

Blake News

The Newsletter of
 Blake Street Public School
 Phone: (416) 393-9415

Blake Street Public School
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Jennifer Zurba, Principal **Tina Weinberg**, Vice Principal
Mary Jane McNamara, Superintendent of Education **Jennifer Story**, School Trustee

Yesterday was our school wide OPAL Play Day. For families new to Blake Street, OPAL stands for Outdoor Play and Learning.

OPAL is the first program in Canada that aims to make play an integral part of the school day. Children engage in self-directed play with "loose parts" (tools, boxes, spare tires, fabric, etc.), boosting their sense of agency and creating a more inclusive and reciprocal social environment.

OPAL is grounded in the child's right to play and the UN Convention on the [Rights of the Child](#), to which Canada is a signatory.

In partnership with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), the OPAL program will roll out to 42 schools by 2020. Their goal is to bring the program to schools across the country. (Earth Day Canada)

As an OPAL school, play is an important part of our school day! We play in all weather, we get dirty and sometimes we get wet, and we play with recycled materials and loose parts. Our play rules are posted and reviewed with students regularly, and our guiding questions serve to build a sense of efficacy in our children, that they have the power and ability to change the course of a situation.

OPAL RULES ARE CLASSROOM RULES

1. Respect the boundaries
2. Listen to others
3. Have fun!

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PLAY

1. Is it safe enough for you and everyone else around you?
2. Is it inclusive?
3. Are you having fun?

Remember that you are responsible for your own fun. If you don't like **what** you are playing, or **how** you are playing or **who** you are playing with, **CHANGE IT!**

Here are some pictures of the day.





Important Early French Immersion Application

Please be sure to see the attachment related to the Early French Immersion Program deadline dates.

We Are Looking for Reading Volunteers

P.A.L.S. WANTED

(Partners in the Acquisition of Literacy Skills)

This may be the PERFECT volunteer opportunity you've been looking for....

Why:

- You can make a big difference in an individual child's success at school
- You can learn how to effectively help your own child be a successful reader
- You can add valuable volunteer experience to your resume
- It is convenient. Your commitment is only for 15 minutes a day, preferable 5 days a week (or as often as possible), just after you drop your own child off at school.

Who:

- Parents, caregivers, grandparents, Faculty of education Applicants, others who want to help (please note that due to TDSB policy, a criminal check will be needed)

What:

- Read one-on-one with a K-Grade 3 student who needs help

How:

- Training, on-going support and materials will be provided by Blake PS primary teachers

Where:

- Find a quiet spot in the library, hall, or classroom and enjoy reading together

Cross-Country City Finals

Congratulations to Camillo Morgan for his 37th place finish at the Toronto Cross-Country City finals at Centennial Park this week. He ran a 2 km race against the top one hundred Grade 6 boys in our large city. Camillo represented Blake Street Public School proudly at this prestigious event.



Our New Mural

We have recently begun another school mural. Using the books *The Curious Gardener* by Peter Brown and *Maybe Something Beautiful* by F. Isabel Campoy and Theresa Howell, students have been exploring the concept of **growth mindset**. *The Curious Garden* is the story of the highline in New York City, told through a fictional picture book. It is the story of Liam, who while out exploring his drab gray city, comes across a struggling garden. He decides to help the plants grow, never imagining what he is starting. As time passes, the garden takes on a life of its own and spreads across the city, changing everything in its path. Bit by bit, the city is transformed, becoming a lush green world.

Maybe Something Beautiful is based on the true story of the Urban Art Trail in San Diego California. The book reveals how even the smallest artists can accomplish something big. It tells the story of the triumph of a community against the forces of social decay, and it is the story of two exceptional artists committed to art and social justice who turn the alleys of the East Village in San Diego into art canvasses, and the darkness of their neighbourhood into a world of possible hope and beauty.

Growth Mindset is the theme of both books, and shows us that within all people, and all places, there is possibility and potential - we just need to look for it and believe it so.

All homerooms classes from grades 1 – 6 work with our artist Alyccia Uccello, on our mural for two half day sessions. If you have some time and would like to help out, that would be great.

Nutrition Tour

On Wednesday Blake hosted a tour of public and private company representatives and TDSB staff who are involved in the Toronto Foundation for Student Success (TFSS) program. TFSS is the branch of the TDSB that helps to provide funding for our amazing breakfast program and our morning meal and snack program. The 40 or so adults who arrived to see our program in action were impressed with the quality of the snacks, the way in which they are distributed to classes and the pride with which everyone at Blake; students, staff, and volunteers, contributes towards making this program the success that it is.

Spirit Wear

Blake spirit wear is ready to be ordered. Look out for the order form coming home with your child next week. You can also drop into the school office to pick one up. Please put your orders with the correct cash amount, or a cheque made out to Blake P.S., in an envelope and hand it in to the office. Please note that taxes have been included in the price. Please see the order form attached to this newsletter.

Halloween

Next week is Halloween. Students are allowed to come to school in costume, though they have been reminded that weapons OF ANY KIND (even plastic) are not to be brought to school. Kindergarten students will have their costume parade beginning at 10:20, while grades 1-6 students will participate in a parade outside on the field (weather permitting) starting at 1:30 pm.

