

CHARLES DICKENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1010 East 17th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C
V5N 3S5

Telephone: (604) 713-4723

Fax: (604) 713-4725

Website: <http://dickens.vsb.bc.ca>

Principal: Julie Weatherall

Vice Principal: Shelley Sunner

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



CHARLES DICKENS ELEMENTARY

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.

February 2021

We acknowledge that we *learn*, work together, and play on the unceded and traditional territory of the x'məθk'əyəm (Musqueam), sełłwítulh (Tsleil Waututh) and s̓k̓w̓x̓w̓7mesh (Squamish Coast Salish) peoples.

IMPORTANT DATES IN MARCH:

Wednesday, March 10th: Early Dismissal at 1:55 or 2:00 pm for *all* students; Conferences for *some* classes (some classes will have Conferences on Wednesday, April 14th).

March 15th – March 26th: SPRING BREAK

Monday, March 29th: First day back after Spring Break

Dear Dickens Community:

You never know what you'll find when going through the attic...



We got a call this month from a woman whose mother had gone to Dickens and had this photo of a concert from 1928 which she has gifted to the school. Funny that my first observation of this picture from almost 100 years ago was not the costumes, but how close they are all sitting to each other! Ten years after the Spanish Flu Pandemic, I guess things were back to normal.

We are certainly more prepared for a global pandemic these days than back then when there were no effective vaccines or antivirals – the first licenced flu vaccine didn't appear in North America until the 1940s. Immediately following World War I there was a shortage of doctors, and hospitals were so overloaded with flu patients that in some places schools, private homes and other buildings had to be converted into makeshift hospitals. Quarantines were ordered in many communities, people were told to wear masks and public places like schools, churches and theatres were shut down. Those communities which stopped public gatherings had markedly fewer fatalities than those which were slow to do so. As we are entering the year mark for COVID-19 in our Vancouver schools, three approved vaccines are in place and we continue to follow PHO COVID protocols to keep us safe until everyone has had the opportunity to be vaccinated.

Trivia tidbit: In reading about the Spanish Flu I found out how it got the misnomer. People thought it had originated in Spain because the Spanish press was not blocked like the presses of other European countries which were still censored because of the First World War. Because it was the only information published about the pandemic, people assumed the deadly flu had originated in Spain.

I got this information from History.com. I wonder what historians in the future will say about the pandemic of 2020? What will you remember?

THE REDESIGNED CURRICULUM

The 'New' or Redesigned Curriculum is not really new anymore, since we started implementing it almost five years ago. Yet it might still seem new because it approaches education philosophically as a process rather than a list of skills that need to be learned. It is child-centered, personalized and intended to allow students to focus on their passions. It emphasizes the Core Competencies of Communication, Critical and Creative Thinking and Personal and Social Identity as integral skills which students need to use and develop in order to learn the subjects or Curricular Competencies (Applied Design, Skills and Technologies; Arts Education; Career Education; English Language Arts; Core French; Mathematics; Physical and Health Education; Science; and Social Studies). The content of the Curricular Competencies is outlined through Big Ideas such as 'People create art to express who they are as individuals and community' (Arts); 'Everyone has a unique story to share' (English Language Arts); and 'Living things are diverse, can be grouped, and interact in their ecosystems' (Science). Basic Literacy and Numeracy skills are still considered to be the foundational skills on which all subjects depend.

REPORT CARDS

Over the past three years the VSB has been working on a new report card to better reflect the Redesigned Curriculum, and all VSB elementary schools were required to use the new report for January 2021. These report cards are strength based and the evaluative sliding bars: Beginning, Developing, Applying, and Extending, are intended to indicate where on a continuum of ongoing learning a student is at the time of reporting. Because the evaluative statements are different from the previous Approaching, Meeting, Fully Meeting, and Exceeding Expectations, they don't simply replace them – it is not just a semantic difference. The Ministry of Education is currently working on Performance Standards for each grade level in all subjects that accurately reflect the Redesigned Curriculum.

