



McGirr Elementary



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Principal: Mr. G. Halfyard

Vice-Principal: Ms. L. Thom

Secretaries: Mrs. B. Lundine and Mrs. M. Lockhart

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Newsletter #3

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

We are now into the final days of December and this is an ideal time to reflect on the first three months of the school year, and to set learning goals for the start of 2020. Teachers continue to share formative communications of student learning with parents about the core competencies, big ideas and curricular competencies and content in core subject areas. These regular communications provide clear reporting to parents on how students are doing in their schoolwork. Written progress reports will be coming home on February 7, 2020. This report card will provide parents with a more complete view of their child's behaviours for success and their learning and achievement in core subjects relative to widely held expectations for their age and grade. It will also communicate areas for improvement and goal setting for future learning (see below).



Ongoing Communications of Student Learning (OCSL) & Written Student Progress Report

Communicating student learning with parents is the new (normal) method of reporting on how students are learning. Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools is a part of a provincial pilot on student assessment and reporting. Letter grades are no longer used and strength-based formative assessment practices are communicated throughout the school year, with a Written Progress Report sent home on February 7, 2020 and a Written Summative Report distributed on June 30, 2020. Teachers share with parents what the student knows- can do- and understands in relation to provincial learning standards.

The February Progress Report is a formative written report of student progress mid-year. It includes a Summary of Learning, a record of the ongoing communications of student learnings that have been completed, and a confirmation that all 3-core competencies (Communication, Thinking, and Personal & Social) have been shared with parents.

With OCSLs, teachers regularly share with parents through hardcopies or FreshGrade (digital) evidence of student learning and achievement in core subject areas such as Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Students' work samples are accompanied by descriptive feedback comments from the teacher in terms of the curricular learning standards. Student voice is also included as students self-assess their own learning strengths and set goals for improvement. Competency scales have replaced letter grades for showing how each student is progressing in their grade. These proficiency scales include headings such as Emerging, Developing, Proficient and Extending to describe the knowledge, skills, processes and strategies demonstrated by each student during the school year.

Another important aspect of our reporting/communicating with parents is the *Behaviours for Success* comments, which are drawn from the new Career Planning curriculum. These student behaviours are directly linked to how each child approaches their learning and how they interact with others in a learning activity. The descriptors include 1) Self-Awareness, 2) Working with others (Collaboration and Communication), 3) Career Knowledge, 4) Career Planning.

Have a Restful and Relaxing Holiday: Wishing all of our parents, staff members, volunteers and students a joyful and healthy Winter Break. Please enjoy a safe and well-deserved Holiday with friends and family and we shall see everyone bright and early on **Monday, January 6, 2020.**

Thank you, *Gregg Halfyard*



Student Leadership Activities-

WE Day in Vancouver - November 20, 2019 Thank you to **Mr. Watt** and **Mrs. Kuffler** for accompanying 13 McGirr students from our Social Justice leadership group to this important annual event on changing our communities and schools. Here are some highlights of selected speakers' powerful messages that parents may wish to reinforce with their own children. Many thanks to Mrs. Kuffler for recording these notes from November 20.

Lorna Rasmussen – She did not fit in, and did not trust others. As a child, she was teased and tried to bury her pain. She wrote stories about pain, from generalized and social anxiety with the potential for depression. She called the crisis line. Do not stay silent about mental illness and be ashamed. There is help out there. You deserve to be alright.

Giovanni Marsico - Dreamed of being a superhero and he was a target because of his high IQ. He was bullied for being so smart (made others look bad). He hated the word "gifted." He kept his love of superheroes a secret, and then discovered that the Xmen helped him embrace himself so he dreamed bigger. He now runs a company called Archangel Academy. His message is do not be afraid to stand out and be different. What makes you different? What is your superpower and how are you going to use it to change the world?

Laura Grizzlypaws - Indigenous people's history of Canada. Her parents and grandparents went to residential schools. They live on reserve land put aside for them and still have their culture, and customs. Although it is not her burden to carry, she is responsible for her own healing and well-being. We need unity and balance to each other and the ecosystem. Open our hearts and minds to the indigenous ways of being for the future. Live in balance.

