



The Panther Press



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

"Achieving Success Together"

General Vanier School

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PRINCIPAL'S PERSPECTIVE

Welcome to September! We trust you had a joyous summer and that your children were thrilled to return to our care. I certainly suspect many of our parents are happy!



We have had a number of families depart and our staff looks a bit different. In June we said goodbye to Mrs. McAlpine, Miss Schultz, Miss Simms, Mrs. Cassidy and Ms. Wright, but welcomed Miss McMahan, Mr. Haynes, Mr. Salmon, and Ms. Eves. Our Youth Counselor will again be Tracy Hofland. Many of these folks will be here to meet you at our BBQ & Open House on Sept 13th.



We ask you to do your best to ensure all the forms and papers are completed accurately and returned. This is especially true when there are health concerns, a need for medication to be administered at school and in cases of custody changes between parents. Without your guidance on these matters our ability to do what's best for child will be hampered. On the safety issue, we remind you about our sign-in system for parent visitors. In our efforts to ensure the safety of all children, we are asking for your assistance and support here.



On the horizon this month we will have an Early Release Day on Friday September 23rd, meaning there will be no school that afternoon and children will be dismissed at 12:05, buses at 12:15. In early October, attached to the Thanksgiving weekend, we will have a full day P.A. Day on Oct. 7th. Parents can expect an Interim Report in November, with the first report card with 'marks' arriving in early February.



Finally, on behalf of the staff and community let me welcome you back to another year. Our hope is that it will be another great one at General Vanier. As the commercial says, this is truly 'the most wonderful time of the year!'



School Staff 2011 – 2012

Miss R. McMahon	JK/SK – AM & some 7/8
Ms. D. MacInnes	Grades 1/ 2 and Literacy
Mr. J. Haynes	Grades 2/3
Mr. M. Gunning	Grades 4/5
Mr. R. Campbell	Grades 5/6
Mr. B. Badger	Grades 7/8 & Teacher Librarian
Mr. B. Salmon	French
Mr. J. Piett	Learning Resource Teacher
	1/ 2 Math & Primary Prep
Miss A. Eves	Educational Assistant – all day
Mr. B. Cross	Educational Assistant – AM
Mr. R. Olsen	Head Caretaker
Mr. B. McKay	Cleaner
Mrs. D. Hum	Lunch Supervisor
Mrs. Tracy Hofland	Youth Counselor
Mrs. M. Walpole	Secretary
Mr. G. King	Principal

As you can see, Vanier has all split grades this year and just a single, morning Kindergarten class. Last Spring we lost some long-time staff but welcomed some new staff - Miss McMahon, Mr. Haynes and Mr. Salmon, plus saw the return of Ms. Eves. Though our student population continues to get smaller (our total is below 120 students now), our staff numbers will not likely change for this year. However projections for the numbers of school-aged children across Town suggest that this shrinking trend will continue for some time, which is one reason why the Accommodation Review process will begin its work here in Fort Erie later this month.

2011 - 2012 Report Cards

2011 – 2012 marks the second year of the new report card cycle. The new reports are written in more parent-friendly language and should be more specific to your individual child – reflecting parent feedback in recent years. Parents can expect an Interim Report card, which will report on the Learning Skills and initial progress in all subject areas, on Tuesday November 15th 2011. The first use of letter grades or percentages will be on the Term One Report Card at the end of the first semester, on Wednesday February 8th 2012. The final reports will arrive home at the end of the school year, on Tuesday June 26th 2012. While no formal dates have been reserved for



interviews, all parents will be contacted in November. Likewise should you or your child's teacher wish to discuss your child's progress at another point in the school year, a phone call is all it takes to set up a meeting.

