

## CHARLES DICKENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Secretary: Anne Canning

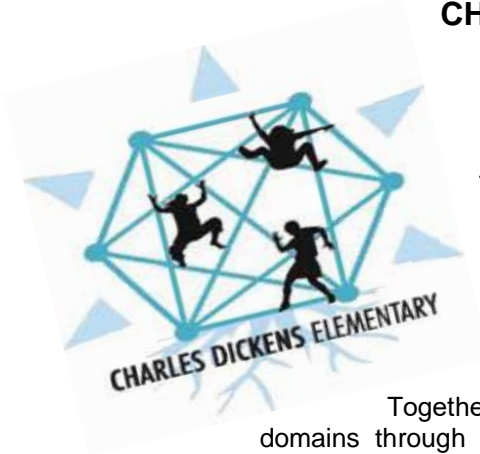
Secretary: Michelle Ventresca

PAC Co-Chairs: Daniela Forde, Sara Getz,

Laura Poree, Tiffany Searchfield

Director of Instruction: Aaron Davis

Trustee: Carmen Cho



### MISSION STATEMENT

Together we bring alive our commitment to develop each child's potential in all domains through a long-established philosophy built on mutual respect, continuous learning and opportunities for leadership within a child-centred, multi-aged framework.

# DECEMBER 2020

We acknowledge that we *learn*, work together, and play on the unceded and traditional territory of the x'məθk'əyəm (Musqueam), seɪl'wɪtʌlh (Tsleil Waututh) and sḵwəxwú7mesh (Squamish Coast Salish) peoples.

### IMPORTANT DATES:

**Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup>: First day back after the Winter Break**

**Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup>: Pro-D Day – No school for students**

Dear Dickens Community:

After strange months of strangely named months (in this newsletter at least), we're back to nomenclature normal, if not holiday normal. I guess that 2020 COVID Christmas will help us appreciate what we may well have taken for granted from previous years: carolling, baking for friends, parties and socials, even family get-togethers, which will be household-small this year. Though the pressure is off in terms of cooking, cleaning, baking and crowded mall shopping. At school we have missed sharing food and singing seasonal songs, Winter Concert and assemblies, in-person conferences and parents in the school. However, we have learned how to meet online, how to keep everyone safe with signage, handwashing and wearing masks. Parents are experts in sending kids to school with everything they need (now if only they wouldn't lose their stuff). Students have embraced the 'West Coast Recess' and learned how to brave the rain and wind, and how to play with their cohort in a different zone every day. They have been so creative in their play – decorating a pine tree with leaves and twigs as a Christmas tree and turning the playground structure into Santa's sleigh. There are budding (and very muddy) engineers who are discovering that water doesn't flow uphill. If you're wondering why we've had so much rain, they have been out there chanting 'We want rain!' There are Magic card games and Pokemon card games and every kind of tag – even toilet tag! Inside, students have made Holiday Art, some of which is featured below. Dickens is full of snowflakes. What more could we ask for – thank goodness it's not on the streets.

## SCHOOL – ONE OF THE SAFEST PLACES FOR YOUR CHILD

School is one of the safest places for kids in our communities according to Vancouver Coastal Health. I attended a virtual presentation and will share some of the highlights below.

- Please continue to do a Daily symptom check:
  - Fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell or taste, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting
  - If “yes” to one of the above (excluding fever): Stay home for 24 hours; return if symptoms improve
  - If “yes” to 2 or more, or fever alone, or one symptom worsening after 24 hours: Seek health assessment
  - If COVID-19 testing recommended and result is negative, return to school when well enough; if positive, stay home as per public health direction

### School transmission internationally – Schools aren’t Super Spreaders

- Where there are cases in schools, there is usually either no transmission or fewer than 5 cases total
- Risk of transmission from children to children and children to adults remains low when COVID-19 safety plans are in place (which they are in our schools)
- Adult to adult transmission is more common than child to adult or adult to child
- Data from overnight camps demonstrates that transmission is possible

### Impacts of school closures

BC COVID-19 SPEAK Survey completed by 395,000 British Columbians after school closures in the Spring showed:

- Impaired learning for children (76%)
- Less social connection with friends (78%)
- Worsening mental health (51%)
- Extreme stress (24%)
- Increased stress experienced by their child (59%)
- Increased child stress among households reporting worsening mental health (70%)
- **Adult to adult interactions** pose the greatest risk
- Minimizing close contact between staff remains a priority (e.g. in staff rooms, offices)

### What else can I do?

- **Stay home when sick and limit contact with others**
- Wash your hands with either soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your arm
- Masks may be worn by those who choose in order to protect others
- Masks cannot replace physical distancing

The take-away from this presentation was that the many benefits of children being in school far outweigh the risks of students contracting COVID. We understand and support any families who have reasons for keeping their children at home but want to reassure those whose children are attending school but who might have some worries, that medical officials support schools being open as the best scenario for everyone.

