



The Panther Press



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<http://www.dsbni.org/Schools/GeneralVanier>

“Achieving Success Together”

General Vanier School

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PRINCIPAL'S PERSPECTIVE



We welcome you all to 2012 and hope you and your family had an enjoyable break! January always means the start of planning for the next school year, beginning with a series of important information sessions. If you have a child who will turn four by next December, then you'll want to be here on Feb. 2nd for our Kindergarten Open House. If your child is at the end of their elementary years, then the Fort Erie Secondary School Open House on Thurs. Jan 19th is a chance for you and your child to check out the school. Additionally we will also be inviting parents of students in grades 3 & 4 to the French Immersion Open House at McKay School in Port Colborne on Jan. 31st and those with students in grades 5, 6 or 7 to Fort Erie Elementary on Thurs. Jan. 26th to hear about the DSBNI Academy for next year.

Also with January come Term One Report cards, which are due home on Wed. Feb 8th. This report will include grades for each subject taught, as well as your child's teacher's assessment of their Learning Skills. Staff will be having a P.A. day on Fri. Jan. 20th to support report card preparation.

The Accommodation Review meetings continue with two this month: a public one on Wed. Jan. 11th and the small committee on Wed. Jan. 25th. The Committee will wrap up with the last public meeting on Wed. Feb. 8th. Each meeting begins at 6:00 pm here at General Vanier.

School events this month include: Knights of Columbus Free Throw Jan. 19th, Family Literacy Day on Fri. 27th, Spirit Days on the 13th & 27th and our monthly Celebration Assembly at 9:00 am also on Jan. 27th. Between open houses, registration, report cards and events, there's plenty to pack into a mere four weeks!

Term One Report Cards



Since their return from Christmas, students have been completing assignments and teachers have been submitting marks and comments, all in preparation for the Term One Report Card – which will arrive home on Wed. Feb. 8th, 2012. Unlike the November Progress Report, this one will include letter grades or percentages, along with comments specific to each subject taught. Additionally teachers will also comment on your child's Learning Skills progress to date. Should either the teacher wish to speak to parents, or a

parent to a teacher, this can be arranged after the reports go home on the 8th. The next and final report card for the year, Term Two, will arrive the last week in June 2011 – though you may request a conference with your child's teacher before that time, should you see the need.

P.A. Day Fri. Jan. 20th

As part of the preparation for those reports, staff will have a P.A. day on Friday January 20th to allow them time to compile all their data and enter it onto the newest form of the electronic report card. There will be no school for children that day.

Homework Club

If your child needs some extra help with homework, a project, or needs to use our school library or computers, our Homework Club runs from 3:15 to 4:00 PM each Monday, Wednesday and Thursday in our school library. Ms. Eves will be there to support those needing help. If you'd like your child to stay, just provide us with written permission, through a separate note or a line written into their agenda.



Family Literacy Day Fri. Jan. 27th

Plans are being finalized for our celebration of Family Literacy Day on Fri. Jan. 27th. We will be holding some special events that day within the school, including a chance for our students to have some selected stories read to them. To help us out, we have invited members of the Fort Erie Meteors Hockey club to drop by to read and spend part of the day with our students.



Meteors Hockey Game Night

Back near Halloween in October the Fort Erie Meteors Hockey Club hosted a “General Vanier School Appreciation Night” where students and families from our school were the featured school at a Meteors game. We sold about 30 tickets and those there thought it would be worth trying again, so ... while we don't have a firm date, we will try and set up another Vanier Night at a game before March Break.



We are Counting Down to Kindergarten!

Children who will be four years of age or older by December 31 are eligible to enroll in Kindergarten starting September 2012.

Going to school for the first time is a major step for children and their parents. At the DSBN, families start that journey together at the 'Kindergarten Countdown' Open House. Families can visit our school, meet the kindergarten teacher, and receive a gift bag filled with fun learning resources and information that will help children develop school readiness skills. Mark your calendar for Thursday, February 2, 2012 from 4-6 p.m. for our Kindergarten Countdown Open House. Visit www.dsbn.org and click on "Kindergarten Registration" for all the details!