COMMUNICATING STUDENT LEARNING

The VSB is following Option A of the Interim Student Reporting Order which requires that teachers connect with parents around student learning a minimum of 5 times a year. Each of these connections or communications should include:

1. Student strengths
2. Student areas for growth
3. Ways to support student learning

In Vancouver we have written reports that go home at the end of January and the end of June, which leaves us with a minimum of 3 additional times that teachers are required to report to parents. At most schools, including Dickens, we have scheduled conferences which count for 2 more communications of student learning. That leaves at least one additional reporting requirement, intended to go out in a 'timely and responsive way', which could be:

1. An Interim report
2. An email
3. A phone call
4. A TEAMS meeting
5. An e-Portfolio communication (e.g. MyBlueprint)
6. An event such as a Science Fair or Celebration of Learning (in a non-COVID year)

In fact, most teachers communicate with parents whenever there is a need which is often more frequently than just 5 times a year. Please contact your child's teacher if you have any concerns.

CONFERENCES:

Our conferences are coming up on Wednesday, March 10th *or* Wednesday, April 14th. We have 1:55 or 2:00 pm early dismissal days on both those days, although your child's teacher will only be having conferences on one of the days. They will contact you to let you know which day. The purpose of the conferences is to provide opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress with the teacher. This year with COVID when in-person conferences are not possible, teachers have approached conferences creatively in a number of ways. In many cases students will be presenting some of their work at home. Parents will also be given the opportunity to sign up for a phone call or TEAMS meeting. Don't forget to pick your child up one hour earlier than usual at 1:55 or 2:00 pm on the two dates above whether or not you have a conference that day. Thank you.

STAFFING NEWS

Paul Nicholls, Dickens's beloved Music teacher and master of the marimbas, will be retiring at the end of March. We will miss Paul but wish him all the best in this new chapter of his life.

A Brief Overview of Lunar New Year

Lunar New Year has been celebrated for thousands of years. The holiday is observed in many countries, including Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore, China, Malaysia, and more. Depending on the culture and the lunar calendar, Lunar New Year can be celebrated in January, February, March, April, September, or November, though February and April are the most common times.

Lunar New Year traditions focus on home and family, with many people returning to their hometowns to spend time with family members. Traditional activities vary from culture to culture, but often include exchanging red envelopes or silk pouches containing money, setting off fireworks, playing games, eating traditional dishes, cleaning the house, and holding parades with colourful costumes. In Chinese culture, the half-dragon, half-lion Nian appears, usually as a giant costume manned by multiple people. Loud noises, fire, and the colour red are used to scare him away.

For many cultures, each new lunar year is marked by one of the 12 zodiac animals. Typically, the animals include the horse, ram or sheep, monkey, rooster or chicken, dog, boar or pig, rat or mouse, **ox**, tiger, hare, dragon, and snake. Some cultures have slight differences; in Vietnam, for example, a cat replaces the hare.

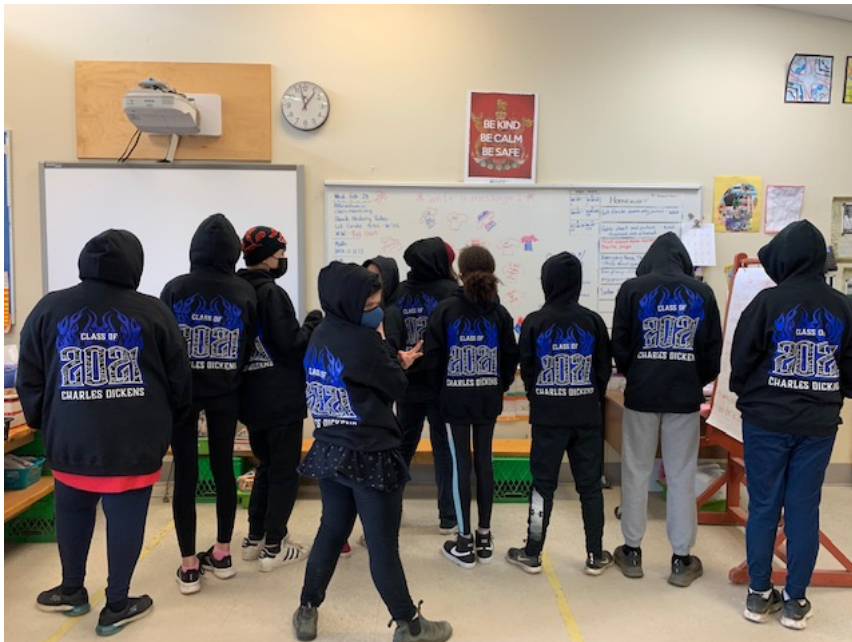
Many Asian families around the world celebrate Lunar New Year. While the holiday is widely celebrated in Asian countries, many cities in Canada hold large celebrations, too.