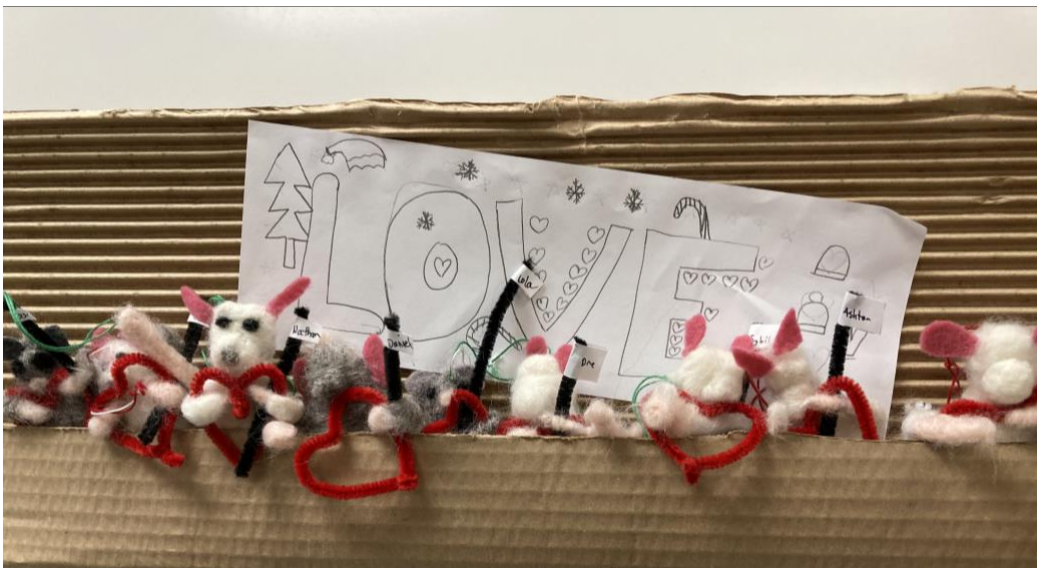
**Holiday Art: Deck the Dickens Halls With Art and Writing,  
Fa La La La, La La La La**