"Hey Parents! Do You Know What Your Kids Are Watching?"

Young people look to celebrities for reassurance about their fashion and behaviour. The evidence is clear....the more youth see smoking in movies, the more likely they are to start smoking.



Ways to Protect our Kids

1. Be aware of what your children are viewing and learn which movies have smoking in them. Updates are available every Thursday at facebook.com/hookedbyhollywood.
2. Talk to your children about tobacco and movies and teach them to be media aware.
3. Show your support to get tobacco out of youth-rated films in Ontario at smokefreemovies.ca.
4. Spread the word to other parents and join the discussion on facebook and twitter.

www.smokefreemovies.ca
facebook.com/hookedbyhollywood

Helping Others Parent Effectively

Our HOPE (Helping Others Parent Effectively) group's next meeting is January 18, 2012 at the St. Catharines Regional Child Care Centre, located at 179 Carlton Street, in St. Catharines. The topic will be: Healthy Eating Tips for the Whole Family. Sandy Maxwell, a Registered Dietitian, will be giving suggestions for weight, sleep and physical activity concerns.



Vaccines and Elementary School Children

Niagara Region Public Health is conducting an annual review of vaccination records for all elementary school children in the Niagara region. **If the vaccination information we have on file for your child is NOT complete, you will receive a letter and questionnaire**

from us in the mail later this month (January 2012).

- Please follow the instructions for reporting your child's vaccinations to us, as outlined in the letter. Various options for reporting are available.
- If your child is overdue for one or more vaccinations, you will need to make an appointment with your child's doctor to get your child vaccinated. You can also make an appointment for your child at one of Public Health's General Immunization Clinics by calling 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7425.
- If you are a parent/guardian not wishing to vaccinate your child, you will need to provide Niagara Region Public Health with an original legal exemption document.

Students under 18 years of age attending Ontario schools must have proof of immunization against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella (German measles). We are required to have this information by law (*Immunization of School Pupils Act, 1990*). **Please provide us with your child's missing vaccination information by March 8, 2012 or your child may be suspended from school.**

For more information, please call the Vaccine Preventable Disease Program at 905-688-8248 OR 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7425.



AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES

There may be times during the school year where inclement weather or other situations could cause transportation cancellations or school closures.



At times when student transportation has been cancelled and schools remain open, the decision of whether or not to have children in school on that day rests with the parent or guardian.

Should you decide not to send your child to school in the event that transportation is cancelled but schools remain open, or if your child is ill or late, please ensure that you call your child's school to inform them of your child's absence.

A key resource in any emergency is the DSBN Emergency Information form that you filled out at the beginning of the school year. Please let the school know of any changes in contact information or procedures you wish to be followed throughout the school year. Information about transportation cancellations and school closures will be available as soon as it is available through the following channels:

Websites:

www.dsbns.org
www.nsts.ca

Subscription Features:

DSBN Facebook or Twitter
NSTS Transportation Delay or Cancellation Alerts

Phone:

Niagara Student Transportation Services 905-346-0290

Radio Stations:

CKTB (610 AM) St. Catharines	CHRE (105.7 FM) St. Catharines
WAVE (94.7 FM) Hamilton	CHTZ-FM (97.7 FM) St. Catharines
CKOC (1150 AM) Hamilton	CKEY (105.1 FM) Niagara Falls/Fort Erie
CHML (900 AM) Hamilton	K-LITE-FM (102.9 FM) Hamilton
CHAM (820 AM) Hamilton	GIANT FM (91.7 FM) Welland
Y-108(107.9) Hamilton	

Television Stations:

CH – Hamilton
CityTV Breakfast Television
CTV Toronto
Cogeco Channel 10

Cold Weather Alerts at DSBN

Winter is a time of wonder for many children; many enjoy the crisp air, the freshly fallen snow and participating in a whole host of exciting winter sports and activities.



