



STORM NEWS

Warman Community Middle School

December 2013

Message from the WCMS Administration

November was a very busy month at WCMS. Thank you to parents and guardians who attended student involved/led conferences on November 5th and 7th. We had approximately 90% of parents/guardians participating in the conferences. Research shows that parental interest and involvement in student learning is a key factor of student success. Our school attended the WHS Remembrance Day program on November 8. A big thank you to staff and students from WHS who did the organizing for this program. It was very engaging and informative for our students with a focus on the Korean War. As well, thank you to teachers and students who contributed many fine pieces of art work to the program. We were pleased to be joined by the Minister of Education Don McMorris, MLA Nancy Heppner, PSSD Director of Education John Kuzbik, members of the PSSD Board of Education, the WCMS School Community Council, and members of the community for our Grand Opening Celebration on November 15. A special thank you to Emily, Anna, Austin and Tristin for sharing their musical gifts with us at the program.

We prepare to see our intern teachers – Mr. Abbott, Ms. Sampson, and Mr. Vikse complete their internships in December. Thank you for your contributions to WCMS and best of luck in completing your last semester of schooling and embarking on your career. To our staff we welcome Ms. Styles, who is teaching Music 4 & 5 and some other subjects. We also welcome Ms. Zdunich who has taken over Mrs. Hamel's teacher-librarian position as she goes on maternity leave. We are excited to be welcoming Cari Hadlund and a cohort of fourth year nursing students from the University of Regina/SIAST program who will be working in our school on community health programming and education projects from January to March.

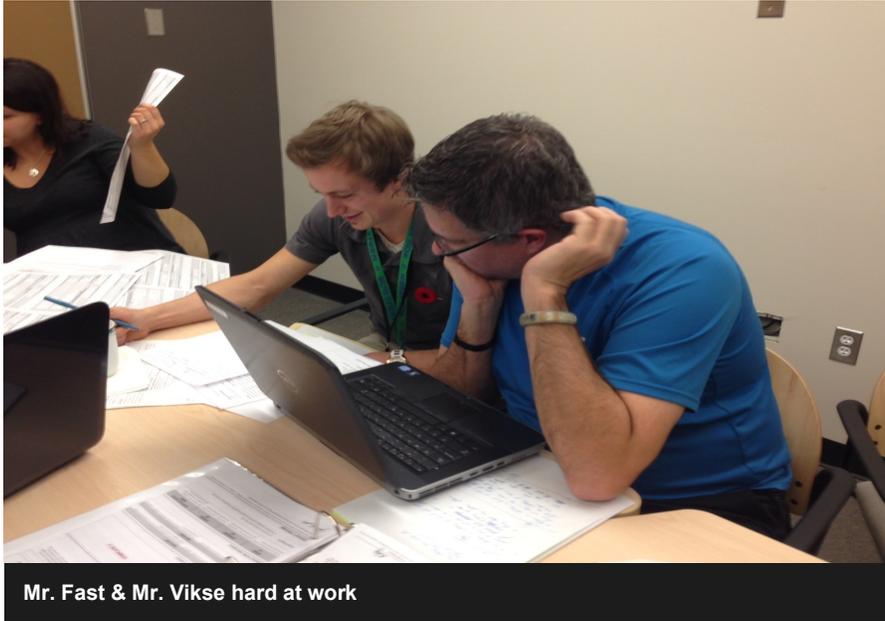
Our administrative team would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas. We hope you all have a safe, festive and restful holiday.

"Strength doesn't come from what you can do. It comes from overcoming the things you once thought you couldn't."

- Rikki Rogers

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Mr. Fast & Mr. Vikse hard at work

Parking and Access Plan

Moving students in and out of the facility is going fairly smoothly overall. A few reminders to parents and guardians as we continue to settle into the facility.

The area in front of the Legends Centre (east side of the facility) is for school bus loading. Please do not make arrangements to pick up your children from the Legends Centre parking lot immediately before or after school when the buses are on site. It is very dangerous for students to be walking between buses to access the Legends parking lot.

Pedestrian traffic and parent/guardian pickup takes place on the west side of the building. Students walking home should be exiting through the assigned student exit to the park paths and sidewalks. Private vehicles should park along Gowan Road when parents/guardians are picking up students.

Noon Hour Supervision Positions Available

We are in need of outside playground supervisors Monday to Friday at 12:58 - 1:23. Please complete a noon hour supervision application found on the PSSD website or contact Lisa Mason if you are interested in being a noon supervisor.

