

SEXSMITH STARS NEWS



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NEWSLETTER #2

October 2016

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

September Opening - As with all September's it was a busy opening. We were able to put the students into classes by the end of the first week. During the first week our enrollment decreased by 14 students. Since then we have had 6 students enroll at Sexsmith. Our current enrollment is 354 which is only 2 less than our projections in May. We are very excited about the upcoming school year as the staff and PAC have been busy planning activities for our students and school community.

Sexsmith Stars Teams – This year we have 2 school soccer teams competing against other Vancouver elementary school teams. The Junior Boys team is being coached by Mr Leconte and they play their games on Monday's; the Senior Boys team coached by Mr Coelho and Ms Jones play their games on Wednesday. Our Cross Country team which consists of 44 students is coached by Ms Owen and Ms Keo. Their season ends on Thursday, Oct 20, at the District Meet at Trout Lake. Many thanks to those parents who have stepped up to help with the driving and I encourage all the player's parents to come out and watch the students either play soccer or running cross country. I am sure you will be impressed with the skill and determination our students demonstrate in the activities. Many thanks to our staff members for taking their time to coach the teams.

Terry Fox Run – Under ideal conditions our school community held our annual Terry Fox Run on September 29. It was wonderful to see how energetic our students were when they were running. Congratulations to our school community for their fundraising efforts. At the time of writing we were still collecting donations so we will publish the amount on the website and the end of October's newsletter.

Traffic Safety at Sexsmith – A serious safety issue at our school involves traffic safety. Please obey all of the traffic signs around our school and in our neighbourhood. Always drive safely when you are picking up or dropping off your children at school. A reminder that the staff parking lot is not to be used by parents for drop off or pick up.

Process for Addressing a Concern – At times parents have questions, need to provide information to or seek clarification about a school assignment or activity or an incident that may have occurred at school. In order to have clear and consistent communication between home and school we ask parents to direct their questions or provide the information directly to the staff member who is involved with your child. In almost all situations this is your child's teacher. If you want to meet with a teacher we ask that you contact the teacher to schedule a meeting. This can be done by using the agendas if your child's class uses one or by sending a note to the teacher. In almost all situations a resolution that is acceptable to the family and staff member is developed at these meetings. From time to time these initial meetings do not satisfy either the family member or staff member and that is when the Principal becomes involved to resolve the issue or address the concern. In these situations we ask that you contact the Principal to set a date and time for the meeting and provide the information that will be the focus of the discussion. We have found that when this process is followed your concerns are addressed in an appropriate, timely and respectful manner and is beneficial to all parties.

If the issue is a school wide issue then please address the concern directly to Mr Cassie.

School Code of Conduct – In the next few weeks each student will be receiving a copy of the school’s Code of Conduct. This document outlines what the behavioral expectations are for our school community members. Please take the time to read and review the Code of Conduct with your child when they bring it home.

Tardiness and Extended Absences – This is a reminder to all families about the importance of our children arriving on time and with all the materials needed for the day at school.

Instruction begins at 9:00 and 12:57 – these are not the times at which students should be arriving at school but when instruction begins. At 8:55 and 12:55 warning bells ring for the students to proceed to their classrooms. When students arrive late for class not only are they hindering their own learning but also disrupting the learning of the whole class. Please be diligent in ensuring your child arrives at school on time and prepared for the day.

Extended absences from school are also a problem that can occur. We strongly recommend that unless the situation is an emergency, students should not be away for any extensive periods of time during the school year. If your child is going to be away for a period of time you must write a letter to Mr. Cassie explaining the reason for absence and the duration of time your child will be absent. Please note when your child is absent for an extended period of time for any reason but health, the education program for the child becomes the responsibility of the parent. School staff will not be responsible for preparation of or assessment of any work that the child does during their extended absence. Extended absences can have an impact on your child’s progress as reported on their report cards.

When Should I Keep My Sick Child Home From School? – If your child is not feeling well especially if they have flu like symptoms, we are asking that you keep your child at home until they have recovered. If they are sent to school when they are sick, the germs they are carrying can spread rapidly between students and staff. Some children and adults are more vulnerable than others. Please do your part to keep the school healthy by keeping sick children at home.

Most Important 20 Minutes of the Day – This next piece is from an article I read many years ago but I still think is a good thing to do with our younger students and is entitled “ The Most Important 20 Minutes of the Day”

- A young child’s growing mind needs active play and live conversation just as much as a body needs exercise. Books boost the imagination in a way TV can’t. Try limiting your family’s tv time to one hour a day.
- Books open a world of wonders to child and parent alike. Learning from reading aloud stories is learning that sticks because the mind is active at work.
- Nothing is more restful after a tough day than reading with your child. Mom or Dad feel happy and the children calm down after a busy day for themselves as well.
- Readers are leaders! Children who read ... succeed

PAC Information – We held our first PAC Meeting of the year on September 29. Many thanks to the 20 parents who were in attendance on that night. At the meeting the PAC approved a request for \$ 4000 from the early primary and Kindergarten staff to support our Home Reading program and Kindergarten classroom programs. Our Hot Lunch program is up and running and our first term orders were very strong. This year the chocolate sales sponsored by the PAC will be held in November. It was decided that this year only chocolate covered almonds will be sold. Also discussed were the Diwali Festival that will be occurring on November 23, and the Santa Breakfast on December 16 which again will involve the Rotary Club. Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 27 and at that meeting the main topic to be presented will be the New Education Plan.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting on the 27th!