Working for Student Success

One of our emphasis' this year will be to ensure that we are delivering a full and comprehensive balanced literacy program in each classroom, including regularly working with small groups of students. Common in most of our Primary classrooms, this will be a bit of a switch, or rather a flashback, for some of our Juniors & Intermediates, but the research suggests this approach will be beneficial to all. It should also provide teachers with a more detailed knowledge of student strengths and needs – something that will be very useful for the interviews after our Interim



Report Card goes home in November. It also supports our continuing work with effective student feedback. In addition to that, one of our school goals will be improving students' mathematics skills. Our grade 4 to 6 classes have already begun by working together to implement some of the SUM math ideas Mr. Campbell and Mr. Gunning have been studying for the past few years.



During both the Early Release day on Sept 23rd and the Oct. 7th P.A. staff will be looking at the results of our EQAO from last spring. This data will help us determine which specific focus in literacy and mathematics we will be selecting for the year, and specifically what the emphasis of each of our Learning pathways will be for the year.

EQAO Spring 2011

Last Spring our grade six and grade three students each wrote a series of tests sent out by the Education Quality and Accountability Office or E.Q.A.O. The tests evaluate student skills in the areas of reading writing and mathematics, comparing them to students elsewhere in the DSNB and to those across the province. Over the summer those tests were graded and we expect to have the results sent to us by mid September. At that time the results will be available to the public and shared with our School Council. The parents of each student who wrote the tests will get a take-home summary of how they did. Our staff will spend some time this fall examining those results and use that information on the October 7th P.A. day to help plan out our students and teacher learning goals for 2011-2012.



Kids Quest

Our Kids Quest Program will continue again this year, though it will run Tuesday afternoons only, starting September 27th at 3:15. We will be welcoming back Mr. Greg Sentance as the teacher, who will be working with Big Brother / Big Sisters of Fort



Erie to put things together. The focus of the program will be more than just homework help, and will also include some snack and activity time as well. It will run right after school for about 90 minutes. Invitations to parents of those children we are recommending to the program will arrive home the week of Sept. 12th and will need to be returned directly, as place will be awarded on a first-come first-served basis. The program is designed to accommodate about a dozen children.

Homework Club

New this year, we will also be offering a Homework Club several times a week. Our Educational Assistant, Ms. Eves, will be supervising selected students after school for 45 minutes to assist them. At press time we were compiling the list based on teacher recommendations and will be informing students and parents in time to start up the week of Sept. 19th.



Early Release – Friday September 23rd

The afternoon of Fri. Sept. 23rd will see all our students dismissed at midday. Our walking students will be dismissed at 12:05. Crossing guards will be on duty for the student's morning trip to school and their trip home at midday. Those taking the bus will depart at 12:15 - three (3) hours earlier than the regularly scheduled bus departure time. **PLEASE NOTE:** Morning JK and SK students may ride their scheduled buses to school on these days, but parents will be required to pick up their child at the end of the morning class. If a JK/SK parent cannot commit to picking up their child, they should not send their child to school on these dates.



September Celebration Assembly

Each month, teachers select several classroom 'superstars' for recognition at our Recognition Assembly. Those students are selected based on the character trait of the month or other good works. Our first assembly will be on the afternoon of Friday September 30th in the school gym.



Open House & BBQ

Mark your fridge calendars for Tuesday September 13th for our annual Family BBQ & Open House. Each September we welcome our students and their families back for another school year with hotdogs, salads and juice, followed by a chance for students to introduce their teacher and visit their new classroom. The food will be served from 5:00 to 6:00 PM, rain or shine, and the classrooms will be open from 6:00 to 6:30 PM. The no-charge event is open to all students and their families. We look forward to seeing you!



Terry Fox Walk

Each September school children from across Canada faithfully participate in a fundraiser for the Terry Fox Foundation to help them in their fight to find a cure for cancer. We will join other thousands of other schools on Friday September 23rd during Period 3 – just before students are dismissed for the afternoon on our Early Release Day. All students will complete several large laps about the school yard and neighbouring Douglas Park in honour of Terry Fox's efforts some thirty years ago. We ask that each student bring in a loonie or toonie to donate to the cause of cancer research. Our hope is to match or exceed last year's total of \$300.



