletter or website. The TD Summer Reading Club information will be available on our website at [www.wellington.ca/Library](http://www.wellington.ca/Library) starting May 15. We would also be happy to send you the information directly.

If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch with Janine Morin, Branch Supervisor from the Erin Branch at 519.833.9762 or [janinem@wellington.ca](mailto:janinem@wellington.ca). You can also contact me using the phone number or email below.

Thank you for considering our request. We hope that all students at Erin Public School will enjoy our TD Summer Reading Club events this summer.