

December 4, 2009
Education Highlights

It is that time of year again when we are all reminded that weather in Manitoba is highly unpredictable. We once again have to start facing the prospect of storms and poor road conditions. Due to the large geographic area of our division there have been some changes relating to the closure of schools due to adverse conditions. The following is an outline of the division policy.

Full Closure - Entire School Division

In specific circumstances where uniform factors affect all of the Division's areas, a decision may be made to cancel bus transportation and to close all schools or the entire Division. Such a decision will be taken by the Superintendent and the Director of Operations.

Partial Closures

At certain times, conditions in specific areas will dictate that the buses will not run and that schools will be closed in those areas only. For partial closures the bus captains will make the decision, they will inform the other drivers and the principals and in turn all of the bus parents will also be notified.

When making the decision to close they look at the safety of the students being transported. In the policy manual it indicates the decision should be made by looking at weather reports and warnings, current weather, visibility, road conditions and excessively low temperatures or wind chill.

Informing Parents

Bus drivers will call the parents of students who are on their route. Information about closure will also be available on the following radio stations:

CKX 1150, CKLQ 880, CKMW 1570, CFRY 920, CJRB 1220, CBC 990, CFAM 950, CKSB 1290. Thanks to the Parent Advisory Council, room reps will contact town families to inform them of closures.

The policy will be flexible to allow for special circumstances like sudden storms. Decisions to run or not in the afternoon will be made in the same way as outlined above. If buses do not run in the afternoon, students will go to their emergency billets and bus drivers will inform the parents on their route.

Everyone is reminded that it is always best to err on the side of safety when dealing with our children. If you as a parent do not feel comfortable sending your child to school due to weather conditions, do not hesitate to keep them home.

It is the week of our Christmas Concert. The concert is scheduled to take place on Friday the 11th, starting at 7:00 o'clock sharp, please make plans to attend. If you cannot make it the evening of the concert, feel free to attend the Dress Rehearsal which will take place on Friday the 11th starting at 10:00 am. The students and staff have been working very hard to make this a highly entertaining evening. Gord and Susan Kentner have once again graciously volunteered to tape the concert. They always do a stellar job of this, and if you are interested in placing an advance order of your own CD of 2009 concert, call the Kentners at 535-2459. On a side note, make sure you congratulate Gord. In conversation with him the other day he revealed the fact that this will be the 51st concert that he has either been directly or indirectly involved in. That is a rather amazing accomplishment.

As I have mentioned in previous education highlights the grade 11 and 12 English students were involved in a unit of structured inquiry revolving around the history of the Holocaust. This proved to be a very gripping unit for the students. After studying the Holocaust, students were asked to reflect about their learning. Here are some excerpts:

After studying everything, it makes me think long and hard about how lucky I am to have my freedom, my family and friends. No one should ever have to go through something as horrific as the Holocaust. I have so much more respect, and know not to take things for granted. I want to always stand up for someone being pushed around or hurt...

Leaders like Hitler are smart, but cruel. We must never let power fall into the wrong hands.

Through all the horror, there were still glimmers of hope – some people did help the Jews, and they are righteous people. Oscar Schindler saved over 1000 Jewish people. He was a hero in my eyes.

The Holocaust was a very needless and inhumane event. This would have been a very scary time to be living in – scared for your life every day, worrying if your family is still alive, or where you might be sent next week.

This unit has taught me a lot about the Holocaust. It is probably the worst thing that has ever happened in the history of Earth. I don't understand how all the Nazis went along with the plan, and hardly any fought against it.

It is so hard to believe! After watching Schindler's list, it is hard to believe it was real. Schindler did everything he could to save as many Jews as possible. He spent all his money and risked his life. Yet, he still thought he could have done more!! The Jewish people he saved told him, "He who saves one life, saves the entire world." Schindler was a hero.

Studying the Holocaust is one way to honor all who died and lived – and to make sure the message gets out that this must never ever happen again...

Over 6 000 000 senseless deaths... it leaves me speechless...

What struck me the most was the brutality of how the Jews were killed...?

I was stunned to learn that a lot of countries stood by and did nothing to help the Jews. Canada restricted its immigration policy at a time when the Jews needed a safe place. It's sad that more wasn't done... especially when people knew exactly what was going on...