September 30 Pro D Day – On our first Pro D Day, our staff worked with noted educator, Ms Linda O’ Reilly. Ms O Reilly has developed a program called the Navigator that provides many great tools to support the implementation of the New Education Plan by our teachers in all subject areas and with all of the core competencies of the Plan. The implementation of the Plan will be an on- going process over the next few years and the work we did with Ms O Reilly will assist us both with our short term and long term planning. It was a most rewarding day for our staff.

Sexsmith Most Magnificent School Project – As you are aware we are focusing on the Critical Thinking core competency that is part of the New Education Plan. To launch this school wide focus, our students participated in a school wide event called Sexsmith’s Most Magnificent Thing project. Below is a wonderful summary of this project written by Ms Gear, our Literacy Support Teacher. Already we are starting to hear the students say – Hmm; Huh and Aha. Ask your children what this means and they will be able to explain to you through these words the three phases of Critical Thinking.

Sexsmith’s Most Magnificent School Project

If you tell me, I will forget. If you teach me, I will remember. If you involve me, I will learn.

- Ben Franklin

As you may be aware, the curriculum in B.C. has been redesigned to reflect a more inquiry based approach to learning and teachers are beginning to implement many of the new ideas into their units of study. This year, Sexsmith School is specifically focusing on one of the three core competencies of the new curriculum – critical thinking. Critical thinking is an approach to learning that involves analyzing, questioning and developing a plan, idea, product or thought. Rather than just memorizing new information, we are asking students to think, question and form their own ideas and opinions about it.

To launch this school-wide focus, we embarked on a school-wide project *called Sexsmith’s Most Magnificent Thing*. Students learned about the project at our first school-wide assembly. Ms. Gear explained the three phases of critical thinking – ANALYZE-QUESTION-DEVELOP and shared the book *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires. Students were then shown how to use their critical thinking as they began to transform their empty boxes into their own ‘Most Magnificent Thing’.

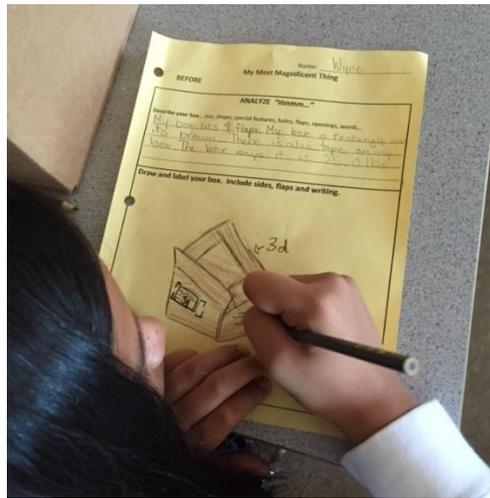
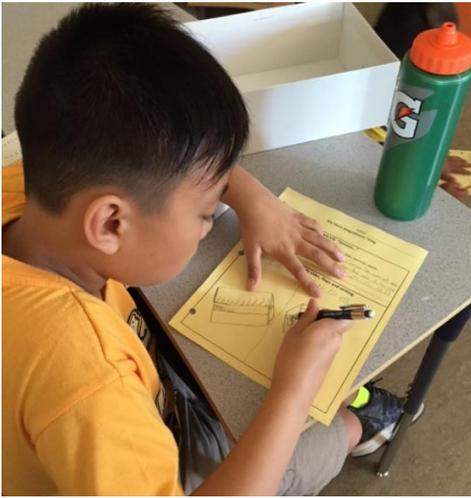


First, students *analyzed* their own empty box – carefully looking at size, shape and special features.



Next, they **questioned** what they were going to make, what materials they might need and what potential problems they may run into.

Finally, they developed a plan for their project and then they were ready to set to work!



During the week, students spent many hours working on transforming their box into something magnificent. They were encouraged to practice their critical thinking skills during the process. If something wasn't working they tried to analyze, question and develop a new plan. The school was buzzing with excitement and thinking!



Last Tuesday, the students and teachers were given an opportunity to walk through other classes to view all of the 'Magnificent Things'! WOW! It was incredible to see how many different creations the students came up with – jet packs, miniature rooms, soccer games, castles, maps, musical instruments, telephones, puppet shows, and even a vending machine that actually worked! The students really demonstrated all the aspects of independent, project-based learning and critical thinking skills, while having fun at the same time! It truly was a Most Magnificent project!



Upcoming Events – also check our calendar on the school web page.

- October 3 to 7 – Scholastic Book Fair – next door to the Library
- October 5/6 – First Term Conferences – 2:15 to 6:00 both days. Students dismissed at 2:00pm on both days.
- October 7 – Field Trip – Div. 2
- October 10 – Thanksgiving Holiday – School is Not in Session
- October 11- Performance – K to Grade 7
- October 14 – Individual Student Pictures – Bring Your Smiles!
- October 18 – Field Trip – Div. 14/15
- October 19 – Field Trip – Div. 8/9
- October 20 – District Cross Country Meet – Trout Lake Park – Noon to 3:00
- October 21 – Provincial Pro D Day – School is not in Session for Students
- November 9- Remembrance Day Assembly – 11:00
- November 10 – Pro D Day – School is not in Session for Students