Changes to the Bell Schedule

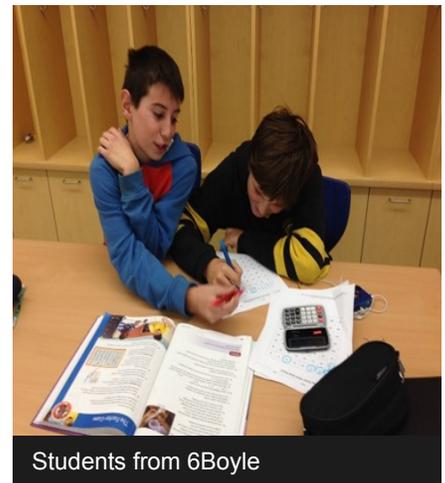
The two warning bells for students at 9:00 and 1:23 provide them with five minutes to come inside and get ready for class. We are finding this is insufficient time with the added clothing for winter and distance students need to travel. We will be extending that warning bell time to 8 minutes from 5 so the bells will ring at 8:57 and 1:20. This will not extend the school day, but will provide students with a few more minutes to prepare for their learning.

Assessment Information Session

All parents are invited to a question and answer session with members of the PSSD Assessment Team on **Friday, December 6th from 9:30 - 11:30 am.**

The format of this session will be an informal drop in for parents to raise concerns, ask questions and get clarification about the purposes, processes and goals of our assessment plan.

All are welcome! If you are unable to attend at this time and would like to arrange an alternate time, please contact Amy Orth at the school.



Students from 6Boyle

Happy Holidays

The final day of classes is Friday, December 20th. Students will return to classes on Monday, January 6th.

Bullying & Cyberbullying Presentation

FOR GRADE 7 STUDENTS

Wednesday,
Dec.11th A.M.



Just hanging out from 5McKay

*What do you have
in December that
you don't have in
any other month ?*

The letter "D"!

Cyber Safety for Parents

SGT. Brian Trainor

Thursday January 9th, 2014

7pm

Warman Community Middle School Theatre

WCMS and WHS are pleased to welcome SGT. Brian Trainor who will speak on the topic of cyber safety. Brian provides relevant and useful information about the cyber world and ideas on how to keep kids and families safe. All are welcome to attend!

Bus Cancellation Information

As we prepare for winter we would like to highlight some important bus cancellation information pertaining to cold weather. Further information can be located on the Prairie Spirit School Division website.

Buses will not run should the temperature be -40 degrees or colder **with wind chill** or if road conditions are considered dangerous.

On days when buses aren't running it will be posted by 7:00 a.m. on the Prairie Spirit School Division website (www.spiritsd.ca) and advertised on various radio stations.

If any or all buses do not run, parents need to know that **urban bus students will not receive a phone call**. If weather is such that you are not sure if buses are running you must check the Prairie Spirit School Division website.

If buses do not run in the morning because of cold weather or unsafe roads, they **will not run** after school that day, even if conditions have changed.

School Clothing

We have recently received more Storm clothing. It has been very popular. There have been some inquiries about being able to buy these items as Christmas gifts.

Parents/guardians who are interested in this can just stop by the office and speak to Patty or Natalie about picking up what you need.

WCMS Learn to Curl Program

The WCMS Learn to Curl Program will help students develop basic curling skills and basic knowledge for curling rules, etiquette and strategy. If students show a keen interest in the sport of curling, the coaches will encourage them to consider joining the WCMS Curling Team that will compete in junior high school curling playoffs.

Parents will need to make arrangements to drive students to and from practice. Bussing is not available for this activity. Practices will be Tuesdays at 4pm at the Martensville Curling Club: Dec. 3/10; Jan. 7/14/21/28; Feb. 4/11

Coaches: Mr. Flett and Mrs. Ford-Johnston

Grade 7 (CVAC) Basketball Update

Junior basketball is in full swing. Parents/guardians should check the school website for information on practice and game schedules for the teams.

Coaches: Mrs. Sawatzky (Community Coach), Mr. Tebay and Mr. E. Folden

Grade 6 Boys Storm Volleyball Season 2013

WCMS Grade 6 and 7 boys volleyball team had a great season! Not only did the boys improve their knowledge of the game and strengthen their skills, they also were very successful in our games and tournament. It was a pleasure coaching, and we look forward to next season! Great job, boys!

Coaches: Mr. Bachmeier and Ms. Russell

Grade 6 Girls Storm Volleyball Season 2013

The Grade 6 and 7 Girls Volleyball team had a great season at WCMS! The girls were able to develop some great volleyball skills as well as promote good sportsmanship on our team. During the season, we played against Rosthern and Allan and hosted a tournament that brought together many teams from surrounding areas. Overall, the season was very positive and we as coaches, are looking forward to working with the girls as a Grade 7 and 8 team next year. Good work ladies!