To think that some people actually survived!! You would have to be a very smart cookie, and one strong person to survive the Holocaust. This was very difficult to read and take in – I could hardly believe that people could be treated this way.

I am very glad we took the time to do this unit. I found it interesting in a devastating, horrific, unimaginable way. I didn't realize how systematic the whole thing was. – How the government systematically set out to completely destroy an entire group of people, and almost got away with it.

All the Jews could do to defend themselves and fight back was stay alive!! By staying alive they were fighting Hitler...

It was touching to learn about young people who lived during this time. Anne Frank – when I read her diary, I grew attached to the characters, and I realized she was just like us!! She almost made it to freedom, but the Nazis got her. Only her father lived, and her diary, so that we can read it and learn what life was like for them. I will never forget this unit – ever!!

I would like to thank the students for sharing their thoughts on this unit of study, it is obvious that it captivated their interest and provided them with a wonderful learning opportunity.

Just a reminder about the change in our kindergarten schedule this week, the kindergarten students will attend 3 days this week instead of 2. They will have classes on the Tuesday the 8th, Thursday the 10th, and once again on Friday the 11th.

There will be a Parent Advisory Council meeting on Wednesday December 9th, starting at 7:00 o'clock.

We are also still accepting donations to our mitten tree up until December 10th.

December 11, 2009

Education Highlights

The Christmas Spirit has been evident at Baldur School over the last week. The Red Cross Mitten tree in our front entrance is rapidly being covered with mittens and scarves, all of which will be donated to needy children across our province. The staff appreciates the fact that children are making contributions to the tree rather than buying presents for them. If you have not yet had an opportunity to add to the tree you have until December 14/09, as this is the pick-up date.

Preparation for the Christmas Concert is a stressful, hectic time for all the students and staff involved. A tremendous amount of work and preparation goes into ensuring that the evening runs as smoothly as possible. And as you can imagine, this is a difficult task when you have close to 100 children ranging in age from 5 to 14 are involved. Everything did come together though and all enjoyed the concert on Friday night. As usual, the hall was packed to capacity with standing room only. Even though we were all crowded, we were still thoroughly entertained as the children performed their plays and sang for us. Each group did a fantastic job, it was especially entertaining to see the individual input that some of the grades included in their productions. It is rather obvious that there is no shortage of creative genius in our school. I would like to thank the teachers and other staff members, and the students, who put in phenomenal amounts of time preparing for this evening. Your efforts are appreciated by all. Of special note, we would all like to thank Sharon Bannerman for all the time and effort that she has volunteered to help with the musical portion of the concert. Over the last few weeks she has been in the school on a daily basis. For those of you who are unable to attend the concert on Friday night, Mr. Kentner has once again video taped the performance. If you are interested in purchasing a copy of the tape please contact Gord or Susan at 535-2459.

Once the students return in the New Year there will only be fifteen teaching days until the end of first semester. This means that exams are moving up on us rapidly. We have posted the exam schedule and reviewed it with the students, but as one further reminder to all I thought I should include it in the highlights.

Exam Schedule January 2010

Provincial Exams

ELA 40 – January 5-8, 2010

School Based Exams (January 25 – 28)

January 25, 2009 (Monday)

***English 10**

***English 20**

English 30

January 26, 2009 (Tuesday)

***Careers 9/10**

Family Studies 11/12

Physics 30

Afternoon

***Geography 9/10**

January 27, 2009 (Wednesday)

Consumer Math grade 11

Applied Math 30
Consumer Math grade 10
***Math Grade 9 (Mid-Term)**
***Social Studies grade 7 / 8 (Mid-Term)**

January 28, 2009 (Thursday)

Science 9

Science 10

***Biology 40**

***Math grade 7 and grade 8 (Mid-Term)**

*** = Mid-Term Exams are all mandatory**

Grade 7/8 Students may be excused following the exam provided they have a note from their parents stating where they are going and with whom.

We had representatives from the Canadian Armed forces speak to our high school students on Tuesday the 8th. This gave the kids a glimpse as to what life is like in the military and what career opportunities the forces can provide the individuals with. It was a very informative session and I know it sparked interest in a few of our students.

