



# THE DIEFENBAKER REPORT



WEBSITE: <http://diefenbaker.sd38.bc.ca/>

PAC website: <http://diefenbaker.sd38.bc.ca/parents>

May 2016

## Message from the Administrative Team

We are well into the third term, and as we look around, it is exciting to see the changes in our students over the course of the year. We are proud of the growth and development shown by the Diefenbaker students and know that they are ready for the challenges next year will bring. Our Grade 7 students have been visiting their high schools, with feelings of both nervousness and excitement, and our new Kindergarten students came for a visit last week in preparation for their start in September!

As often happens at this time of year, we are expecting some staffing changes for the 2016-2017 school year. Mr. Rollins, who has been Diefenbaker's Vice Principal for the past four years, will be moving to McKinney as the Vice Principal. We are appreciative of all that Mr. Rollins has contributed to the school and know that he will do well in his new role! We welcome Mr. Trevor Shuto, currently teaching at McKay Elementary to Vice Principal at Diefenbaker and look forward to working with him.

Also, Ms. Yager's contract for this year's portion of Ms. Anderson's maternity leave will be ending, and we wish her all the best in her next position. It has been a pleasure to have you at Diefenbaker!

Ms. E. Stapleton  
Principal

Mr. H. Rollins  
Vice Principal

## Long Range Facilities Planning – School Closures



There are three public meetings to outline the plans for school closures. It is important that parents attend one of the meetings to learn about the plans and to ask questions about our school and community. The meetings will be an "open house format" with presentation boards with options for each of the 16 schools on the school closure list. District staff and Trustees will be present to help clarify the information. As the format of the evening is "drop in," you do not need to stay for the entire session: May 17<sup>th</sup> at Steveston-London, May 18<sup>th</sup> at Palmer and May 19<sup>th</sup> at Hugh Boyd. All sessions run from 6:30-8:30pm.

Also, on behalf of the school and the PAC, we would like to say thank you to all the families who completed the survey and returned it! The School/PAC committee was able to share the information you provided with the District during our consultation meeting.

## Student PEN Numbers

Many parents have been calling the school asking for their child's Student PEN Number (Personal Education Number) so they can register for summer courses. This number will stay with your child throughout his/her schooling and does not change, so please keep it in a safe place so you can refer to it in the future.

## Student Lunches

We need your help to make sure that your child comes to school with a lunch. Students are arriving at the office daily saying they don't have a lunch or they don't have enough to eat. Please have a discussion with your child about his or her lunch to make sure there is enough food to last the day and also check before your child leaves home to make sure that the lunch comes to school. We will keep you informed by email if your child does not bring a lunch.

## Parents in the School during the Day

Just a reminder that if you come to the school during the day to be mindful of the lessons that are going on. Sometimes hallway noise causes a distraction, and children have difficulty focusing once they see their parents outside the class. We appreciate your support!

## Use of Student Washrooms

If you visit the school, you will notice new signs on the doors of the student washrooms, indicating that the washrooms are for student use only. We request that adults use adult washrooms.

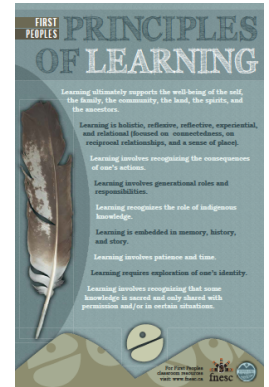
## Me to We

On Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, there will be a staff vs. student basketball game in the gym at lunch. The students in Me to We are organizing a fundraising drive for the community of Fort McMurray and are asking that students bring a donation to the game. Students who do not wish to watch the game are welcome to bring a donation as well. The proceeds will go to the Canadian Red Cross and will be distributed to families in need.

On Tuesday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, to celebrate the end of Readers' Choice, we will be having a Book Character Dress Up Day. Come to school dressed as your favourite literary character!

## Aboriginal Content in the New Curriculum

Aboriginal perspectives and knowledge are a part of the historical and contemporary foundation of BC and Canada. Aboriginal knowledge and worldviews have been embedded in the curriculum in authentic, meaningful ways so that all learners have opportunities to understand and respect their own cultural heritage as well as that of others. In some areas of learning, explicit Aboriginal content is included (e.g., information about residential schools in Social Studies; Aboriginal peoples' uses of indigenous plants and animals, or their knowledge of the sky and landscape, in Science). In other areas, there are opportunities to learn about Aboriginal people in the local community, for example, or Aboriginal literature. From Kindergarten to graduation, students will experience Aboriginal perspectives and understandings as an integrated part of what they are learning. For more information check out: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/rethinking-curriculum>



## Students Not Returning

This is a busy time of year, as we are gathering information on our students and where they are attending school next year. If your child is not going to attend Diefenbaker next year, please inform the school in writing, by **June 15<sup>th</sup>**, as we have students on a wait list who would like to be placed.