Nav Bahati - Super fan of Toronto Raptors. Nav dealt with many racist comments. He could not get a job when he came to Canada in 1980s. He responded with positivity, by reaching out to someone who made nasty comment to him on twitter. He phoned him and the person apologized. Nav only accepted the apology if he and his family joined Nav and his family for dinner and a game. They are now friends for life. Others have responded with negativity, which makes them *no* better. The challenge is to stand up for people who are being discriminated against. Let them know they are not alone and respond with positivity.

Rick Hansen - At 15 years old, a car accident left him paralyzed. Rick started a movement to make the world more inclusive. He completed an ultra-marathon around the world on the journey of social change. Had to find superpower after his accident. It is not what superpower you have; it is what you do with it. Disability affects everyone - from a broken arm to long-term visual impairment. About ability – there are solutions created to make things more inclusive although many barriers remain in the world. Is your school accessible? Community? Whether it is local or global it applies to everyone. The world is much smaller and more connected now #everyoneeverywhere. No one is left behind.

Grade 7 Team Building & Giving Back-

On the evening of Thursday December 5th our grade 7 students will be in our gym from 6-9 p.m. completing a variety of leadership and team-building activities and exercises with their teachers **Mrs. Peace, Mrs. Carlson** and **Mrs. McDonald**. This will be followed the next day with the annual "giving back" morning in which groups of students will go to various businesses and organizations around the Nanaimo community with the purpose of volunteering their time for an important cause in order to make their neighbourhood and community better. We are grateful to each parent and guardian for volunteering to drive pods of students to and from various locations throughout the city.

Bake Sale Sponsored by the Social Justice/Student Leadership Clubs

Mr. Watt is organizing a bake sale with the student members of our social justice club with proceeds going to support local and global causes. The **McGirr Social Justice Club** members have voted to use half of the funds raised from the bake sale to go to KIDS International (a local non-profit based out of Nanaimo) who support the educational needs of children and families in Cambodia. The other half of the funds will go to a local initiative that has yet to be voted on, such as Loaves and Fishes or The Salvation Army.

Delicious home baked goods will available on Thursday December 19. This is the same day as the winter concert and items will be for sale at both recesses and before and after the afternoon (1:00p.m.) and evening (6:30 p.m.) shows.

Winter Concert: The concert is on Thursday December 19, 2019 with 50-minute performances at 1:00p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Students in grades K-4 plus our Sr. & Jr. choirs will perform. Tickets will be distributed this week, and a lottery will be drawn for extra tickets next week. For the 6:30 show parents are asked to bring their children at 6:10 to their exterior classroom door (if there is no outside door they may enter through the main door and go directly to their class).

Parents will pick up their children after the performance in their child's classroom. **Please make sure that you have the tickets with you for the correct performance. They will be collected at the door.** Due to the fire code and safety regulations, we cannot exceed the maximum number of people in the gymnasium. If parents or guardians show up without tickets (or the wrong show), they will be asked to wait until everyone with tickets has been seated. We appreciate your cooperation with this safety matter.

Recycling at McGirr

An important environmental message from student teacher, Ms. Megan Schlitz:

MCGirr Elementary School has been working on the goal of conservation and environmental stewardship this year, which has led us to register in the **Return-It Schools** program. This program focuses on recycling properly, which we hope will combat the large amount of the waste we see in the garbage cans. This program focuses on informing students which items can be recycled, and where they need to go. We will have an interactive presentation from the Return-It Man and his Assistant to inform the whole school and ensure we are using the bins properly.



Finally, we have also created an account with the **Return-It Depot**, at **2375 Hayes Road**, where we would appreciate if you would drop off your recyclables under our McGirr Elementary School Account. The money will go back into our school to be used for environmental initiatives such as improving our courtyard. We would also appreciate it if donation receipts could be sent to school with your student so we can keep track of our "Recycling Report Card" to share results with the school. Thank You!

