



École FA Hamilton

May 2018

Newsletter

[Be sure to visit our website to stay up to date all month long!](#)

EcoLeague Evening on May 4th (Star Wars Day)



The students who planned the Eco Day before the March Break are ready to do Part 2 - an evening movie event on Friday, May 4, to raise money for the Grand River Conservation Authority. Since this coincides with "Star Wars Day", students are invited to wear their costumes to the evening.

The six students will be running a donation table, snack table, and showing an environmental-awareness movie in the gym (most likely The

Lorax).

The movie will begin at 5:30pm, but students are welcome to start arriving around 5pm.

Please remind your students about this event, and listen for announcements.

Thank you for your support in helping these junior students raise awareness in our school, and make an environmental difference in our community!



Come on Out to the Spaghetti Supper!

We hope you can join us on Thursday, May 10th for our second annual Spaghetti Supper. There will be two sittings at 5PM and 6:30PM. There will be choices of pasta dishes, salads and bread from East Side Mario's. We ask that families bring plates, cutlery and glasses to help us create as little waste as possible. Also happening that evening is an amazing silent auction with a wide variety of quality items up for the bidding. AND the Scholastic book fair will be open in the library! It will be a super-fun evening and mom and dad get a break on the cooking and clean-up. All proceeds will go towards sports and arts resources here at school.



The Role of the Special Education Resource Teacher

Sometimes people ask me what our Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) does. I thought I'd give a bit of a summary this month, starting with the philosophy of the Special Education Department in our board.



Guiding Principles

- ❖ We believe all students can learn
- ❖ We value each student's unique ability, individuality, learning style and pace of learning
- ❖ We believe that the growth, the development and the learning of each student is enhanced in the most enabling environment
- ❖ We believe that the inclusion of exceptional students in the school community provides a valuable learning experience for all children
- ❖ We deliver programs which incorporate realistic goals and objectives through individualized teaching and assessment methods
- ❖ We respect the rights of parents to make informed decisions in the best interests of their children
- ❖ We respect, value and encourage collaborative partnerships with parents, community agencies and professionals
- ❖ We provide a diversity of placements and resources which reflect effective programs and strategies for exceptional pupils
- ❖ We recognize the wealth of learning opportunities in the community which assist students with transitions, to offer work experiences and to allow their pursuit of special abilities or talents
- ❖ We value early intervention for all students experiencing difficulties in school and/or needing enrichment

Our SERT, Mme Cantin, is an integral part of the team that is led by the Principal to help support students with special education needs and she makes special education services run effectively within the school.

Examples of SERT responsibilities

- ❖ Teaching and leading
- ❖ supporting teachers with writing, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of IEPs and transition plans
- ❖ Sharing in ongoing parent/guardian communication
- ❖ Gathering documentation for SEA claims, managing SEA, DHH, and BLV equipment
- ❖ Preparing materials for IST, CST, IPRC review, Central Level IPRC Meetings, special class placement requests, and collaborative case conferences
- ❖ Providing support and resources to teachers and educational assistants
- ❖ Liaising with student support service personnel and community agencies
- ❖ Participating in professional learning communities, SERT workshops, and other professional development opportunities; monitoring the online Special Education Conference
- ❖ Acting as liaison and facilitating ongoing communication with Psychological Consultants, Special Education Consultants, Speech and Language Therapists and external agencies, etc.

EQAO

I often get questions about EQAO. Here is a brief explanation of the Education Quality and Accountability Office and the test. I have borrowed very heavily from a [Wikipedia article](#), because it was a clearly worded explanation. If you want



more information, then please visit the [EQAO website](#) or give me a call.

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. The chair of the board is currently Brian L. Desbiens. EQAO has an annual budget of approximately \$33 million CDN.

Purpose

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 hopes 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 and
- 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, and
- 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) 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.



Parent Requests for Class Placements

Teachers will soon be sitting together with me in teams to build classes for next year. We consider many factors when we assign students to classes: ratio of boys to girls and leaders to followers, academic needs, social-emotional needs, support needs, friends, and many more. If you have a request for next year, then please let me know of your request by sending me an email (jane.bibby@ugdsb.on.ca) or giving me a letter in writing (drop off in main office). *I will not consider a request unless I have it in writing.* Discussions with teachers and/or Mme Manni will not be sufficient as I do not always hear about those conversations. The school team works very hard to ensure that class assignments give each student the greatest chance for success, and while we will take your request very seriously, there is no guarantee that we will be able to comply with it. The deadline for making requests is June 1st.