Writing and Display by Jaze Thind, Dickens Teacher Librarian



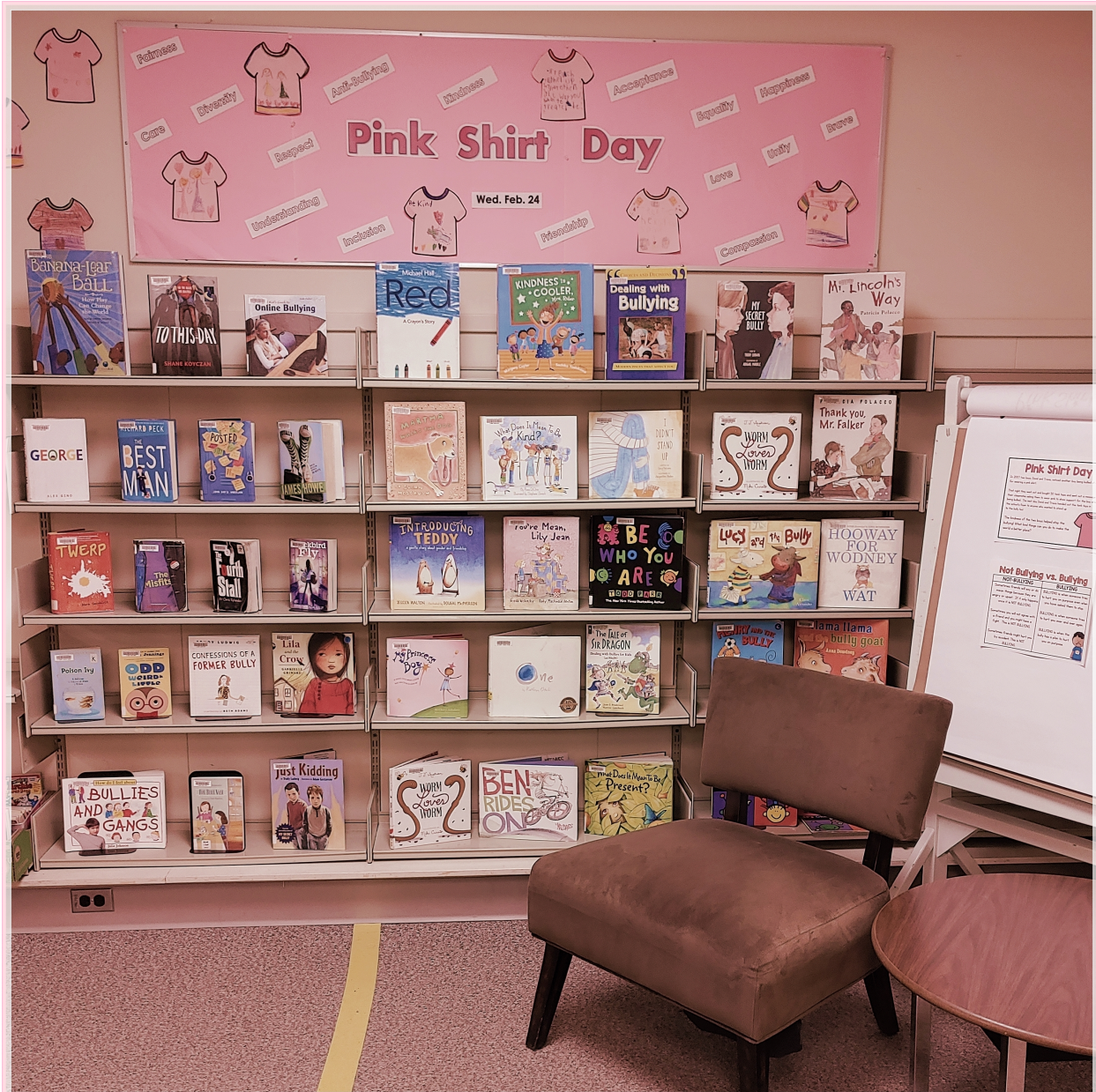


Lunar New Year Dragons



Grade 7 Hoodies – thanks to the Grade 7 teachers and office staff for making sure the hoodies happened!

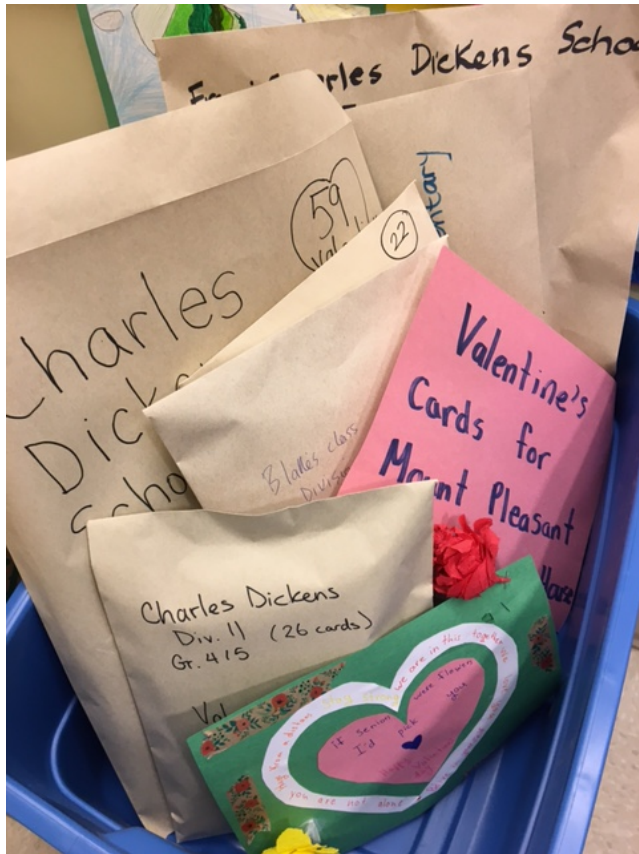
Pink Shirt Day is an annual global celebration which began in Canada. In 2007, two classmates from Nova Scotia stood up for a younger student who was facing homophobic bullying for wearing a pink shirt. In solidarity, they got the majority of their high school to wear pink the next day. We wear this colour as a statement of kindness and anti-bullying.



We have focussed on Kindness and Black History this month at Dickens.

- Shelley and Jaze have read many of the books in this display to all the classes.
- Julie has read *Each Kindness* to a number of classes and we have created a Kindness Tree.
- Staff and students wore pink on February 24th.
- 9 divisions participated in a drive to write Valentines for seniors

Senior's Valentines



Nine divisions participated in our drive to raise Valentines for Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House:) We had over 245 Valentines with precious messages of love and hope! I delivered them today after school. I have a thank you note to share with staff. Here are some pics of the envelopes. Anita Kang – Classroom teacher – Division 8.

Fur Trade



Div. 11 & 13 have been learning about the fur trade.

Working with Kim Kondra, Indigenous Support Worker, we learned about medicine pouches and had an opportunity to make them using real leather, beads, and synthetic feathers.

Julie Weatherall, Principal, Dickens Elementary