

September 2019

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Jackie Berkes, Vice Principal

Dear Parent/Guardians,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year at Sardis Elementary. If you have returning children, I hope you are ready for another great year. If you are new to Sardis, I hope you will soon feel at home here.

My name is Janine McCurdy and I have the pleasure of being the Principal of Sardis Elementary. It has been an exciting few days as we reconnected with students and also met a lot of new students. We moved students into classes on Friday and students were excited to meet their teacher.

If your child came home with worries about where they were placed, please know that placement was carefully considered. Our enrollment has required the need for some “single” grade classrooms as well as some “combined” grade ones. Please be assured that ALL students will receive the educational program they need. I have attached to this newsletter an informative article entitled “Combination Classes: Myths & Realities”.

Communication is an area that is extremely important and we are trying to improve the way that information is sent home. Here are some ways that we use to keep everyone informed:

1. Monthly newsletters will be sent home by email the first Friday of every month. There will also be paper copies available at the office.
2. Our school website, <http://sardis.sd33.bc.ca/> is kept up to date.

It is also vital that you communicate with us, so if your child is going to be absent, please call the school at 604 858-7145.

Also if there is any information that is necessary for us to know in order to provide the best educational

environment possible, please contact your child’s teacher or phone the office.

Until next month!
Janine

Calendar of Events



Thursday, September 19th - Meet the Teacher (5-6:30)
Monday, September 23rd – Terry Fox Run
Wednesday, September 25th – Individual Photo Day
Friday, September 27th – Professional Development Day
Monday, September 30th – Orange Shirt Recognition
Monday, October 14^h – Thanksgiving Day – No School
Tuesday, October 15th – Photo Retakes
Thursday, October 24th – Early Dismissal @ 11:30
Friday, October 25th – Professional Development Day
Thursday, October 31st – Halloween
Friday, November 1st – Professional Development Day

Welcome!



We are very lucky to have some new staff members joining us at Sardis Elementary.

Please extend a warm Sardis welcome to **Mrs. Duval**, who is teaching Grade 1/2, **Ms. Falk and Mrs. Buck**, who will be teaching Prep, and **Mrs. Frose**, who is teaching Gr. 5 until Ms. Halvorson returns.

Verification Forms

Verification Forms are being sent home this week. They will be printed on **Lime Green** paper. Please check backpacks for this form. Please ensure that all the information on the form is accurate, make any corrections and then send it back to school by next Friday. Throughout the school year, if contact information changes, please let the office know so that our records are correct. Thank you

Meet the Teacher Night

On **Thursday, September 19th**, from **5 – 6:30 PM** There will be hotdogs and chips. More information will be sent out next week, but please circle the date on your calendar. Hope to see you there.

Coupon Books

Our PAC is currently selling The Great Little Coupon Book for \$10.00. We have both the Chilliwack and Abbotsford books. Order forms are going home today with students. There are a lot of great savings and the school benefits from every coupon book purchased. (\$5.00 from each book stays at the school)



Professional Development Day

There will be **NO** school for students on **Friday, September 27th** as it is a Professional Development Day at Sardis Elementary. All staff will be participating in Professional Development activities.

Terry Fox Run



Sardis Elementary will be having their annual Terry Fox Run on **Monday, September 23rd**. We will be using our school field as well as Sardis Park to complete our run.

Photo Day



Individual photos will be taken on **Wednesday, September 25th**. Mountain West Studios will be taking the photos. More information will be sent home closer to the date.

PAC Meeting

Our first PAC meeting of the year will take place, **Monday, September 23rd @ 7 PM** in the Library. All parents are invited to attend.

Bell Schedule

Please do not send your children to school before 8:15 as that is when supervision begins.

