

Principal's Report -January 2017

Happy New Year, Mackie families! We have had a terrific start to the New Year. Our staff and students are hard at work and our children are demonstrating growth, academic progress and social maturity. Our staff members continue to work together on our Three Learning Goals for this school year:

1. Incorporate technology as a tool for engaging student in relevant and meaningful learning tasks.
2. Engage regularly in formal and informal conversations and activities that require us to challenge our thinking and practice in order to improve our practice of equitable support for all students and families and ensure student-voice and well-being are paramount.
3. Engage in a Collaborative Inquiry process that allows us to network with other lead learners when developing meaningful strategies for teaching and learning Math.

To support our endeavours to engage students in relevant and meaningful learning tasks, we have enlisted the support of our School Council to sponsor such activities as an Author Visit to the Classroom, Shakespeare workshops for our junior students and this spring we will be welcoming back Artist Taya, to work with our students. We are currently considering other valuable guests such as Just Aissi who will teach our students gumboot dancing! We are very grateful for the efforts and the support of our School council to enrich our programs. This team has also spent time recently deriving a SSON (School Statement of Needs) and developing the financial planning report all while planning our many fundraising efforts.

Our school community spirit is strong and student participation is high in our many learning opportunities both in and out of the classroom. Safety on the school yard is paramount and we have enlisted the support of student leaders to support safe choices and remind other students of their roles. Students are taking on more responsibilities. While our junior students will be office helpers and lunchroom crew, many of our younger students are scheduled for jobs such as eco-inventory and door monitors. Meanwhile, many various clubs and teams are taking place at any given time. Our biggest challenge is finding the space for all of our meetings and activities!

Staff members continue to meet twice a month to ensure that the learning needs are being met by any student that is having difficulty in any particular area of school. If you have any questions/concerns regarding your child learning please speak to your child's teacher right away. You do not need to wait until formal interview times to address these concerns. If you have any questions regarding Special Education or accessing supports for your child please contact me. There will also be a special presentation regarding Special Education at our next School Council meeting on February 7, 2017 at 6:00pm. You do not need to be a School Council member to attend!

We have not escaped the season for illnesses. There have been a number of illnesses that have affected families and student attendance. We work hard to promote hand washing and keep children home if unwell. We also have a student in our primary division with an auto-immune problem, thus making this child even more susceptible to sickness. Please help us by supporting proper hand washing and keeping your child home if he/she is sick.

Our Platinum Eco Initiatives continue to build and thrive thanks to the leadership of Ms. Qazi and Ms. Mahen. All students are encouraged to bring Litterless Lunches (re-usable packaging), our student eco-club performs daily energy audits and our recycling patrol collect milk cartons, juice boxes and fruit peelings/cores in the lunchroom daily. You should be able to see how much your child is eating at school as they are expected to bring home all of the ingredients in their lunch-bag outside of the items just listed.

And yes, it is Report Card time once again. You will be receiving a report card for your child on Monday February 13, 2017. While teachers prioritize students who may be having difficulty at this time of year, you can always request an interview with your child's teacher. Please look for more information coming home in weeks to come.

Have you heard? We are soon moving to Mackie Snackie 4 days a week beginning January 30th!! Thank you for the

dedicated efforts of Lori Gibbs, Julie Dainard and team . The snack program is time-intensive but a fantastic way to keep our children nourished throughout the day! We simply could not run such a program without the support of reliable and dedicated volunteers.

At this time of the year we begin to set our sights on the next school year. A first step in this process is Kindergarten Registration. Kindergarten Registration will take place at Mackie on February 6, 2017.

Finally, by the end of this month, we will have said our farewells to a longstanding and well-loved community member, Mr. Mike Connolly. Mr. Mike is retiring in good health and is happily looking forward to spending more time with his wife and family, and greeting each day without an alarm clock. His contributions to our school, community and especially to our school spirit and students will be greatly missed. We wish you all the best Mr. Mike!!!!

The position of Head Caretaker will be filled by a TDSB Caretaking employee until the staffing process is complete. When this process is complete, we will introduce our new Head Caretaker to our student body and community.

Sincerely,

Ms. Ponka

Principal

G. P. Mackie Jr. Public School

416-396-6265