Division 3's Crystal Snowflakes



Division 4's Snow Person



Division 14's Little Felted Mice Ornaments



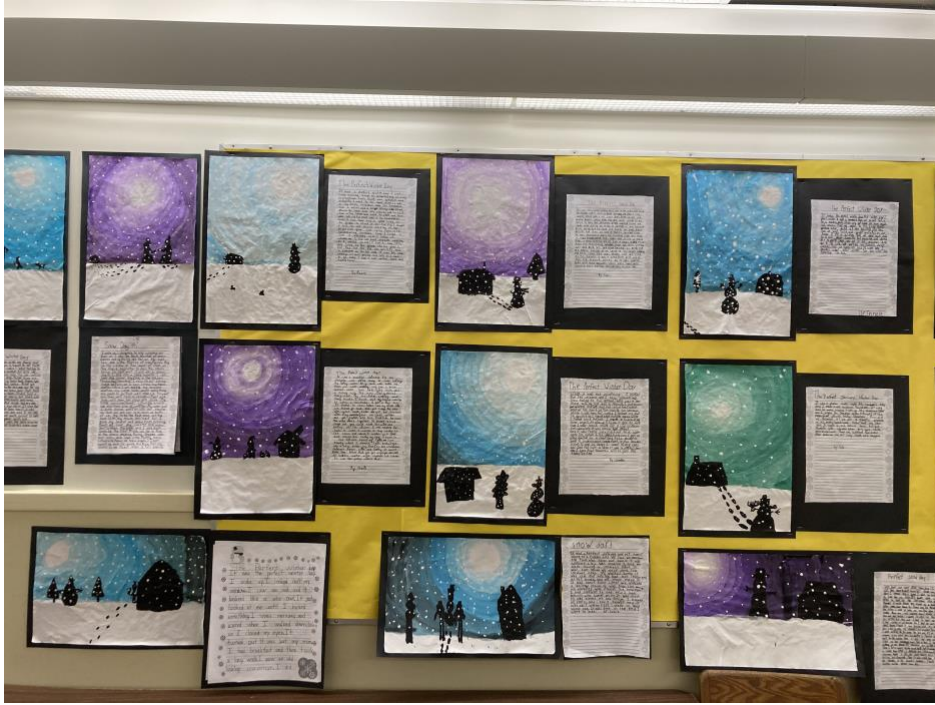


Division 6's Sparkly Christmas Tree Cards



Division 1's Hannukah Menorahs

## Division 8's Illustrated Winter Stories



### Excerpts from Div. 8 students Winter Art depicting "The Perfect Winter Day" or "Snow Day"

- Paloma – I wake up. I scramble to my window as fast as I can. The thick blanket of snow covers everything as far as my eyes can see. Little flurries of snowflakes fog up my window in a fine layer of frost, as they chase each other to join the others below. I'm confident it will be a snow day.
- Clara – I walked along my snow-covered path and could see the detailed footprints the bottoms of my boots made. The snow went crunch, crunch, crunch as I stepped. It was like a winter wonderland out in my shimmering snow filled yard. It wasn't just the looks, the sounds of the quiet and gentle snow falling, and the sound of my breathing was very peaceful.
- Dasha – Today was the third amazing day of our fantastic Chanukkah so we already had our one lucky dreidel out. Our beautiful menorah still had the shamash burning along with three other candles shimmering in the bright day light.
- Morgan – The soft snow was crunching below my cold soaked feet which were trotting along the deep, deep snow. The sunset was beautiful in the glowing purple moonlight. By now I could see my beautifully lit up house in the distance surrounded by dark green snow-covered evergreens.
- Lawrence – On a cold and crispy winter night polar bear and Fenn fox went searching for a Christmas tree. They found one in Laura's class.
- Luke – It was warm inside the winter lodge and the firepit was filled with marvelous flames. After we drank hot chocolate and ate banana pancakes with whipped cream, strawberries and blueberries on top.
- Otis – One sweet winter day my Mom and I built a gorgeous snowman. The beautiful snowflakes were dancing onto my tongue.

## Division 16's Owl Ornaments



### SPIRIT ANIMALS BY DIVISION 15

An **eagle** is a bird with a two-meter wingspan. The big bird represents a great mind, power and grace. When given an eagle feather you then wield honour, respect and courage. An eagle is referred to by the First Nations as the ruler of the sky. By Anamika

**Orcas** symbolism means to think about your inner self by meditating and soul searching. It means all your knowledge is inside you in your soul and to trust your instincts. It means if you trust your instincts then that is the only way you can move forward. By Kody

My spirit animal is a **bear**. I am focussing mainly on brown bears. A bear has several meanings, but here are a few. The bear means strength, confidence and leadership. Bears are said to have medicine that helps you calm down and rest. Bears also come up in a lot of dreams. Some of the scenarios are: if a bear is chasing you it is trying to tell you to avoid a big situation, bears in your dream could also mean you have to show your power to the world. By Tessa

**Otters** are mysterious marine mammals rarely seen by humans. Usually when people do see them they might think they are thought to be just driftwood or a fallen log moving in the



waves. It is probably because of their colour. Otters have big black noses and sometimes a lighter coloured head. By Harper

A **hummingbird** represents light and lightness of its being. It's capable of amazing achievement, such as travelling far distances or being able to fly backwards despite its small size. Those who have this totem may be encouraged to develop their adaptability while keeping an optimistic view. Hummingbirds have a prolonged history of folklore and symbolism in many cultures. The Aztecs saw them as messengers between them and their ancestors of the gods. In Native American culture hummingbirds are viewed as healers and bringers of love, good luck, and joy. In Central America they are a sign of love and will bring it to the person who spots them. By Hannah

During the winter **arctic foxes** have white fur. Their fur helps them camouflage in the snow. In the spring their fur starts to turn grey or brown. Sometimes an arctic fox will have fur that may look blue. It is very rare. Only 1% of arctic foxes have blue fur. Sometimes foxes are mistaken for being tricksters. Their real spiritual meaning is a sign of guidance and adaptations to your surroundings. They also symbolize teaching and finding your way through obstacles. By Aubrey

### STAFFING UPDATES

Division 8 will be saying goodbye to **Laura Sengara** as she heads off into the adventure of parenthood. We wish her all the very best. Here is a message from Anita Kang, who will be their teacher during Laura's Mat leave: "I am very excited about joining your school community. I have been teaching for 20 years mostly in grades 4 and 5. I have also taught Kindergarten to Grade 3. I love finding out what makes students passionate about learning and facilitating that! I look forward to working closely with students, parents, and staff in the New Year. I have heard wonderful things from Laura, and I am excited to be their teacher in January. As we wish Laura the best with her leave, I also wish you a safe and cozy Winter Break. See you soon Dickens! :) Sincerely, Anita Kang"

We are also saying goodbye and thank you to **Scott Kanou** in Division 17 and **Aaron Yang** in Division 11. We are still waiting to see who will be teaching in Division 17. We welcome **Jennifer Setzo** back to Division 11 from her Maternity Leave.

### THANK YOU, PAC!

Our PAC is wonderful in so many ways. The executive recently voted on how to allocate the gaming funds. Following staff requests, they have allocated money for the library, a sensory walkway and classroom funds for inside books and activities as well as outside equipment for individual classrooms. Thank you!

The whole Dickens community came together for Christmas Hamper Gift Card Drive and the committee put together 'Gift Card Hampers' for many families in the community. The families are so grateful for the kindness and support, especially this year. A special thank you to all the PAC members who spearheaded this initiative and put together the packages.

HOLIDAY WISHES FROM ALL OF US TO ALL OF YOU!



**Cathy and Audrey on Hat and Scarf Spirit Day**

The  
Entire Dickens  
Staff Wish you and  
Yours a Delightful & Relaxing Winter  
Holiday Full of Everything you Desire!  
May it be safe, restful, enjoyable and brimming with  
the Love and Joy of Family and Friends (Virtually).  
Happy  
2021  
To All!

Julie Weatherall  
Principal, Dickens Elementary