- 8:28 School Entry Bell
- 8:33** Morning classes begin
- 10:15 Recess begins
- 10:30 Recess ends
- 12:10 Lunch begins
- 12:59 Lunch ends
- 2:30** Dismissal



Sardis Elementary Staff

Administration

Ms. J. McCurdy, Principal
Mrs. J. Berkes, Vice Principal & Resource Teacher

Classroom Teachers

Kindergarten – Mrs. D. Forrest, Mrs. A. Hipwell,
Ms. M. Greenwood, Mrs. G. Anderson

Grade 1 – Mrs. G. Anderson, Mrs. P. Duval
Mrs L. Lacerte, Ms. V. Rempel,
Mrs. A. Veenendaal

Grade 2 – Mrs. P. Duval, Mrs. E. Kadar,
Mrs. L. Murphy, Mrs. J. Neufeld,
Mrs. A. O’Grady

Grade 3 – Mrs. S. Bateman, Mrs. R. Herrin,
Mrs. J. Neufeld, Mrs. J. Price

Grade 4 - Mrs. R. Herrin, Mrs. S. Mulder
Mrs. C. Noer, Mrs. K. Ogmundson

Grade 5 – Mrs. A. Dow, Mrs. E. Frose,
Mrs. K. Ogmundson

Support Teachers

Mr. C. Hunt, Teacher-Librarian
Mrs. J. Jackson, Learning Assistance Teacher
Mrs. J. Johnston, Learning Assistance Teacher
Mrs. M. Cavanagh, Prep Teacher
Ms. J. Falk, Prep Teacher
Mrs. L. Buck, Prep Teacher
Ms. V. Oza, ELL/ESD Teacher
Mrs. H. Logan, Speech-Language Pathologist
TBA, Counsellor

Administrative Assistants

Mrs. C. Brass, Mrs. L. Sumner

Education Assistants

Mrs. K. Croucher, Mrs. J. LaHaise, Mrs. W. Lillicrap,
Mrs. S. Piper, Mrs. C. Barbosa, Mrs. T. Perkins,
Ms. K. Chambet

Aboriginal Support

Ms. C. Doerksen, Ms. V. Joe

Custodians

Mr. L. Moore, Mr. D. Tjepkema

Supervision Assistants

Ms. N. Mirshamsi, Mrs. A. Irvine, Ms. A. Pena,
Mrs. R. Montgomery



COMBINATION CLASSES: MYTHS & REALITIES

The debate around combined classes has generated a great deal of research, including Trusty and Beckenstein (1996) and Gorrell (1998). Although the findings continue to raise a number of controversial points, the general and significant conclusion is that combined classes are just as effective as straight grade classes and in fact may offer additional benefits.

THE RESEARCH!

Dr. Joel Gajadharsingh, of the University of Saskatchewan, was the leading North American investigator of combined classes. The Canadian Education Association (Gajadharsingh, 1999) summarized his extensive findings and concluded the following:

1. Children in combined classes get an education that is just as good or better as in single grade classes.
2. Children in classes where there is more than one level learn to become more independent, responsible learners and develop a greater degree of social responsibility. They also develop better study habits and a more positive attitude toward school.
3. 85% of teachers considered the achievements of students in multi-grades to be equal or superior to the achievement of students in single grades in language arts, mathematics, sciences and social studies.

ACHIEVEMENT

BA Miller reviewed 13 experimental studies assessing academic achievement in single-grade and multi-grade classrooms. He concluded that there were no significant difference between them (ERIC Digest, No. ED355178).

THE NON-GRADED ELEMENTARY

John Goodlad completed a very detailed study in 1987 called "The Non-Grade Elementary School." The study revealed that on average there was a five year span of development found in a single grade group. In combined classes, representing two or three grades, the span was about six years of difference in the various aspects of pupil development.

MULTI-GRADE CLASSES

S. Veenman completed a research paper on multigrade classes in 1995. He reviewed fifty-six studies from twelve countries, including Canada. Forty-eight multi-grade classes were studied. Thirty eight of the fifty six studies looked at overall achievement in math, reading and language. Of the thirty eight studies, twenty eight found no overall effects on achievement. In four other studies significant and positive effects were found favouring multi-age classes. Eleven other studies found no significant difference in cognitive achievement, whereas in the non-cognitive area, multi-age classes generally scored higher.