Although we feel it is important for students to spend some time outside each day exercising and socializing with their peers, there are times when bitterly cold temperatures and other inclement weather conditions require that we keep children inside.

Because Niagara is such a large geographical area, and weather conditions may vary from one municipality to the next, the decision whether or not to hold recess outdoors is made by the individual school principal. When making this decision, principals will often consult with neighbouring schools, talk with parents as they arrive in the morning, and if the decision to send children outside is made, yard duty staff will communicate with the office to sound the bells to bring students in earlier if needed.

The health and well-being of our students is a top priority at the District School Board of Niagara, and if it is determined that the weather conditions pose a risk to their safety, students will be kept indoors. Extreme cold weather alerts

issued by the Niagara Region are often good indicators that students will stay inside.

Even when temperatures are not low enough to necessitate an indoor recess, it still may be quite cold outside. Here are a few tips to help ensure that your child stays warm during the cold winter months.

- Try to send children to school with plenty of layers, such as long underwear, sweatshirts, sweaters and pullovers. Layering their clothing will allow them to add or remove items depending on the weather.



- Students should have a warm winter coat that repels the snow, sleet and rain, while blocking the wind.

- Warm socks and boots will keep their feet warm and dry in the snow and slush.



- Hats are one of the most important parts of dressing warmly in the winter. A thick winter hat will keep students from losing too much of that essential body heat.



- Put on a good pair of gloves or mittens that are water-resistant as well. Gloves will keep kids' hands toasty warm and protect their skin from becoming damaged by the wind and chill.



If you have any questions about our inclement weather procedures, please visit our website dsbn.org, or contact the principal.

Fort Erie Accommodation Review Process

Following the last public meeting in mid-November, the Accommodation Review Committee met on Nov. 30th to review all of the input they had received. At the end of their session, the A.R.C. agreed to recommend to the Board a slightly altered version of the Board's Senior Planning Team suggestion: to expand Garrison Road School's drawing area to include all students south of the QEW, and to expand General Vanier's capacity to accommodate those students currently attending both Rose Seaton and Fort Erie Elementary – both of which would be scheduled to close by June 2013.

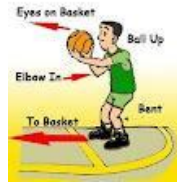


The A.R.C. will formally present the details of this option at the next **Public Meeting**, scheduled for Wednesday January 11th 2012, starting at 6:00 pm. Members of the community will have an opportunity to provide feedback to the Committee through an open microphone. If you are interested in accessing any of the meeting records and supporting documents shared in the process so far, you can do so through either the DSBN or General Vanier websites

via the Accommodation Review Committee link. The final meeting of the Fort Erie A.R.C. will be on Wed. Jan. 25th, followed by the last public session on Wed. Feb. 8th, 2012.

Knights of Columbus Free-Throw

Mr. Gunning and Mr. Piett have been busy over the last month holding tryouts for our school's reps at the upcoming Knights of Columbus 'Free Throw Competition' on Jan. 19th. Those students will represent their age group over at the Leisureplex, trying for a chance to win some prizes while demonstrating their basketball skills. This year's Vanier squad will be made up of: Isiah J-E., Aarron T., River K., Tristen B., Matt L., Tessa J., Vicky T., Julia G., Brittney P. and Kayla B. We wish them all the best as they represent us at the Leisureplex on Thursday, January 19th. Good luck, players!



Grade Eights & FESS

Starting with this year's class, all of our Grade Eights will be selecting their high school courses using a web-based program called "Career Cruising" – which also serves a tool for their guidance classes. The beauty of this new program is that it shows students what their choices are for next year and also shows the options they have in the years to follow. As in the past, the homeroom teacher makes a recommendation on whether each student should be taking the academic or applied level, the difference being now that it is already on-line when the students log in. Vanier will have the guidance folks from FESS over here on Mon., Jan. 16th to discuss their course options. Once their choices are made, each student will be bringing home a course selection sheet to be reviewed with and signed by their parents. To help everyone make the best decisions, **all grade eights and their parents are invited to FESS' Open House from 6:30 to 8:30 pm on Thurs. Jan. 19th** where they can have their questions answered and tour the facility.