Safe Schools

Increasingly schools are being required to be more concerned with student safety within our buildings and controlling those who come and go within them. Many homes now consist of 'blended' families where our students may be the children of adults other than those living with them, and where there are custodial restrictions and/or limitations placed on non-custodial parents. In such cases when issues of access arise, schools must take make their decisions based on the most current legal documents in our possession. If the legal conditions around your child have changed, or you are not certain what we may, or may not, have on file regarding your child then you should contact Mr. King to do an update or review.



Yard Supervision

A reminder to parents: our teachers are on yard supervision starting at 8:35 each morning. When walking or sending your child(ren) off to school please ensure that their arrival isn't before 8:35 am.

Visitors Sign-In Procedures

We will continue our practice of having **ALL visitors** inside the school during the school day [8:35 to 3:15] **report first to the main office** before moving about the school. If you are simply dropping off something for your child, those items can be left at the office and they will be delivered. If however you are here with the intention of staying, Mrs. Walpole will ask you to sign in and issue you a temporary name tag indicating that you are an approved visitor. Our policies require that all adults – regular teaching, supplies, tradesmen or volunteers are required to wear a name tag. That way, no unauthorized adult should be in our building or on the yard.

Child Drop-Off or Pick-up

Should you bring your child to school after classes have begun, we ask that you bring them into the office. There, Mrs. Walpole can record their arrival and issue them with a late slip. Likewise if you are picking your child up for an appointment, we also ask that you come into the office to sign them out. If this happens during our secretary's

lunch hour (12:30 to 1:30) Mr. King and/or a student secretary will be happy to assist you. If you are meeting your child after school, please avoid doing so in the Main Office, entrances or hallways. Instead we ask you choose a place outside of the school to meet your child.

No Crossing Guards

New this year, there will be no crossing guards at Central Ave or Catherine Street during 2nd Nutrition Break as there have been in the past. The reason? Very few, if any, of our students go home for lunch now and the crossing guards can be better used elsewhere. Therefore we are expecting that **ALL students will remain at school for both breaks, unless** a) they are **picked up** by and signed out by an authorized adult or b) we receive **written permission from a parent** allowing their child to go home. Those families affected by the change can expect a call from Mr. King to confirm things.



Walking to School

Last year our School Travel Plan committee worked hard to encourage as many of our students as possible to get in the habit of walking or biking to school. We held several Walk to School Days and a Bike Rodeo to show them how it could be done, and done safely. The payoff was that our children received daily exercise, fresh air and helped re-establish our sense of community here at the school. Though the formal part of the STP has ended we will continue what we began, starting with another Walk to School Day in early October. In the meanwhile, strap on your bike helmets and walking shoes!



Cars Versus Kids

On poor weather days we often see an increase in auto traffic around the school. Please keep in mind:

- Park **ONLY** where it is permitted. Real parking spaces are clearly marked. Parking anywhere else may be convenient for you, but it puts our children at risk.
- Our Kiss & Ride lane in front of the school is **NOT** a parking area – as the signs clearly indicate. When picking children up, you need to remain in your vehicle at all times. As it is also an 'anti-idling' area as well, we ask you to turn your engines off while you wait.
- Our busses may be small but they need their space. The paved area near the handicapped parking spot is reserved for them so please don't block that area.



Grade 7/8 Design/Science & Technology

Our intermediate students will be going to the Science & Technology program at Fort Erie Secondary on the afternoon of each Day 10 of our cycle. This will begin on Mon. Sept. 19th and continue until the end of January 2012 – the end of Semester One. They will leave Vanier at 12:55 and return at 3:10 – in time for dismissal. For them, 2nd Nutrition Break will be at about 12:30 on these days. We ask that parents avoid setting appointments for their children on Science & Tech afternoons.



Medical Concerns

Each September we carefully go over the registration forms to ensure that we are aware of any special conditions or medical needs of our students. If you have indicated that your child has an allergy, sensitivity or medical condition, you can expect a letter from the school asking for more information – especially those students requiring medication or a medical emergency plan.