Coaches: Mrs. Erin Boyle and Mrs. Linda Balon-Smith

Drama Club

WCMS Drama club is proud to present Lindsay Price's *Free* on December 13 and 14 at 7pm at the WCMS theatre. Admission will be by donation. The troupe has done some amazing work on a very challenging piece of dramatic art and they are in final preparations for this show. All are encouraged to come support their rising stars of the stage in the community.

Music Club

Music club is doing very well and has enjoyed a successful season this fall. We will be having our wrap-up party on December 4th. A big thanks to all students who participated and dropped in over the course of the season to sing, dance, listen, and perform with us.

Happy Holidays!



Students and staff at WCMS wish everyone a warm and happy holiday season. At this special time of year, students are encouraged to consider ways that they can give to others who may be less fortunate.

The WCMS SRC is collecting loonies/toonies this month to support two worthwhile causes. The money we collect will be divided among two charitable causes. First, WCMS will be working with WES and WHS, the Warman Ministerial association, and other community organizations to assist the Warman Food Bank's Annual Christmas Hamper Project. Second, the SRC will make a donation to the Philippine Flood Relief.

Parents and community members are also invited to stop by the main lobby to check out our Christmas tree, to which each student will contribute one hand crafted decoration.

Wishing you the joy of family, the gift of friends, and lots of learning in 2014!

Contact Us

Give us a call or email any time with questions, concerns or suggestions.

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Visit us on the
web at [http://
blogs.spiritsd.
ca/wcms/](http://blogs.spiritsd.ca/wcms/)

Special Education

This month, the focus has been on Pre-reading Strategies.

1. Set a clear **purpose** for reading (entertainment, information, persuasion) *determines if you read the book quickly or slowly.*
2. Think about what you **know** about the topic (KWL: what you know, want to know, what you learned); read the book jacket and perhaps a bit of the first page/prologue
3. Make a **prediction (beginning, middle, end)**
4. What information can you get from the **title/pictures**
5. Scan through the text to identify **unknown words** (synonym, antonym, sentence)

By using these strategies, one's comprehension of the book can increase by 5-10%.

Finding the "Just Right Book"

1. Make sure it is of interest to you.
2. Make sure the language is at your level or easier
 - a) 5 finger rule: pick a page and read it. If more than 5 words trip you, it is getting too hard.
 - b) Check reading level on the back
 - c) Use app: "Level It" (\$3) to determine the grade level equivalency

Intramurals

Grade 6/7 Intramurals will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:58-1:20. A game is set for a period of 3 weeks and then changed. For example, indoor soccer will be played for 3 weeks, until all teams have had a chance to play each other. The schedule is posted in each classroom and games should be announced as part of daily announcements.

Points:

- Players who show up to participate are awarded 1 point for their team.
- Winning teams will be awarded 5 Bonus points.
- Games ending in a tie will result in each team getting 3 points.

Expectations:

- Players will only be allowed to join until 1:05.
- Only people participating will be allowed in the gym.
- No students are to enter the gym until a teacher is present.
- Have fun!

A Great Big Thank You

Dear Parents and Friends:

Each year, our school conducts a variety of fundraising campaigns to earn money for student activities and additional resources for our programs throughout the school year.

Recently, we completed a QSP Magazine Subscription campaign which offered you the opportunity of renewing your existing subscriptions or ordering new subscriptions through our school. It provided a service to you the customer and the profits stayed in the community to help our students. We truly thank you for your support of this campaign.

SATISFACTION QSP guarantees your order or your money is refunded!

GUARANTEED Help is always available at **1-800-667-2536**. Please contact QSP if you have not yet received your magazine by the New Year.

Operation Christmas Child

WCMS students were actively involved throughout the past few months gearing up for the annual Operation Christmas Child. Students showed wonderful support for this very worthwhile endeavour. On November 22 the Warman Fire Department arrived at our school to collect over 240 OCC boxes for children around the world. Special thanks to our WCMS SRC team who organized this event. Special mention for Mrs. McKay's class that brought in over 35 boxes on their own and won a pizza party! Thanks to everyone who participated! You really showed your Storm spirit and the importance of giving!

Why Grades Should Reflect Mastery, Not Speed

RYAN MCLANE JUN 03, 2013

I am the principal in a grades 7-8 school, perhaps the last venue where we try to give kids second, and sometimes third, chances. This happens mostly with discipline, but also with academics, because this is the last time when a kid's grades do not really matter. What I mean by this is that I am unaware of any college or employer that has ever requested a transcript from a student's junior high school.