The school year may not even be half way over, but for our grade 12 students they already have to start to give some consideration to their future plans. A lot of post secondary institutions are in the process of taking in applications for early acceptance. By applying to college or university early, the student secures a spot if there is a waiting list, and their acceptance is later confirmed when they submit their final grades. If you would like information relating to the various colleges and universities or other career related questions, please call the school and get in touch with our counselor, Tammy Ballingall. Tammy would be more than willing to provide whatever assistance she can.

December 18, 2009
Education Highlights

The 2009 portion of the school year ended on a very cold note. Frigid temperatures and wind chill have kept the students inside for recess and noon breaks for the first two days of the week. Even though all the kids are bundled up, they can still succumb to frost bite when the wind is blowing strong. It is imperative that all the kids be prepared for the worst at all times, whether they are on the bus or in town, they must ensure that they have their mitts and head covering at all times. Bus students actually spend less time outside than many of the town students when coming to school, and sometimes they get complacent, especially the high school students, when it comes to dressing properly. Keep in mind that if disabled, a bus cools off very quickly, so make sure the kids are prepared at all times.

It may have been cold outside, but the students still showed a lot of warmth and generosity. Two of our Christmas charity programs wrapped up this week, the Red Cross Mitten Tree, and our Food Bank Campaign. The mitten tree was literally ready to topple over due to the weight of the donations of mittens, gloves and hats that were draped over it. Numerous boxes of food products were also gathered during our food bank drive. The items collected by both these programs will be donated to local organizations and then disbursed to help ease the need for those less fortunate than ourselves. I must compliment the generosity of the students, especially the elementary students. They have truly taken these programs to heart, and their giving spirit shines through each Christmas.

In the spirit of Christmas, I posed the following question to the students in grades 1 to 4, and asked for their responses: *“What does Christmas mean to me?”* Here are some of the replies that we received:

Christmas is seeing family and giving gifts to them. Also decorating the Christmas tree. Sending Christmas cards to friends and family. Sometimes even drinking eggnog too! I love Christmas! – Kennedy Everett, Grade 2.

What Christmas means to me is happiness and joy. My favorite part is getting together with all the family, but the most important thing of Christmas is the birth of Jesus Christ. – Marty Dalzell, Grade 4.

Getting together with family when it is Christmas Eve. We put up the tree, we put up the lights and we put up the angel, then we go to bed. – Ethan Martel, Grade 3.

Hanging stockings, getting presents from Santa, putting our Christmas tree up, decorating the Christmas tree, but when Santa comes – better be asleep cause he will give you presents too! – Matthew Doyon, Grade 1.

Christmas is a time for giving. It's a time for friends and family to come to your house. It's a time to practice for the Christmas concert. Last and for all, playing Christmas game on the computer!. – Teigen Gudnason, Grade 2.

Getting together with family and friends and playing games and celebrating the birth of Jesus and meeting new friends and wrapping gifts and enjoying big meals and dessert and playing in the fluffy snow and going sledding on big hills – that is fun! – Owen Lockhart, Grade 4

Christmas means to me the birth of Jesus Christ. I think of giving to one another – so we can overeat. – Brayden Rey, Grade 3.

The end of December also brings along with it the recognition of our Students of the Month for this period. The category this month was Students' Choice. This is an opportunity for the students to select who they would like to receive this special recognition and to give their reasons. This is a very meaningful award for the recipients because it comes directly from their peers. The students of the month for December, as selected by their fellow classmates are:

Baldur School Elementary Student of the Month – Reece Johnson. Reece was selected by his peers for the following reasons: *"I chose Reece because he is very responsible and tolerant. I chose Reece because he helped me with my crutches and is a friend. I chose Reece because he always compliments me every time I lose!"*

Royal Bank Middle Years Student of the Month – Savana Johnson. Savana was selected by her classmates for the following reasons: *"Savana is nice, sharing, caring, and trusting. She is everything good! Savana is nice to everyone and she always remembers her manners."*

Sunrise Credit Union, Baldur Branch, Senior Years Student of the Month – Jordan Gillies. Jordan's peers selected him because they feel he is a great person who is willing to help others both in and out of the class room. He has become a lot more involved with everyone this year and we all appreciate his sense of humour. It is great to see Jordan participating, he is always respectful and willing to join in to help and have some fun.

Congratulations to all three of these students.

On behalf of everyone at Baldur School, have a very merry Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.