



# Ross R. MacKay Public School

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Principal: Ms. Tracy Armstrong  
Office Coordinator: Mrs. Connie Eberhardt

January, 2016



## *Principal's Message*

Happy New Year and welcome to January 2017! We hope that everyone was able to spend some time with friends and family over the holiday and that students feel rested and rejuvenated to begin an exciting new year.

Thank you for donating food items, mitts and scarves under our tree. These items went directly to support the East Wellington Community Services (EWCS) Food Bank and needy families in our community. Without the generosity of our school community, this would not have been possible.

It was so rewarding to see so many of our families on the evening of our Holiday Concert on December 23. The concert was such a wonderful community event, with songs and instrumental music. A special thanks our staff and students for the preparation required.

We would like to say a warm welcome to our new Office Coordinator, Mrs. Connie Eberhardt. She comes to us with experience in both elementary and secondary settings as well as roles with both the UGDSB and Thames Valley District School Boards.

Please help us reinforce our “**Hands & Feet to Ourselves**” and “**No Throwing Snow**” policies at school by talking with your children on a regular basis. Some of our students are

struggling to understand that it is not appropriate to push, hit, or kick other students during outdoor play. We encourage students to report issues when they arise, rather than responding aggressively. We appreciate your support in reinforcing appropriate behaviour. Our goal, as always, is to ensure safety for all children at our school.

Related to safety, after consultation with Superintendents/other Administrators as well as examining OSBIE and OPHEA guidelines (which includes the use of helmets and a dedicated supervisor specifically for tobogganing at both the top and bottom of the hill), I have made the decision that I am not willing to risk the inherent liability of allowing tobogganing at recess.

<http://safety.ophea.net/safety-plan/168/1845>

Teachers will begin writing report cards on January 27<sup>th</sup>, our first Professional Activity Day of 2017. (No school for students.) First term report cards will be sent home on Thursday February 16<sup>th</sup> 2017.

As always, if you have questions, concerns, comments or compliments, my door is always open.

Yours in education,

*Tracy Armstrong*

## School Improvement Planning:

All schools continually work on school improvement. The improvement cycle looks like this:



Our school is currently designated a YEAR ONE (out of five) school which means that we are being provided with a lot of additional support from our Upper Grand District Program Department in order to support our identified goals.

We have welcomed Curriculum Leader Ms. Patricia Josephson, Itinerant Language Coach Ms. Kyla Lightfoot and Technology Coach Ms. Jen Apgar to our school over the past few months. They have been working directly with both our staff and students in order to improve both teaching and learning. As teachers, we are looking to deepen our professional knowledge and refine skills as well as engage students in new learning experiences.



On Wednesday, January 12, the District Support Team will be visiting our school so that we, as a school, can share our improvement process with them. The Team consists of our own Superintendent Mrs. Denise Heaslip, a second Superintendent Mr.

Gary Slater, Principal Kate Creery and our Curriculum Leader Patricia Josephson. These special guests will be touring our school and visiting classrooms. They will be interacting with our students. Specifically, they will be asking them direct questions about their learning. The questions are as follows:

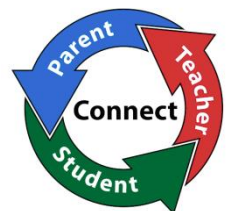
### “Do you mind if I ask you some questions about your learning?”

- What are you learning today?
- Why do you think you are learning this?
- What is easy about this?
- What is difficult about this?
- If you are struggling, where do you look for help to find the answer? What strategies do you use?
- Do you know how to improve your work?
- How are your groups established?
- What do you like the very best about your school

After our District Support Visit, our staff will be working to update our School Improvement Plan, which is due to the Board at the end of January. We will be sharing this plan with our school community on the school website.

How can you as parents/guardians support school improvement?