Grade 4 & 5 French Immersion for September 2012

The DSBN is expanding their French Immersion program by starting the program across the Board beginning with grade 4 at all sites and with a grade one entry class at selected pilot sites. . Registration forms can be found at the DSBN website, which you can access through Vanier's website or directly at <http://www.dsbn.edu.on.ca/> The folks from McKay School will be bringing their French Immersion information session to Vanier on Thurs., Jan. 19th at 1:40 pm to speak with our students in grades 3 and 4. Their Open House will be held on January 31, 2012 from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.



January Celebration Assembly

Our January Celebration Assembly will happen on Fri. Jan. 27th at 9:00 am. Parents, grandparents, little brothers & sisters and friends are all welcome to attend.

DSBN Academy 2012-2013

On Thursday January 26th, Fort Erie Elementary is hosting an information evening for parents and students in grades 5, 6 & 7 interested in attending the DSBN Academy in September. Located in Welland, the Academy is an optional school setting, with an intensive focus on academic success that is intended to better prepare them for a post secondary school program at a college or university. If this sounds like the right opportunity for your child, please contact Fort Erie Elementary at (905)871-2673 to reserve your seat for the presentation. The application forms can be found on-line at <http://www.dsbn.edu.on.ca/>

Student Council

In December, Student Council coordinated another successful Christmas Toy & Food Drive. Thanks to the generosity of students, parents and staff, the Salvation Army received over 100 kg of food and \$200 in cash to help Fort Erie families this winter. In addition several hundred dollars worth of toys were donated by parents and workplaces which the local Kinsmen Club also directed to needy families. A photograph of their efforts appeared in the local papers. As a follow-up to the drive, the \$100 incentive that the Kinsmen awarded to schools who participated, Student Council has agreed to donate to Doctors Without Borders, an international charity of trained medical personnel who donate their time free of charge to assist in disaster areas the world over.



Friday School Spirit Days

Student Council has also planned out the next three School Spirit Friday themes. On Fri. Jan. 13th they will be hosting 'Hockey Sweater Day' where students are encouraged to wear a sweater or jersey from their favourite hockey team. Two weeks later on Fri. Jan. 27th, they are challenging students to come dressed as their favourite story book character to help us celebrate Family Literacy Day. Then on Feb. 10th it will be Tacky Sweater Day, in support of National Sweater Day - a mid-winter environmental event where we will turn down the heat a degree or two and wear a sweater instead. This is everyone's chance to show off that sweater from your Aunt that you have buried at the back of your closet! As with each of our Spirit Days Student Council will be noting those participating and tallying them by colour team.



December Celebration Assembly

Congratulations go out to the winners from our December Celebration Assembly. They were: Gavin Mc., Brooke D., Brittney P., Danielle N., Railynn D., Allyson B., Mara R., Nathyn M., Rachael D., Trista L., Emily L., Carly J., Ash C., Ruby P., Cameron D., Weston T., and for French we have Graham R. and Nicole M.

Recycling Contest Winner

During each of the six recycling pick-ups during this past fall, Mr. Olsen had been keeping close tabs on what was going into each classroom's recycling box, and awarding points to those who had the "right stuff". The results from each bi-weekly pick were posted in the main hallway so that classrooms could see how they were doing. After a very close competition, the class that came out on top was Mr. Salmon's French class – which is no easy accomplishment as many classes use his room in the course of the day. His name will be added to our recycling trophy which will awarded to him at this month's Celebration Assembly.



schools to come out and hear what it is all about. After the presentation there will be an opportunity for questions from the audience, and a chance to mingle afterwards over some refreshments. Everyone is welcome. It should be a very interesting evening for all who can make it.