Authorized Adults

Many homes now consist of 'blended' families where our students may be the children of adults other than those living with them, and where there are custodial restrictions and/or limitations placed on non-custodial parents. In such cases when issues of access arise, schools must take their decisions based on the most current legal documents in our possession. If the legal conditions around your child have changed, or you are not certain what we have on file regarding your child then you should contact Mr. King.

Grade 7 Hepatitis & Grade 8 Girls Gardasil Vaccinations

Niagara Region Public Health nurse will be here on September 28th to speak to our grade sevens about their Hepatitis inoculations and our grade eights about HPV, or Human Papillomavirus inoculation. Consent forms will follow the talk, and they are to be returned by Thurs. Sept 29th as the initial round of inoculations is scheduled for Mon. Oct. 3rd.



Annual Magazine Fund Raiser

Our major school fund-raiser, the QSP Magazine Campaign kicks off with a 12:30 PM assembly on Wed. Sept. 14th. Students are encouraged to ask family & friends to subscribe or renew their subscriptions to their favourite popular magazines and earn some nifty prizes for themselves in the process. Our prices are well below newsstand and a portion of all sales is remitted to the school to help fund sports and clubs. All sales submitted on 'Double Day' Mon., Sept. 19th will count as double



credit towards their prize point total. The campaign will wrap up on Mon. Sept 26th.

Photo Day

Our photo day is **Thursday, October 13, 2011**. Edge Imaging provides a wide selection of products to capture your child's true personality. Your child should be bringing home a flyer containing all of the details. Feel free to visit www.edgeimaging.com for answers to frequently asked questions. Retakes will be done on Wed. Nov. 9th.

Student Leaders

By mid-month we will have our student morning announcers and milk monitors to assist with the distribution of milk during our 1st Nutrition Break in place. Volunteers sign up with a partner and work a two-week shift. With Mrs. Walpole's lunch hour shifting to 12:30 to 1:30 this year, we will also be recruiting some of our intermediate students to act as student secretary to handle calls in the office.



October 6th Provincial Election & Student Vote

Normally by the end of September, we open up nominations for our Student Council. Students elect a series of 'ministers' and a female and male representative from each of our classes from grades four through eight. With the provincial election happening on Oct. 6th we will also be signing up with Student Vote which is an election simulation for school-aged children where they get to cast an unofficial vote in a mock provincial election. More details about this will follow later this month.

School Council & Parents Group

One of the most active roles parents and community members of the school can take up is to be involved with our School Council and Parents' Group. While the Parent's Group is the official body that manages and disperses the proceeds from our Bingos, School Council has a much wider role. Besides offering feedback to the school on many topics such as student safety and discipline, they are also directly involved in supporting the educational efforts of the school and Board through both their financial support and planning of events. With the Board conducting an Accommodation Review of the four schools in town this Fall, the future of Fort Erie schools will also be on our agenda this year.



Each fall we seek out interested parents and community members to stand for election and we meet a minimum of five times throughout the year. As we must also select a Council rep to participate on the Accommodation Review Committee, our first meeting will be early this year, on Thursday September 15th at 7:00 PM in the school library. We hope to see you there.

Bingo

The largest source of money the school receives to support school trips, extra sports equipment and our special drama productions comes from our Bingos. Several times a quarter, volunteers from the school spend an evening working so that our children do not have to pay the full cost of these activities. If you are looking for a way to become involved in our school that does not involve a significant commitment of time, we ask that you call Susan Taylor at 289-320-9833 or the school at 905-871-5962. The date of our next bingo is September 17th at 1:00 pm. The other bingo dates this quarter are: October 15th – 1:00 pm; November 19th – 1:00 pm; December 17th – 1:00 pm & December 31st – 1:00 pm.



