

Parliament Oak News for April 2011

From the Principal's Desk . . .

Many children love computers, and in terms of literacy education, there is a growing body of research showing that electronic talking books (ETB's) can help children learn to read through support features offered, such as narrations, feedback and sound effects. ETB's can also encourage children to read. It has been established that reading at home is linked to higher achievement in reading (Allington, 2006). Further, family literacy is an important facet of children's literacy learning, and the staff at Parliament Oak School feel very strongly that there needs to be a relationship between home and school literacy practices. So, what do you do if you have a reluctant reader at home? Check out the following websites that have EBT's and other wonderful tools to engage your child in reading at home: storynory.com;

www.lookybook.com ; www.roythezebra.com ; www.storylineonline.net.

✿ *Students of the Month for March*

JK/SK1 Charlotte Dodd, James Couroux

JK/SK2 Alexander Angelakopoulos, Michael Angelakopoulos

Gr. 1 Dawson King, Paige Hoadley

Gr. 2/3 Ella Burns, Clara De Munnich

Gr. 3/4 Jesse Jones, Justice Ball

Gr. 5. . Michael Fritz-Jones, Giorgios Angelakopoulos, Teniya Cowan

Gr. 6. . Nicholas Petrick, Emily Day

Gr. 7/8 Charlotte Petrick, Weston Miller

The character trait we will focus on for the month of April will be COURAGE.

✿ . . . *Easter Break*

It's hard to believe but Easter is just around the corner. Please be aware that the school will not be open on Friday, April 22 or on Monday, April 25. The staff of Parliament Oak School wish you a restful and enjoyable long holiday weekend.

✿ *School Council News*

Our current fundraising initiative is the Simply Fruit snack sales. Ask your kids about how much they enjoyed the snacks on our last skating day and order some to balance out those Easter baskets with some healthier choices. Our next Council meeting is Tuesday April 12, 7 pm in the Staff Room. We would love to see some new faces at our meetings so please come out and share your ideas. This is also the time of year when we start to plan our Council Executive for next year. We have a dedicated group of parents but need to expand this as many of our members' children are moving on to upper grades and high school. We all know our children benefit from having parents who are involved in their education. Make the jump from theory to practice and come to Council this month!

✿ *School Safety and Security*

The safety of your children while they are in our care is our number one priority. Students who usually eat lunch at school, **must have a note** if they are leaving the school for lunch. Parents, please remember to sign in at the office and wear a visitors badge if you need to come to the school for any reason. For security reasons, it is important that we know who is in the building at all times and why they are here. If you are in the building and are approached by a staff member, please remember that they are only following this policy.

✿ . . . *Young Author's Day*

On Friday, April 29th Parliament Oak will be hosting a Young Author's Day to celebrate the reading and writing students have done during the school year. In the morning students will be rotating to various stations where they will be participating in workshops that focus on the writing process. This year we are very thankful to have not only our staff coordinating workshops but to also have dedicated community members. A special thank you goes to our following guests: Steven Gallagher, managing editor of the Niagara Falls Evening Review, Jamie Williams, actor and Bonnie Giampa and Brier Krieger, co-owners of Balance Fitness Studio.

In the morning we have invited author **Sharon Jennings** who will be speaking to grades JK-3 and in the afternoon author **Eric Walters** will be speaking to grades 4-8. Parents are more than welcome to join the author presentations. To help offset the costs of our authors students are asked to pay \$5.00.

Eric Walters was born in Toronto in 1957, which makes him "real old". But, as Eric says, "Just because I have to grow old doesn't mean that I have to grow up!" In his many roles as parent, teacher, social worker, youth sports coach and writer he is in constant contact with children and young adults. He draws from these experiences and feels that this helps him to capture the realistic interaction between young people - the conflicts, tensions, stresses and interests that make up their lives. Eric tries to write every day. When he has a story idea he starts with research. This could involve reading books, watching a documentary, or trying to experience the things that his characters are going to go through. This could include rock climbing or riding white water (for STARS), spending time in a wheelchair (Rebound), playing and walking with tigers (Tiger By The Tail), hanging around a tough biker bar (Diamonds in the Rough), standing out in his backyard in a blizzard wearing a T-shirt and shorts (Trapped In Ice), or traveling to Africa (Alexandria of Africa).