FACTORS FOR MULTI-GRADES

A review of Veeman's results by Mason and Burns (1996) concluded that multi-grade classes are appropriate for many students. They do not dispute Veeman's findings, but they do suggest there were factors in place that contributed to the outcome of his study. These included careful selection of students, class size, the skill of the teacher and the school supports in place to effectively manage a combined class.

MYTHS AND REALITIES

Myth 1: If my child is in the lower end of a combined class they will receive a superior benefit from being exposed to the higher grade program. Conversely, if my child is in the upper grade of a split class it is because they have been underperforming the previous year.

Fact: The curriculum for each grade is well defined and each child will receive a program which is specific to his/her learning requirements. Dr. Joyce Simmons once referred to combined grades as a unique environment where enrichment and independence can both be nurtured.

Myth 2: Children in combined classes receive less attention to individual needs than those in a single age class grouping.

Fact: Students need to be accommodated as much as possible, regardless of placement. Resources and supports within a school are available equally to all students.

Myth 3: Students in straight grades benefit more than those in combined classes because they are working at the same level.

Fact: Every classroom, whether combined or straight grade, will be made up of children with wide variations in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In many curriculum areas, a combined grade classroom actually offers a much wider range of educational experiences for students and they develop broader and more varied friendships.

Myth 4: Instructional approaches are more advantageous when students are placed in straight grades.

Fact: Teachers have spent a great deal of time honing their instructional skill. Classrooms are alive with a variety of experiences throughout the day. Children spend time at activity centers, producing independent projects and interacting in a variety of group exercises. In all effective classrooms children who need to spend more time on a particular concept may do so in a nonthreatening way. In the combined classroom, older students have the added opportunities of peer teaching and leadership experiences while younger children may model on the behaviours and learning of the older students. Parents recognize the benefits of interaction between the older and younger children in their families. Combined grade classrooms provide exactly the same opportunities.

Myth 5: The reason for placing a child in a combined class appear to be "numbers" driven.

Fact: The composition of a combined class is very carefully considered by the principal and staff. The teacher is well prepared in the variety of teaching techniques now used in all classrooms.

Myth 6: Overall achievement of children in combined classes is jeopardized.

Fact: Research to date on combined classes simply says this is not true. There is little or no difference in the academic achievement of students. Studies conducted on children in combined class settings clearly indicate significant and positive gains in personality and social development compared to single grade classrooms. Careful planning leads to highly successful classrooms and parents familiar with combined classroom settings have been pleased with the progress of their children. The focus for classroom instruction, regardless of its combined or single grade status, is student learning and achievement.

Gajadharsingh, Joel (1991). CEA Research Study on the Multi-grade Classroom. The Multi-grade Classroom: Myth and Reality A Canadian Study. Ed. Margaret Gayfer. A Canadian Education Association Report. Toronto, Ontario

Goodlad, John and Anderson, R.H. (1987). The Nongraded Elementary School. New York, NY: Teachers College Press

Gorrell, Janet L. (1998). A Study Comparing the Effect of Multiage Education Practices versus Traditional Education Practices on Academic Achievement. ERIC Digest No. 424 008

Mason, D.A., Burns, R.B. (1996). Simply No Worse and No Better May Simple Be Wrong: A Critique of Veeman's Conclusions About Multi-Grade Classes. Review of Educational Research. 66 (3), pp. 307-322

Miller, B.A. (1996). A Basic Understanding of Multiage Grouping. School Administrator, 53.1, pp. 12-17

Trusty, Edward M., Bekenstein, Stacey (1996). A Comparative Study of Single-Graded versus Multi-Graded Classrooms. ERIC Digest No. 417 014

Veenman, S. (1995). Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Effect of Multi-Grade and Multi-Age Classes: A Best-Evidence Synthesis. Review of Educational Research, 65 (4), pp. 219-381