Megan Schlitz, VIU Student Teacher in Mrs. Paziuk's 4/5 class

PLEASE BE SURE TO SIGN UP FOR OUR LISTSERVE TO BE ABLE TO RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTERS VIA EMAIL! Due to privacy and FOIPPA laws, parents must actively request to sign up for this listserve due to it communicating fundraising information periodically. To subscribe to frequent updates, district press releases and newsletters, please send an email to: subscribe-mcgirrelementary-news@listsrv.sd68.bc.ca

DATES TO REMEMBER- December 2019

December 2- Monday	Strong Start Closed; Early dismissal 1:22 for PLC
December 5-Thursday	Grade 7 Leadership Team Building in Gym 6-9p.m.
December 6-Friday	Fine Arts Performance- "Bluesberries" 10:55 (adjusted lunch recess starting at 11:55); Grade 7s "giving back 9-11a.m.; Fun Lunch (White Spot)
December 11-Wednesday	Divisions 16 & 17 Nanaimo Museum 12:00-2:15
December 13- Friday	Divisions 8, 9 & 10 Fun Swim at NAC 11:15-1:55; No Fun Lunch; Mrs. Galloway's grade 2 class to the Nanaimo Museum 9-11:30 a.m.
December 16- Monday	1:22 dismissal; PAC meeting @ 6:30, Child-minding provided; Division 1&2 Skating at Cliff McNabb 11:30-1:20
December 17-Tuesday	Division 5,6 & 7 to NAC 11:45-2:15
December 19- Thursday	Winter Concert: 10:30 Dress Rehearsal, 1:00 Afternoon Performance, 6:30 Evening Show; *Bake sale for Social Justice Club at both shows
December 20-Friday	Divisions 1-4 to Avalon Theatre 8:40; Last Day of School before Winter Break; Hot Lunch sponsored by PAC (Pizza Hut); Strong Start CLOSED
December 23-January 3	Winter Break
January 7- Monday, 2020	Schools Reopen
January 8- Wednesday	Online Registration for the 2020-2021 school year opens at 8:00 a.m.



Sports Updates **Volleyball & Triple Ball**

Now that cross-country and touch football are finished, we have shifted to indoor sports such as triple ball for peewees and volleyball for bantams. McGirr has teams in all NETPEA leagues with several players having fun, working hard and practicing each week with their coaches. Game days are as follows: Peewee girls and boys play every Tuesday afternoon and bantam boys play Wednesdays and bantam girls play each

Thursday after school. The season goes until early February 2020. We are always appreciative to teachers for volunteering their valuable time and energy to coach our student-athletes. Thank you to **Mrs. Dawson, Mrs. Mark, Mr. Mitchell, Mrs. Peace, Mrs. Carlson and Mrs. Galloway** for coaching triple ball or volleyball. Special thanks to **Mr. Green** who has offered to be our official referee for all home games! We are also grateful to each parent for helping to drive our students to/from away games at other schools in the district.



Mr. Watt has sponsored a floor hockey league for our primary and intermediate students with weekly games in the gym. Students are enjoying playing, coaching and watching these competitive yet fun games. It provides our grade 7 students leadership opportunities by coaching and refereeing teams and games. Thank you **Mr. Watt** for organizing and running this floor hockey league at lunch recess.

Foursquare is a popular game at McGirr. On any given day one can observe a diverse group of students playing foursquare on one of our painted courts outside the gym and portables. By popular demand, we will be holding a fun tournament for all interested grade 3-6 students starting Monday December 2 at short recess. Students will referee the games and a set of game rules will be shared with students prior to starting the tournament. Foursquare teaches a variety of life skills such as patience, turn-taking, using strategies to solve problems, communicating and resiliency. You may want to discuss these attributes with your child(ren) before they enter the fun tournament.

Volunteers

We are grateful for parent/guardian volunteers at McGirr. Please follow these school procedures if you are interested in assisting in some form in your child's classroom. 1. Check with the teacher to ask him/her if volunteers are being requested in the class/school. 2. Inform the teacher of your availability and s/he will provide a specific time and day for you to volunteer. 3. Teachers inform parents of the exact tasks and roles they wish the parent to perform while in the class. 4. Sign in at the main office and wear a *Visitor's Pass* when entering the school. Please remember that volunteers must respect the privacy and confidentiality of all students and school staff they interact with during their visits to the classroom and school.