"The most important thing anybody ever told me about writing was to write what you know . . . and the only way to get to know things is to do your homework and research before you write," Eric stated.

Sharon Jennings has written many picture books (including over 40 titles in the Franklin series), several chapter books, books for the reluctant readers, a board book for babies, and scripts for the television show "Role Play". She has worked for many years as an educational editor. Sharon currently teaches Writing for Children at Ryerson University, and she is also the

Writer in Residence for King City Public Libraries. Sharon Jennings has been travelling across Canada giving author visits for over 15 years.

❁ *Silver Birch Celebration: An Explosion of Reading!*

Our Silver Birch and Silver Birch Express reading groups have been reading, discussing and rating the 2011 silver birch nominees. We have selected the criteria by which we judge each book as well as create hi-tech book reviews to entice interested readers to pick up these books.

We are in the last month before the DSBN Silver Birch Conference approaches in May. Members are to have read a minimum of 5 books, either fiction or non-fiction, before they are able to attend the conference. We will be casting our own ballots for the best fiction and non-fiction titles end of April. Only Silver Birch members will be attending the conference that will be held at School Support Services (former NDSS) this year.

❁ *EQAO Prep is Available*

The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat has granted funds for Parliament Oak School to assist Grade 3 and Grade 6 students to prepare for the upcoming EQAO assessment in June.

WHEN: Tuesday & Thursday after school from 3:15 - 4:15 p.m. in the library beginning March 22, 2011.

WHO: Students in grades 3 & 6 who would like support with preparing for the upcoming Provincial assessment. We will be offering students additional opportunities to develop, or fine tune, literacy and/or numeracy skills for EQAO.

Students will have access to school resources, computers and will receive a snack. They will receive assistance from Mr. Mead, Mrs. Casement and Miss Collard.

Please note: If students are staying for the after school program, they **must** be picked up by 4:15 p.m. in the library unless other arrangements are made through Ms. Ciazynski

❁ *Junior Girls & Boys Basketball*

The junior girls and boys are in the midst of their season! We have certainly improved from last season with a few wins "under our belt". Both teams continue to work hard and display excellent team work and sportsmanship. We are very proud of them! A big thank you goes out to volunteer coaches Caughill, Lapointe and Davis for their hard work and dedication. Also, thank you to all of the parent drivers who transport our teams to and from our away games.

❁ *Badminton*

Badminton has started for all students in grades 7 & 8. A tournament will be at Virgil on April 29th with 18 students (mixed doubles) participating against other schools throughout the day. Practices will be announced in the mornings and will usually be held during breaks.

❁ *Eco News*

The Eco-Team is gearing up for spring and our ECO Schools Ontario inspection in May to see how well we are doing in our

school. We will also be looking for extra hands to help with the gardening around the outside of the school in May/June. Any green thumbs out there? In addition, we hope to install a plaque and an Inukshuk in the Outdoor Classroom by the end of June.

❁ *School Excursions*

As we approach the end of the school year, the number of school excursions will increase. We try to keep the cost of these trips to a minimum by choosing excursions that are reasonable in terms of entrance and transportation fees. As well, we subsidize these expenses with money raised through school fundraisers and with money from the School Council. On occasion, a family may find it difficult to support their child's involvement for financial reasons. In a situation like this, we usually can find a way to help. We like to do what we can to ensure that every student is able to take part in these class experiences. Of course, we reserve the right to exclude students from these excursions if their behaviour does not warrant their involvement. This decision is left to the teacher(s) taking responsibility for the trip and is supported by the school administration. We endeavour to make these experiences enjoyable and educationally worthwhile for all who are involved.

❁ *Spring is Here*

The nice weather is approaching and students are anxious to ride their bicycles, roller blades and skateboards to school. Please be reminded of a few rules:

❁ bicycles, skateboards and roller blades must be walked on school property. Students are not allowed to ride their bicycles, skateboards and roller blades on school property based on a recommendation by the Niagara Regional Police.