JK Orientation

There will be an Junior Kindergarten Orientation on Friday, June 8th from 9:00 - 10:00 AM. Children will have a chance to visit classrooms and there will be an information fair in the gym 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!



Music Monday



Inspired by Canada's sesquicentennial celebration, the Coalition for Music Education commemorates Canada's musical heritage with an anthem that celebrates the unifying power of music. Music Monday will take place in cities across the country.

Our school's Music Monday assembly will be on **Monday, May 7th** in our school gym and classes will begin to arrive after first

nutrition break, at 11:05am. Please consider joining us to support this musical event. [Click here for more information about Music Monday in Canada.](#)

Lundi en musique est pour tous ceux et celles qui aiment la musique, apprennent la musique, jouent de la musique, enseignent la musique - vivent la musique!

Parent Engagement

Mike Poulin (School Council Co-chair), Katie Young (Gr. 2 Teacher), Tess DeNardis (School Council Secretary) and I (Principal) attended an evening event run by the Parent Involvement Committee last week. We listened to speakers with expertise in parent engagement and began to think about all sorts of ways to engage parents more meaningfully in their child's school experience. Research shows this benefits students and results in higher levels of achievement. To move forward, we really need to hear from you! Please consider coming to School Council meetings on the 3rd Thursday of each month to participate in the discussion!



Long Term Accommodation Plan Final Report (Draft) - Public Meetings

The Long Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP) Final Report (Draft) is going to be presented at 5 regional public meetings throughout the month of May.

The draft report includes a list of proposed short (1-5 yrs.) and long (6-10 yrs.) accommodation priorities. The report does not include any recommended changes to school programs or boundaries.

We invite you to attend any of the following meetings:

- Wednesday, May 2, 2018, 7-9 pm – Erin PS, gymnasium
- Thursday, May 3, 2018, 7-9 pm – Centennial CVI, cafeteria
- Thursday, May 10, 2018, 7-9 pm – Orangeville DSS, cafetorium
- Wednesday, May 16, 2018, 7-9 pm – Centre Wellington DHS, cafetorium
- Thursday, May 17, 2018, 7-9 pm – Norwell DSS, double gymnasium

Feedback collected in this second phase of engagement will inform staff's work to finalize the LTAP.

Please visit www.ugdsb.ca/ltap for more information and to provide feedback. The LTAP webpage includes all documents including the LTAP Final Report (Draft), an online comment form and an opportunity to sign up to receive updates.

YMCA Before and After School Program Safety Notice!

Please enter the school to drop off or pick up children at the YMCA Daycare through the daycare. Do not come into the school through the front doors of the school. Parents who are dropping children off or picking them up from the YMCA programs must enter through their part of the building for safety reasons.

Feedback welcome on draft policies

The Upper Grand District School Board is welcoming public input on draft policies. Currently under review are [Policy 214 Accessibility Standards](#) and [Policy 518 Students with Life-Threatening Medical Conditions \(Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Diabetes, Epilepsy/Seizure Disorder\)](#). The deadline to respond is April 26, 2018 at 4 PM. Persons without internet access may call 519-822-4420 (or toll-free 1-800-321-4025) ext. 723 to request a printed copy of the draft documents.



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!

Social Connections

Understanding Emotions

Personal Health

Empathy

Resilience

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?

- **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

Fun, interactive options for de-stressing for youth.

Smiling Mind (Free App) smilingmind.com.au/

An app that guides you through simple, calming meditations.

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

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

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

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

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. <https://www.cbd.int/>

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.

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!

May Days of Significance



Date	Name of Day	Faith/Group
May 1	Beltane	Wicca/Pagan
May 1	Nisfu Shaban	Islam
May 2	Twelfth Day of Ridvan	Baha'i
May 3	Vaisakhi Puja (Buddha's Birthday)	Buddhism
May 10	Ascension Day	Christianity Eastern Orthodox and Western
May 15	International Day of Families	United Nations
May 16-June 14	Ramadan	Islam
May 17	International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia	Grassroots LGBTQ
May 20	Pentecost	Christianity
May 20	Shavuot	Judaism
May 21	Queen Victoria Day	Public Holiday
May 24	Declaration of the Ba'b	Baha'i
May 25	African Liberation Day	Rastafarian
May 27	Pentecost (J)	Christianity
May 29	The Ascension of Baha'u'llah	Baha'i
May 29	Tibetan Buddha's Enlightenment (Saga Dawa)	Buddhism
May 29	Wesak or Vesak (Buddha's Birthday)	Buddhism/Tibetan
May 31	World No Tobacco Day	World Health Organization