My teachers and I are currently having discussions about grading practices, standards-based grading, and everything in between. I do not know that we will ever adopt a truly standards-based grading system, but I believe we are on our way to making our grading system more meaningful.

The first thing we attempted to clarify was what exactly is a grade? If I were to look in my grade book and see that Johnny has a B, what picture does that actually paint? That B *should* tell me that Johnny is pretty proficient. He obviously has some flaws, but I would venture to say he is fairly well-versed in the subject at hand.

The question is, however, what actually went into that B? Unfortunately, a teacher's grade book is one of life's greatest mysteries. Did Johnny do well on tests, but fail to turn in some homework assignments, thus dropping him to a B? Possibly worse, did he do poorly on his tests, but those deficiencies were masked by Johnny's reliable turning-in of homework or participation in class? Perhaps worse yet, did Johnny's grade increase because he brought in a box of tissues or earned some other type of extra credit? I firmly believe the problems of the American education system are not the result of years of poor teaching practices. They are the result of years of poor grading practices.

Now I am not looking to debate the relevance of homework. There are experts out there who can cite research and data to both support and refute the importance of homework, and I have no desire to wade into that discussion. It is also not my intention to debate the merits of high-stakes testing. What I hope to bring to light is what a grade really is.

Ideally, Johnny's B should tell me that Johnny has a good handle on things and will likely do well on any standardized test in that subject. Realistically, I have no idea what Johnny's B means. To fix that problem, I suggest we make sure Johnny's grade reflects what he knows and is not influenced by factors such as discipline or responsibility. Those should be separated.

I believe it is our responsibility to make sure all students are learning the content and skills that are required of them. I am a big believer in re-teaching and reassessing. It is more important that the child *learns* the material than *when* the child learns the material. If a child takes an assessment (I dislike the word "test") and fails because he or she does not know the topic, that child receives a low grade. So far, that is fair. However, simply putting that grade in the grade book and moving on is the exact reason why public schools are in the position they are in today. This process begins early in a child's education when a child never learns the necessary skills, and then continues to fall further and further behind. It would be my hope that a struggling student receives additional instruction and is reassessed and that his or her grade is updated to reflect the new knowledge gained.

At my school, many teachers will have a brief discussion with students before or after class to identify a problem, and teachers will give suggestions on looking at the content from a different angle. Sometimes a student will come to school 10 minutes early for the reteaching portion of his or her day, and then the student and teacher will work out a convenient time to reassess what's been learned (or not learned). We have built two daily intervention periods into the school day (around lunch time) for all students to assist in this endeavor. But it still brings us back to the original debate of grading based on what's been learned versus *when* it was learned.

When I share this view with other educators, the No. 1 response I get is that it is not fair to the kids who got it the first time to allow kids to be reassessed.

Really? I missed the part in education school where they taught us that a grade's primary purpose was to compare and rank students. It was my understanding that a grade is a tool that tells us about an individual's level of mastery. If that is the case, then it is unfair if we do not reassess that individual.

The second-most-common response, and one gaining some momentum lately, is that by giving students extra supports, we are not preparing them for college because there will be no opportunities for a redo there. That is probably correct, but what is more important for us to teach our students: deadlines or the actual skills they will need to be successful? I argue that it is the latter. I understand that deadlines and a sense of responsibility are important skills to learn, but not at the expense of learning the primary skill that was at the heart of the assignment, project, or assessment in the first place.

So how do we fix the grading system? If we are going to continue to use the traditional 100-point grading model, then we need to make grades more meaningful and more reflective of what students have mastered, not how compliant they have been. We need to get to the point of looking at a student's grade and knowing exactly what it means. We can do that by basing students' grades on their levels of mastery. If we can identify the students who need help simply by looking at our grade book, we will be able help those students rather than just passing them along. I am not a proponent of just passing them along. I am a proponent of fixing the problem.

I have two daughters, and they both enjoy playing golf. It would be nice if they made it to the LPGA Tour (I'm really not *that* dad, just trying to prove a point). But it is more important for them to learn the basic skills than it would be to learn those skills on the lightning-quick greens of Augusta. So I choose to take them out to the local public course. My detractors might say: "Well the greens on the LGPA Tour are not that slow. You are not preparing them to be successful." I think most people would look at that viewpoint and find the logic flawed. I wish more people saw it that way in education.

Maclane, R. (2013). Why Grades Should Reflect Mastery, Not Speed. *Education Week*. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/01/31/21sos-1.h26.html>