Colour Team Intramural Soccer

We are nearly at the end of our first round of indoor soccer play. Each week during a nutrition break, two of our colour teams square off in the gym. Points are awarded for having the most players present and additional points for winning that day's match. The competition has been very close and the last few games will be important in determining the winners. Our thanks go out to Mr. Campbell and Mr. Salmon for organizing and running the league.

School Council & Parents Group

This month, on Tuesday January 24th, we will be having a two-for-one meeting for Vanier parents.



There will be a brief regular meeting of our School Council starting at 6:30 pm, we will conduct regular business, including discussing some fundraising ideas.

Following that short meeting, at 7:00 pm, the group will then hear from Rhonda Baron of Bridges Community Health, who acted as our school coordinator for last year's School Travel Plan pilot program. Rhonda will be presenting the wrap-up report and encourage discussion around how we can expand to other schools in Niagara. As we were a pilot program for Fort Erie and the hope is that the STP will expand to other schools, an invitation has also been extended to the parents of neighbouring

Vanier Chess Club 2012

Now that winter is here, girls and boys from grades three to eight interested in playing chess are invited to join the Vanier Chess Club. The Club will run during selected 1st Nutrition Breaks from now until just after March Break. From those players, Mr. King will select about ten to represent the school at the Area One tournament, which is usually held about the end of March or early April. If successful there players will be invited to participate at the DSBN tournament which occurs in mid-April. No experience is necessary, just a desire to play!



January Newsletter Draw

My child(ren) _____ brought home this newsletter and I have read it.



Signature of Parent / Guardian



District School Board of Niagara Expanding French Immersion for 2012

The District School Board of Niagara is pleased to now offer French Immersion beginning at the Grade 4 level across the system. In addition, as of September 2012, we will be implementing a Grade One French Immersion Pilot at 5 locations. As well as the new grade 4 entry, Grade 5 entry will continue across the Board for the 2012-2013 school year (Grade 7 entry will continue in St. Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake).

Information re: entry levels and the application process is on the DSBN website www.dsbni.org. Click on the Parent Tab, under Programs, click on French and International Languages, click on French Immersion Registration. Applications for Grades 1, 4, 5 and 7 (at select schools) will be online. Application packages will also be available at your child's school starting January 9, 2012. Further program information will be sent home with your child in January.

"The ability to communicate in French is a valuable skill, because French is **one** of Canada's two official languages and because it is a language used widely around the world. Research confirms that knowledge of a second language strengthens first-language skills and that the ability to speak two or more languages generally enhances reasoning and problem solving skills, as well as creative-thinking skills. Learning a second language not only strengthens students' ability to communicate, but also develops their capacity to understand and respect other cultures. In this way, second-language learning prepares students to participate more effectively in the workplace and in the global economy, and provides them with a distinct advantage in a number of careers, both in Canada and internationally." (pg 3 of the E.F./F.I. Curriculum Document (C.D.) 2001)

Parent Information Evenings will take place during the weeks of January 30 – February 10th. If you wish to find out more details about the French Immersion program, please attend one of the Information Evenings listed below or call your school.

Central	January 30, 2012	6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Alexandra	January 30, 2012	6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Parliament Oak	January 31, 2012	6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Dalewood	January 31, 2012	6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
McKay	January 31, 2012	6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Prince Philip (Niagara Falls)	February 1, 2012	6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Sheridan Park	February 1, 2012	6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Gordon	February 6, 2012	6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Princess Elizabeth	February 6, 2012	6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Oakridge	February 6, 2012	6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Briardale	February 7, 2012	6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Queen Mary	February 7, 2012	6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
John Marshall	February 8, 2012	6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Bienvenue!

Trustees say “Oui!” to Expansion of French Immersion Programs

Learning a second language enhances students’ reasoning and creative thinking skills, develops their capacity to respect other cultures, and prepares them to participate more fully in an increasingly global marketplace.

With these opportunities in mind, at their regular meeting on December 13, 2011, Trustees approved the expansion of the DSBN’s existing French Immersion program from a Grade 5 entry to one that has students starting in Grade 4. Trustee support of the program expansion will see 36 classrooms open their doors to French Immersion in September, 2012.