- Ask your children some of the questions above and see what they share
- Read to and with your child every day
- Check your child's agenda daily
- Talk about current events and world issues to help make connections
- Ensure your children have adequate sleep and physical activity
- Ensure your children are fueled for learning by providing good nutrition
- Limit the amount of technology per day
- Cultivate your child's curiosity and interests
- Connect with your child's teacher regularly to see what additional support you may be able to provide at home



## Student Absences

Thank you to all parents for taking the time to call the school when your child is absent, due to illness or other reason. This allows our office coordinator to focus on the needs of the students within the school rather than trying to track down where a particular child is on that day. Please leave a clear message on the answering machine before 8:30 AM or if you call after this time, you may speak to Mrs. Eberhardt. Thanks for your assistance.



### Life-Threatening Allergies/Wow-Butter

Wow Butter is one of the recent products made available that is being offered as an alternative to peanut butter. It has the appearance and taste of peanut butter, but is a soy-based product.

We have a number of students with life-threatening allergies, including nuts and tree-nuts. Our Board policy/procedures for Life-Threatening allergies indicate that products that imitate a known life-threatening allergy is not allowed in classrooms/schools. This is not because of a health danger, but because it is confusing for students in the class and for staff monitoring the room. A simple note from parents or a sticker is not sufficient. We appreciate that it can be difficult at times to find a variety of items for student lunches, however, we ask for your understanding and support in this situation.



### **Wanted! Emergency Employees!**

There are times when we have absent employees and our regular systems of filling those roles do not provide an occasional employee. If you are interested and available to fill in during these situations, please call and speak with Ms. Armstrong. We

would require a resume, references and up-to-date police check.

Due to the nature of these roles, we would usually only be able to let you know of the opportunity in the early morning.

The roles include:

- ✓ Occasional Teachers (ideally we prefer qualified teachers but on occasion, we do have to use un-qualified)
- ✓ Occasional Educational Assistants (again, we prefer qualified but sometimes are required to fill in with unqualified).
- ✓ Occasional Nutrition Break Supervisors (for supervision of both eating and outdoor times)
- ✓ Occasional Bus Supervisor (for supervision of drop-off and pick-up during bus times).

### Wanted!!! Donations!

If you are doing any home cleaning...please think of **Ross R Mackay** if you are getting rid of the following items:



- ✓ Magazines—both children/adult versions
- ✓ Gently used books
- ✓ Games for Indoor Recess
- ✓ Art, craft and building supplies for our Makerspace creations (including glue, duct tape, old phones & remote controls, tinker-toy, Lego, tape, cardboard rolls etc...)



- ✓ Sports Equipment for Outdoor Recesses
- ✓ Gently used toys

## Wellington County Library

98B Trafalgar Road, Hillsburgh  
(519) 855-4010



### Community Board

Here are a few programmes that we will be offering in January that might be of interest to your students and their families: At the Hillsburgh Branch, Wellington County Library

[www.wellington.ca/library](http://www.wellington.ca/library)

#### Family Literacy Day: Stuffed Sleepover

(All Ages) Bring your stuffed animal to the library for a sleepover adventure to celebrate Family Literacy Day! What will those cute and cuddly creatures get up to overnight in the library? Please ask staff for details.

Thursday, January 26, 4:00 – 6:30pm

#### PA Day Programme: Puppets Elora Presents “Stone Soup” (All Ages)

Two large puppets, a quaint cookstove and ample audience participation are the ingredients in the Puppets Elora version of this classic tale. Please register.

Friday, January 27, 2:30 pm

#### Happy Birthday Canada! Open House (All Ages)

We’re celebrating 150 years of Canada! Drop in for cake and refreshments and join the party!

Saturday, January 28 during branch hours



### Indoor Footwear for ALL Students

Please ensure that your child has a second pair of shoes/socks to wear inside, and boots or another pair of outdoor footwear/socks for outside. The floors can be very wet during the winter season, and in the event of an emergency evacuation or fire alarm, students **must** have footwear on to leave the building. It is unsafe for children to be without shoes.