Fort Erie Accommodation Review Process

As the community is aware, starting later this month the DSBN is conducting an Accommodation Review of the four schools here in town: General Vanier, Rose Seaton, Garrison Road and Fort Erie Elementary schools. Over the next few months coming months, the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) will undertake an in-depth study of Fort Erie's elementary schools and provide recommendations that will help guide Board Trustees in their decision making. The ARC will include business members and/or a municipal representative, parents, a trustee, and DSBN staff. The public are welcome to observe all ARC meetings, which will be held in the gym at General Vanier. An opportunity to provide feedback will be provided during specially scheduled public meetings, which will be the second session held each month. The first meeting of the ARC will be on Wednesday Sept 21 at 6:30 PM, while the first Public session will be Wednesday Sept 28th also at 6:30 PM.

Ministry School Food and Beverage Policy

In their efforts to improve student health and nutrition, the Ministry of Education's new 'School Food and Beverage Policy' comes into effect this month. The policy sets out the nutritional requirements for food and beverages sold in schools, specifically requiring that more than 80% of what we sell must be lower in amounts of fat, sugar and sodium. The biggest impact these new rules will have will be on events like pizza days. A principal may schedule up to ten days per year where these requirements are relaxed, but that must be with the agreement of the School Council – another reason for parents to get involved this year. If you have an interest in food & nutrition, we would welcome your input on Council to help us work our way through the new rules.



Breakfast Club

Our school Breakfast Club will be open for business again this fall starting on Mon. Sept. 13th. Thanks to our local community volunteer, Mrs. Lorraine Spencer, we can offer dry cereal, toast selected fruits, juices and cheese to those who need a great start to their day. Open to all students, the program begins at 8:15 AM and runs for 30 minutes in Room 3. Our program is funded by the Niagara Nutrition Partners, the school and by parent donations. If you would like to offer either your time or a donation, please give us a call 905-871-5962.



Milk Program

We will continue to offer white & chocolate milk for sale at 1st Nutrition Break. Students are asked to pre-purchase a milk card that entitles them to 20 half-pint cartons, usable whenever they choose, at a cost of \$15.00. Those with spots remaining on cards from last year can carry them over to this year. Cards can be purchased for your child or another if you wish, through the Main Office.



School Sports

Our first varsity sport of the year, Cross Country is just underway. Under the guidance of Mr. Campbell and Mr. Haynes, they are practicing to improve their running endurance in preparation for the first of the Area One meets in early October – which will be right here at our school. The All-DSBN Cross Country meet is scheduled for our Area One qualifiers on October 12th at Fireman's Park in Niagara Falls.



Those students interested in playing on the school soccer team are busy honing their skills with Mr. Salmon. More information will follow as it becomes available.

School-Based Immunization Clinics

Did you know that every year in Canada, 1,400 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and more than 400 will die from it? Almost all cervical cancers are caused by a Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection. The HPV vaccine is an important medical advancement that makes cervical cancer a preventable disease.

Once again this year, the HPV vaccine called Gardasil® will be offered free to **all female Grade 8 students** through Niagara Region Public Health's school-based immunization clinics. In addition, the Hepatitis B vaccine and the Meningococcal vaccine called Menactra® will be offered free to **all Grade 7 students**.

Parent/student information packages will be coming home with your child in September. Clinic dates and times will be announced through your child's school.

For more information, speak to your school nurse or call the Vaccine Preventable Disease Program at 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7425.



September 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 P.A. Day	2	3
4	5 Labour Day	6 1st Day of School	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Open House & BBQ – 5–6 BBQ & 6–6:30 classrooms Soccer meeting – 1:05 pm	14 Magazine Drive starts today Cross-Country practice - 3:30 pm	15 School Council meeting – 7:00 pm in our library	16 Magazine Double Day bonus begins	17
18	19 Magazine Double Day bonus ends today EQAO results come in this week	20	21	22	23 Early Release Day	24
25	26 Magazine Drive ends today	27 Kids Quest – 3:15	28 Public Accommodation & Review meeting at General Vanier’s gym – 6:30 pm	29	30 Celebration Assembly - PM	