❁ bicycles must be locked in the bike racks.

❁ if a student is younger than grade 4, it is recommended that he/she be accompanied by an adult to and from school.

❁ *DSBN Road Race*

Come on Parliament Oak it's time to lace up those running shoes and get your feet moving once again for the DSBN Road Race. You can walk or run a 1Km or 5Km race on Sunday, April 25th, 2010. You can get a form from your teacher or from the office. The cost is \$10 per race entry under 20, \$20 for adults.



✿ How Can I Help my Child with Bullying

At Parliament Oak School, we have a strong “Anti-Bullying” focus. It is a part of every day in the classroom, on the playground and in the halls. Teaching students to become responsible, respectful and kind is an ongoing concern of all the staff here at the school. Often parents ask how they can help their children at home with the issues that face them. Here are some suggestions that may assist you in helping your child:

Skill Building: Parents can assist their children by listening to them when they report problems. Parents can help equip their child with appropriate strategies for dealing with bullies at an early age. Discuss the following skills with your child:

Get Help - Ask for help from a friend or a classmate. Ask for help from your parent, your teacher or another adult.

Make a Plan - Find kids to hang out with. Stay with kids who treat each other respectfully. Join clubs and activities. Know which parts of the school are most likely to have supervisors and go there. Know which kids or groups to avoid.

Passive: Your words and actions do not communicate clearly your desire that the bullying behaviour stop. You do not protect your rights and others. You lose control of the situation and give the power to the bully.

Assert Yourself - Stick up for yourself by using assertive words. Make “I” statements telling the bully how you feel. (“I don’t like being called names.”) Set limits to what you will allow others to say to you. (“If you want to talk to me, don’t put me down.”) Ask questions about the bully’s behaviour. (“Why are you bugging me?”) You do not want to be passive in dealing with bullies. Being passive means that you don’t say or do anything to avoid the bully. By not saying anything to the bully you let them control the situation. You do not want to be aggressive toward the bully. That means you are trying to hurt them back either with words or by physical contact. That only makes the situation worse. Instead, be assertive.

Aggressive: Your words and actions are hurtful toward the bully.

Assertive: Your words and actions communicate clearly your desire that the bullying behaviour stop. You respond in a way that protects your rights and others. You keep control of the situation and keep the power.

Report Bullying. Know the difference between tattling and telling. **Tattling is rooted in a desire to get people in trouble and telling is to get yourself out of or to prevent trouble.** Don’t hide bullying. Your courage may help many others from being bullied. Remember, we at school cannot solve a problem that we know nothing about. As a parent, don’t hesitate to contact your child’s teacher or the office to communicate a persistent bullying problem so that we can address it before it grows into something serious.

✿ April is Oral Health Month

Although preventable, cavities are the most common chronic disease of children aged 6 to 19 years. Cavities lead to difficulties sleeping, decreased school attendance, pain, discomfort, and infection. Fluoride is not added into our water supply. Therefore, it is recommended that all residents brush their teeth twice daily with fluoridated toothpaste to prevent cavities.

Children three to six years of age should be assisted with brushing their teeth by an adult using a pea-sized portion of fluoridated toothpaste until they can tie their own shoe laces.

Regular flossing is the single most important thing you can do to prevent gum disease. Most children will need help flossing until they are about 8 to 10 years old.

Niagara Region Public Health has two programs to assist children and youth with no insurance in getting the dental health care they need. For more information please call the Public Health Dental Program at 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7399.



The 2011 DSBN Education Week Theme is "Celebrating Community Partnerships". From parent volunteers who assist in classrooms to agencies who coordinate a variety of programs including breakfast programs and after school activities to corporate partners who sponsor scholarships and so much more, our community partners complement the work of our schools to support student success.

We want to take this time to thank you, our community partners, for everything you do to help support our students and our school.

Working together, we make a difference. And that is truly Achieving Success Together!