For those of our students who do not participate in Halloween alternate programming (arts, board games...) will be available.

WeScare Hunger

Once again Blake's WeSchools Club is collecting non-perishable food items, personal hygiene products (shampoo, soap, toothbrushes, etc.) and baby items (diapers, formula, wipes, etc.) for our annual drive to benefit Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre's Food Bank. Items being donated should be brought into your student's classroom.

We are bringing back last year's popular *classroom competition*! The classroom that collects the most items **by Thursday, October 31st** – Halloween – will win a WE prize for each student in the class!

Help us help the families in our community by donating goods! Thanks for your support with this important initiative. #WeSchools



Claude Watson School of the Arts

If you have children in grade 3 - 8 that demonstrate potential and a strong interest in the arts; **dance, drama, music or visual arts, this may be a school for you!!!**

Our program is an audition program for students currently in grade 3.

Please find attached our flyer for our Claude Watson School For the Arts Information session:

Date: Monday, November 4th, 2019
Location: Earl Haig S.S. 100 Princess Avenue
Time: 7 pm

Families do not need to RSVP for our evening session.

Extra Curriculars

Current running extra curriculars include:

Ambassadors Club for Junior Students (grades 4-6): Monday at lunch
 Junior Choir (grades 4-6): Tuesday and Thursday pm recess
 We Schools (grades 4-6): Thursdays at lunch
 Girls Club (grades 4-6): Monday and Tuesdays at lunch for grades 4-6
 Advanced Uke (grades 4-6): Monday at lunch
 Beginner Uke (grades 4-6): Wednesday at lunch
 Junior Girls Basketball (grades 4-6): Monday and Tuesday after school
 Junior Boy's Tripleball – Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 – 4:30

French Online Resources to support Reading at Home

Please see this email from one of our grand-parents about an online reading resource. An online French resource will also be available for free in the coming week as our licence for Raz Kids has just taken effect.

Je Lis, Je Lis : What is this?

It's a reading programme specifically developed for French Immersion students. It is the product of RK Publishing, a Canadian Company, and has been around since 2000. As well as hard copy books, the programme consists online of about 200 levelled books grouped by colours which indicate grade levels.

How to use it

Once your child is registered, you just log in, choose the book you want to read, and click on it. There's a button to turn the page, or go back. If you feel you've finished the book, there's a place to click and it will be saved for you so that the next time you sign on, you can remember where you are.

What kind of books are there?

They are mostly age appropriate fiction. There are also a few instruction type books, often explaining how to make a craft or do an experiment related to a previous story. There are 11 colors with anywhere between 8 and 32 books in each colour, ranging from SK to grade 6. There are pictures on every page, at least in the primary levels, at much the same ratio as there would be in similar hard copy books. Some characters reappear in some books within a colour, so they build familiarity.

What if I don't read French myself?

This is the beauty of the programme. There's a blue arrow button which will cause the nice lady in your computer to read the story aloud for you. You can use it just to check on one word, or listen to the whole page, or the whole book. If you hear the word and don't know what it means, Google translate is your friend. You can even slow this down to hear it better if you need to. Hey, this programme might even teach you to read in French 😊

Can my child use this alone?

Probably, as long as they have basic tech skills.

Do they use this at school?

Blake used this programme last year up to grade 3 but are going with Raz this year. I wanted to keep it going for my girls as the older one who has a lot of learning issues had improved so much using it, and her little sister was eager to start.

So, I contacted the company and bought myself a license. This essentially makes me a "teacher" and I can register up to 30 kids in my "class". I have room for 28 more, so if you think you might be interested in doing this with your child to help them with their reading at home, let me know. You can email me at joanjamieson2@gmail.com. The license was \$200, so if you can EMT me \$10 for your share I'd appreciate it. But if you can't, that's OK too 😊

News from Parent Council

We hope to see you all tonight at the **Halloween Dance**: 6:30 p.m. in the gym. Remember to bring a refillable bottle/coffee mug and some small change.

Our **Clothing Fair** volunteers are in full swing sorting bags of clothing, books, games and electronics. We are also collecting ripped, stained or worn out items for the bag2school textile drive. Bring any items you would like to donate to Room 203 before November 11. Please be sure to label each bag. It really helps the volunteers! **The swap takes place November 14 and 15.**

Blake School Council's next meeting is **Wednesday, Nov. 13** at 6:00 p.m. For more council news and events, visit <https://blakestreetparents.wordpress.com/>



Upcoming Dates

November 11: Remembrance Day
 November 15: Parent Teacher Interview Day
 November 20: Photo Retake Day and Sibling Photos
 November 29: SPIRIT DAY – Dress Like your Favourite Video Game Character
 November 29: Deadline Early French Immersion Application
 December 6: PA DAY
 December 13: Prologue Presentation: Duffle Bag Theatre K - 6
 December 20: SPIRIT DAY – WHITE PARTY
 December 23 – January 3: WINTER BREAK

For those celebrating Diwali this week, we wish you a wonderful and bright holiday!

Should you have any questions or concerns with the content of this newsletter, or any other school related issues, please email me directly at jennifer.zurba@tdsb.on.ca

Have a great weekend.

Jenn and Tina