### Lost & Found



During the past few months our “Lost and Found” container seemed to fill rapidly. Be sure to mark your children’s clothing with their initials, as so many mittens, snowpants and boots look alike during this season. We currently have all lost items displayed on tables in the lower hall. Please pop in to take a look if your child is missing any items. These items will be bagged up and donated to charity if not claimed by Friday, January 13.

### Emergency Contact Numbers

Winter has finally arrived, and along with it comes unpredictable weather that can cause changes to transportation plans for parents and bus travel. Please ensure the school has updated phone numbers and emergency contact numbers. The school relies on accurate and updated information to ensure your child is safe and accounted for.



# Welcome to Kindergarten

## Get ready! Kindergarten Registration is from January 9-26

Kindergarten Registration is from January 9 to 26, 2017, at all elementary schools in the UGDSB. Parents/Guardians may register their child at their local school from Monday to Friday during regular school hours (stat holidays excluded).

If you are unable to attend registration during the day, evening sessions will be held from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the following locations:

- January 11, Parkinson Centennial PS (Orangeville)
- January 16, Harris Mill PS (Rockwood)
- January 19, Westwood PS (Guelph)
- January 19, Centennial Hyland ES (Shelburne)
- January 24, Arthur PS (Arthur)
- January 25, William C. Winegard PS (Guelph)

Please bring the following documents to registration:

1. Birth certificate or Immigration papers
2. Immunization Record card
3. Proof of address (e.g. driver's license)

Anyone wishing to enrol their child in French Immersion (FI) should be aware that the Junior Kindergarten FI registration and selection process has changed. For more information, please visit [www.ugdsb.on.ca/jkfi](http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/jkfi). For more information on Kindergarten Registration in general, please go to [www.ugdsb.on.ca/jkregistration](http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/jkregistration).

## Council's Corner

December was a busy month at RRM and we would like to thank all staff, students

and parents for helping us celebrate the holidays at our annual Christmas Concert. I think we can all agree that the students did a fantastic job and it was a lovely night celebrating our school community. A big thanks to the Council Events Team; Beth, Chris and Angie were busy helping to get everything organized for the popcorn, hot chocolate and spirit wear sales that helped us toward our fundraising goal of \$5000.00 for this school year.

We introduced a new fundraiser in December. *Snacks with Santa* was an opportunity for parents to get a bit of a break from preparing AM snack and also gave the kids some time to socialize together in the gym, complete with a visit from Santa himself! This fun morning event coincided with PJ Day so if your child had his or her free picture taken with Santa it will be a great keepsake.

Our next School Council meeting will be on Wednesday, January 11 at 7 pm in the library. We are still in need of a Secretary on Council so if you are adept at listening and preparing notes, please come on out and join the team.

Happy New Year to All!

Linda Campbell, School Council Chair



## Washroom for All:



Equity of access is important and our school strives to be inclusive and fair. At RRM,

this means that we will designate both single stall washrooms as non-gendered facilities. Use of these single stall washrooms will be an option for all students and adults. There are actually many reasons that people might feel more comfortable/safer in a single stall washroom. It might be because of bullying. It could be for a health reason. It might be they are transgender. It might be they have body images issues.



### Before and/or After School Programming – changes for Sept of 2017

You may already be aware that school boards in Ontario must provide 'extended day programs' for JK/SK students in schools, where there is sufficient parent demand/interest and viability for operators to run a program. Beginning, September of 2017, school boards are also required to provide 'school age programs' where there is sufficient demand/interest and viability for students in grades 1 to 6. Fortunately, we have many schools that already have before/after school programs for both age groups.

