

February News in Room 201...

We're halfway to Grade 9! Can you believe it? These next few months are so important for students to gain fluency in the work habits that will support them in Grade 9. I tell the students that **FLUENCY** means not having to think about something before you do it, that you do it without hesitation and all the time. So, consider the following work habits, students.

- Do you get right to work preparing a quality set of study notes that you compare to others' for accuracy?
- Do you know which methods (writing it out, talking about it, oral question and answer...) work best for you?
- Do you hand in work on time?
- Do you ask for help if you can't figure out the problem? And do you do this before too much class time has slipped away?
- Do you put up your hand and get involved in class?

These are great questions for parents and children to talk about. If students have questions or concerns about this, please have them chat with Mrs. Dykstra. This area is the most important focus for Grade 8.

SOME PROGRAM NOTES...

Language: We are on a mission to overcome weak language mechanics. The students "know" the rules for capitals, punctuation, sentence structure, etc., but they often don't see the importance in ensuring they are looked after in written work. We had a specific example this week of missing out on a possible job if errors exist in a resume and cover letter. I liken proper language use to the way we get ready in the morning. We brush our teeth and hair and put on clean clothes, because that allows the world to form positive first impressions of us. If our written work is littered with errors, then often the quality of the message is lost behind those distractions. We will also develop strong word choice and varied sentence structures to add interest to our work.

Math: Isn't there a TV show called Everybody Loves Fractions??? Oh, wait...maybe it was Raymond. Anyway, we have jumped into the world of whole numbers and the leftover bits. We have spent the last week exploring what fractions actually mean, how they compare to each other as relates to their size, and the number relationships between fractions like $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{2}{8}$ and $\frac{7}{28}$.

History is...well, history: We wrap up History and move on to Geography. The next time your child will walk into a History class will be when they are older, wiser, and in Grade 10! Grade 8 Geography focuses on how humans interact with each other and their environment. It's a really interesting study of current world issues and the patterns that have developed over the past decades.

Phys. Ed.: As you will have seen on my recent Remind photos, it's basketball season at the Creek! The students are competing in a 21 tournament alongside a partner. We have almost every student in our class changed into gym clothes each and every day. This is a great habit that most students have become **FLUENT** in. Congratulations!

Music: In our music program, students will be learning to read, write and play music on the treble and bass staves. We are getting started with just the treble for now. We will also learn the value (length) of the different notes and rests (silence) and how they affect the music we play or sing. The end-of-unit assessments include written tests and playing a performance piece for our class. Throughout the unit, I will be providing students with sheet music which they will label with the note names (A→G). It is each student's responsibility to sign up for regular 20-minute piano blocks during our school day. Through

repeated practice periods, their job is to become FLUENT on the keyboard. Students will select a song from the sheet music I have provided to play for the class.

Upcoming Trip Opportunities:

1. **Swimming at Brock University:** We will go twice to this amazing facility. The pool floor is lowered to 3 different depths: 3 feet, 5 feet and approximately 12 feet. There are diving boards and the Olympic tower, as well as a super fun Tarzan rope to swing off of. We will have 6 lifeguards and the whole pool is reserved for our group. The classes attending will be from Mr. McDonnell's class up to Grade 8. The forms will come home shortly. Payment will be available online. We are just finalizing the cost, but it will likely be \$30, which includes both trips. The dates are Friday, February 23 and Friday, March 9th. We will leave the Creek at 11:30 and return for 3:00.
2. We have registered the Grade 8 classes for a really great hands-on **trade fair** in Toronto on Thursday, April 12th. The kids will get to lay brick, build a metal toolbox, and paint a car door. More information will come home closer to the day. The cost for this trip is the bus only, since the expense of the trade fair itself is covered by the Ontario Construction Secretariat.
3. **Camp Wanakita:** Thanks to Mr. Cole and Mr. McDonnell for organizing the second of three fundraisers. The Little Caesars Pizza Kit forms went out earlier this week. Students earn \$5 for each product they sell. All orders and money are due on Friday, February 16th.