We rely on, and greatly appreciate, volunteers at McGirr. Thank you especially to parent volunteer drivers! Please ensure that you complete each of the following Volunteer Forms if you are able to drive our students to sports/events. Blank hard copies are available at the office in the slots beneath the office windows.

- **A Criminal Records Check (good for 5-years)**
- **Volunteer Driver Form and Abstract- AP 310 Appendix B (annually)**
- **Volunteer Driver Application- AP 310 Appendix C (annually)**

Information about volunteering, free online access for CRCs and appropriate forms are available at www.sd68.bc.ca/Board/Policies and Administrative Procedures/300 Students/AP 310 Volunteers.

Inclement Weather & School Closure:

Inclement Weather- School Closure Procedures Due to Weather – If schools are closed due to snow, or any other weather-related problems, announcements will be made on local radio stations (WOLF 106.9 FM, WAVE 102.3 FM, and 91.7 COAST FM) by 7 a.m. on the day of the closure. Please do not call the radio station – tune in and listen for the announcements, which will be made on a regular basis. In addition, the district will post the information on the district's website, Twitter, Facebook and mobile app. Families may also receive a message through the School Messenger notification system via phone, email or text. Please keep in mind, however, that there may be situations where this is not always possible, for example, power outages or technical problems. The most reliable method is to listen to the local radio stations. **FOR STUDENTS** • Listen to the radio stations for announcements of school closures, as described above and on the mobile app. **RENTALS** – All rental agreements will be cancelled on the day of a school closure. **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES** – In the event of a school closure day, all school activities will also be cancelled (e.g. School sporting events/excursions, PAC meetings etc.). *Only* the Superintendent/CEO of schools has the authority to close schools.

Punctuality and Readiness to Learn

This is a friendly reminder to all parents and guardians about the importance and value of having students arrive at school before the morning welcome bell at 8:28 a.m. We have noticed a pattern of several students often being dropped off late and entering the office *up to 20 minutes* after the morning bell at 8:30 a.m. When students start the day tardy and enter the classroom several minutes after the other students, it disrupts the teaching and learning environment. In addition, students miss valuable learning opportunities that set the tone for the day such as class discussions, reviewing lessons from the day before, discussing the 'shape of the day,' and going over established classroom routines. Time-management is a life skill that we all must learn and elementary school is the ideal place to learn this skill. Thank you for supporting your child's learning by helping them be ready to learn on time.



**McGIRR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
WINTER CONCERT THURSDAY DEC.19th**



- Tickets will be available as of **Tuesday, Dec. 3rd, 2019.** Tickets will start going home in planners on this date.
- Tickets are limited to **two per family** until **Friday December 6th.**
- Additional tickets will be available via lottery beginning **Monday December 9th ending Wednesday December 11th at 3:00 pm.** Send in a written request on a separate sheet of paper (remember to indicate your *youngest student's name* and *division*) directly to lottery box located in *the office*.
- **Additional requests will be limited to 2 tickets per family per performance.**
- Please check your child's planner on **Thursday 12th** for the tickets. (You will receive notification if you did or did not 'win the lottery' via planners on this date).

Please indicate which performance you wish to attend and return this form to *the teacher of your youngest child* at McGirr (this means we should only receive one ticket request per family, not per child). Although we recognize there are often more than two family members who would like to attend, to accommodate equitable access for all families and meet fire and safety requirements in our gymnasium, we have to limit the number of people inside the gymnasium at one time. ***We would really appreciate it if you could make the afternoon performance!*** Bring the tickets to the performance, as they are your ticket in the door! Thank you for your understanding and enjoy the festivities!

2019 MCGIRR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Winter CONCERT TICKET REQUEST

I would like tickets for the Winter Concert performance on:

Please write # of tickets (maximum of 2)

_____ Thursday, December 19th 1:00 p.m.

OR (so this means you must choose one performance)

_____ Thursday, December 19th 6:30 p.m.



Family Name: _____

Child's Name: _____ **Division:** _____

SAMPLE ONLY