In previous years, a survey has been provided to parents of new Kindergarten students and shared with parents of students in grades JK to grade 5 (next year's Grade 1 to 6 students). Unfortunately, interest/need data gathered from the online survey, hasn't always provided us

with accurate information. In some cases, parents indicated they would require before/after school care but did not confirm when later contacted by third party providers (contracted to provide licensed programs in Upper Grand). In other cases, the results from this survey indicated that there was not sufficient demand for a program to be viable, yet greater needs surfaced later in the year and parents had difficulty finding care.

In fairness to our third party operators and to fulfil our obligation to provide programs where there is demand and viability, it is important that our survey data be as accurate and complete as possible. **To assist with this, a Memo regarding Before/After School Care Survey is being sent home to all parents of students registering for JK in September and to those presently attending JK to Grade 5 (students in grades SK to 6 for Sept, 2017).** The survey link will be available on the Upper Grand website and remain open to families during the Kindergarten registration dates. After January 26<sup>th</sup>, the link will be closed and data will be used to assist with determining program needs & locations for next September.

Link to Upper Grand DSB web page that contains Before and/or After School Programs

<http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/kindergarten/before-after-school.aspx>

It is important for parents to know that this survey is NOT a registration form. It does not put your child on a waiting list or guarantee there will be a program at your child's school. The information is gathered to determine demand and viability of a program. The board website can be accessed to program locations and contact information.

## What is the Special Education Advisory Committee?

Every school district is required to have a **Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)**. SEAC is a broad-based, educationally focused committee that meets monthly to engage in a variety of discussions all related to the educational programs for students with special needs. These meetings are open to the public and are held on the second Wednesday of each month throughout the school year. Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Upper Grand District School Board office in Guelph.

At SEAC meetings, the representative members from different organizations (ABC - Association for Bright Children, Autism Ontario Wellington Chapter, FASD-Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community (Ontario), Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County, Parents for Children's Mental Health, VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children) share knowledge about their agency programs with the committee. These community members then take back points of information about the Board's educational programs to the agencies that they represent. In addition, SEAC makes recommendations to the board with respect to any matters affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of Special Education programs and services for exceptional students within the board. The SEAC committee also participates in the board's annual review of the Special Education Plan and participates in the board's annual budget process as it relates to Special Education.

For further information about SEAC or Special Education Programs in the Upper Grand District School Board please call the Program Department at 519-941-6191 ext. 254.

## Nature and Mental Health

Getting outside makes such a difference to how we all are doing inside. Spending time in nature improves our mental health and well-being. It is a simple way to add some much needed down time from screens. Adding some time in nature is having some much deserved peace and quiet in our busy lives.



If you want your family:

- To be less stressed
- To be happier
- To be more resilient
- To feel better about themselves
- To have increased attention
- To have a better ability to learn

Then GO OUTSIDE! Take your kids outside! Enjoy and be part of nature. One study showed that even 5 minutes in nature improves our mood. 5 minutes! We all can take 5 minutes (or more if have it) to go outside and enjoy nature. Go for a walk or a ski or a skate or a run. Head for the woods. Go birdwatching. Follow tracks in the snow. Watch the sunrise or the sunset. Watch the clouds drift by. Visit a river or lake or pond. Listen for all the sounds of nature. Take in the smells. Notice all the colours and textures. Notice the light as the days get longer. If you are not sure where to go, check out the links below for lots of great parks in our area.

<http://guelph.ca/living/recreation/parks/>

<http://www.wellington.ca/en/discover/trailsandforests.asp?hdnContent=>

<https://www.grandriver.ca/en/grand-river-parks.aspx>

<http://headwaters.ca/experience/parks-conservation-areas/>

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/arboretum/>

## Avoid school suspension by keeping immunization records up-to-date!

Student's immunization records must be provided to Public Health in order to attend school. In the next few weeks, Public Health will be sending notices to students with incomplete immunization records. Anyone who gets a notice should contact their family doctor so they can update their vaccines, and then report their new vaccines to Public Health.