The development of French Immersion at the DSBN does not stop there however. Increased parent interest in the program also fueled the plan to implement a Grade One pilot in five schools this fall. Central Public School will launch the Grade One pilot for families in West Niagara, Briardale and Sheridan Park Public Schools will offer the pilot in St. Catharines, John Marshall Public School will run the Niagara Falls pilot, and Gordon Public School will serve the communities of south Pelham.

Superintendent of School Support Services Carol Germyn notes that the decision by Trustees to approve the Grade One pilot will enable more students in Niagara to learn French at a time when they are able to grasp the subtleties of language. “Younger language learners have a great ability to grasp both pronunciation and intonation of new languages,” Germyn said.

To learn more about both the Grade Four entry into French Immersion and the Grade One French Immersion Pilot, parents are invited to attend open houses scheduled for January 2012. Julie Stapleton, DSBN FSL and International Languages Consultant adds that the open houses are also a great way to find out if the program is suitable for their child. “When parents attend a French Immersion open house they will learn more about program specifics, and also ask questions that pertain to their child’s specific learning and program needs,” she said.

Parents interested in enrolling their children in French Immersion will be able to register online from the DSBN website www.dsbno.org starting January 9 2012, with a deadline of February 29, 2012.

For more information about French Immersion at the DSBN, please contact Kelly McDonnell at 905-227-5551 ext. 54202 or Julie Stapleton, DSBN FSL and International Languages Consultant, at 905-227-5551 ext. 52220.

West Niagara:

- Central Public School is accepting Grade 1 students (pilot) as well as Grades 4 and 5 entry students
- Students from Central will continue in the French Immersion program at Lakeview Public School for Grades 6, 7 and 8.

St. Catharines (north):

- Sheridan Park Public School is accepting Grade 1 students (pilot). In 2013, the pilot will expand to include Grade 2, with Grade 3 added the following year.
- Students from Sheridan Park will continue in the French Immersion program at Dalewood Public School for Grades 4-8.

St. Catharines (south):

- Briardale Public School is accepting Grade 1 students (pilot) as well as Grades 4 and 5 entry students
- Students from Briardale will continue in the French Immersion program at Oakridge Public School for Grades 6, 7 and 8.

Niagara Falls:

- John Marshall Public School is accepting Grade 1 students (pilot). In 2013, the pilot will expand to include Grade 2, with Grade 3 added the following year.
- Students from John Marshall will continue in the French Immersion program at Prince Philip Public School for Grades 4-8.

Welland/Pelham/Fonthill:

- Gordon Public School is accepting Grade 1 students (pilot) as well as Grades 4 and 5 entry students



January 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Christmas Holidays	3 Christmas Holidays	4 Christmas Holidays	5 Christmas Holidays	6 Christmas Holidays	7
8	9	10	11 Accommodation Review meeting at Vanier – 6:00 pm	12	13 Hockey Jersey Day	14
15	16	17	18	19 French Immersion visit for Gr. 3 & 4's – 1:40 pm Gr. 8's – FESS Open House @ FESS – 6:30 – 8:30 pm Knights of Columbus Free Throw @ YMCA – 6:30 pm	20 P.A. Day – no classes for students today	21
22	23	24 School Council meeting – 6:30 pm in the library - 7:00 pm School Transportation Plan meeting	25 Accommodation Review meeting at Vanier – 6:00 pm	26 DSBN Academy presentation at Fort Erie P.S. – 6:00 pm – for students currently in Gr. 5, 6, & 7	27 Celebration Assembly – 9:00 am Family Literacy Day Come dressed as your favourite story book character	28 Legion Public Speaking – 10:00 am
29	30	31 French Immersion Open House @ McKay School in Port Colborne – 6:30 – 7:30 pm	Feb. 1	Feb. 2 Kindergarten Open House – 4:00 – 6:00 pm	3	4