## Understanding Combined Classes

We are beginning our initial planning for next year in the coming weeks and often find that the philosophy behind combined classes is unfamiliar to parents. Children who are placed in the upper grade of a combined class are not placed there because they struggle in school. For example, in a combined Gr. 4/5 class, we do our very best to ensure that for each grade, we have students who encompass a range of learning styles and abilities. We do not place all of our strongest Gr. 5 learners in a Gr. 5/6 when a Grade 4/5 classroom is also available.

Teachers are trained to provide instruction to diverse classes of students, looking at children as individuals, and providing for individual education plans, where warranted, for students who are faster or slower to develop. In this student-centered approach to teaching and learning, we recognize that not all students learn at the same rate and at the same time. Common topics explored in classrooms allow for a diverse range of students to learn at their own pace, while working toward learning outcomes specific for their grade.

Combined classes offer enhanced opportunities for all students to demonstrate confidence, positive self-concept, and a strong sense of belonging. Combined classes can help students form broader and more varied friendships, as older students provide role models for younger students. Sometimes the teacher/student relationship can be enhanced if the same teacher teaches a student for more than one year, leading to increased feelings of security for returning students and

a smoother transition in September because the teacher already knows their learning styles and needs well. Teachers in combined classes, like those in straight grades, follow the curriculum requirements defined by the Ministry of Education.

You will find that over the course of your child's schooling, there are years that he/she will be in the lower grade of a combined class and other years when he/she will be in the higher grade of a combined class. These are both valuable learning experiences and will benefit your child's development academically, emotionally and socially.

## Class Placements

Each year, the school makes organization plans based on the number of returning students and new registrations. Your child's classroom teacher, resource staff, educational assistants and administrators work together to place students for the upcoming school year. These plans are tentative until the end of the first week when final student numbers are known. During the first week, all staff meet to confirm teaching assignments and to review student placements.

In organizational meetings, many factors are considered when placing students. These considerations include:

- \* Learning styles and strengths
- \* Social/personal characteristics
- \* Special needs
- \* ELL levels
- \* Contractual obligations
- \* Work habits
- \* Male/female balance
- \* Friendship groups
- \* Age and physical maturity

As you can see, this is a complicated process, and this list is by no means exclusive, as there are many factors unique to a situation that must be taken into account.

Parents are welcome to provide information that may assist the staff in planning for next year. **Class placement forms are available at the office for those parents who wish to complete one and must be returned by Friday, June 3rd.** Please note that information about how your child learns provides the most valuable information. The information you provide should not include a request for a specific teacher, but rather some important personal or educational information that will assist us in our decision. Teacher requests are not the basis for class placements.

All information you provide about your child(ren) at the end of the year will be shared with the teachers and taken into consideration. Please be aware the final decision regarding placement needs to be a school-based decision.

## Upcoming Dates

May 17 <sup>th</sup>	Public Input Meeting (Steveston-London) 6:30-8:30pm	May 26 <sup>th</sup>	PAC Meeting 6:30pm
May 18 <sup>th</sup>	Public Input Meeting (Palmer) 6:30-8:30pm	May 27 <sup>th</sup> -31 <sup>st</sup>	iRide Program (Gr. 6/7)
May 19 <sup>th</sup>	Public Input Meeting (Hugh Boyd) 6:30-8:30pm	June 1 <sup>st</sup>	LFI Orientation PM
May 25 <sup>th</sup>	Gr.7 Orientation at McMath 9:00am-12:30pm	June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	PAC Walk-A-Thon
May 26 <sup>th</sup>	Track Meet @ Minoru		

<u>Daily Schedule</u>	
8:30	Doors open
8:40	First Bell
8:45	Classes begin
10:30-10:45	Recess
12:25-1:10	Lunch
2:38	Dismissal

**Be sure to read your newsletters to keep up-to-date, and refer to our school website, where we will post additional information.**

**Please call our Early Warning Line (604-718-4094) to report students late or absent.**