Report every vaccine to Public Health using one of the following methods:



- Online: Fill in the form at [www.immunizewdg.ca](http://www.immunizewdg.ca)
- Email: Send a photo of the immunization record to [vaccine.records@wdgpublichealth.ca](mailto:vaccine.records@wdgpublichealth.ca)
- Call: 1-800-265-7293 ext. 4396

If a student is not getting vaccinated for medical reasons, reasons of conscience or religious beliefs, an exemption form must be submitted to Public Health. The forms are available at [www.wdgpublichealth.ca](http://www.wdgpublichealth.ca).

Public Health is committed to helping students update their vaccination records so they can avoid suspension from school.



## Keep in the Loop with RRM emails

Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) came into force on July 1, 2014. As a result, the Upper Grand

District School Board would like to ensure that we have your consent to receive newsletters, school and Board updates, announcements, event invitations, and other electronic messages which may contain advertising or promotions regarding school fundraisers, field trips, the sale of yearbooks, student pictures, uniforms, books, prom or dance tickets, or similar events and offers.

**If you wish to receive the above communications from us, please visit our CASL registration website at:**

[www.ugdsb.on.ca/CASL](http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/CASL)

By registering your email on this webpage you will receive electronic communication from the school which may or may not contain commercial electronic messages as described above. **If consent is not provided, you will not receive electronic messages containing commercial content and may find it more difficult to be aware of the activities that take place in school, and which your child may have an interest in participating.**

If you have any questions or if you wish to withdraw your consent at any time, please click the link at the bottom of email messages you receive from the school, or visit the same site and click on "Unsubscribe" to remove your name from our contact list.

For additional information on Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation you may visit our board's website at [www.ugdsb.on.ca](http://www.ugdsb.on.ca).



## Creative Thinking

The Ministry of Education recently released a document entitled 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies, that outlines four key competencies. They include critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity & innovation. The document outlines how these key competencies impact learning in the classroom in the world and, later in life, in careers.

Looking for some ideas to inspire creativity at home? Consider these invitations to create and innovate.

- Read picture books that promote creative thinking with everyday materials such as *Not a Box* or *Not a Stick* by Antoinette Portis. Then, collect some sticks or a few boxes and let your child's imagination run wild.
- Explore the idea of provocations at home. A provocation is simply putting materials or items together that provoke thinking and curiosity. It could be as simple as a basket of unusual household items (old vinyl records, a variety of nuts and bolts, open-ended building materials, some paper and writing materials, etc.) and asking you child what they might be able to do with these items. Offering similar materials over a period of time allows children to challenge themselves to come up with even more creative ideas using the same things
- Offer your child a variety of open-ended art materials (markers, watercolours, plasticine, buttons and loose craft bits, etc.) to allow them to do the creative thinking and planning instead of pre-planned crafts.
- Together, create a dance routine to a current song, or even better, use an oldie but a goodie. Inspire your child to create dance moves for the verses, and then change up the moves in the chorus. Engaged in the fun of being innovative;

your child will be creative guidance phrases and exploring musical form by doing this!

- Re-purpose containers, or small boxes and create a scavenger hunt outside in the snow. Place found objects in the containers/boxes as clues that your child needs to piece together. By placing the containers/boxes ahead of time as a scavenger hunt, you will have created a large scale provocation that can lead to imaginative play afterwards. Use the idea of discovering artifacts in the outside environment as an invitation to create a map of your backyard, or a forested area near your home. Build on this idea...and make new scavenger hunts and maps as an inquisitive way to learn about your home and local environment together.

*“Awareness of one’s inner feeling & thoughts is a prerequisite to making art. Inspiration and innovative thinking spring from this awareness and provide us with new answers and solutions, and new questions to pursue.”* (The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1 – 8, The Arts, p. 19)

[http://www.edugains.ca/newsite/21stCenturyLearning/about\\_learning\\_in\\_ontario.html](http://www.edugains.ca/newsite/21stCenturyLearning/about_learning_in_ontario.html)



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