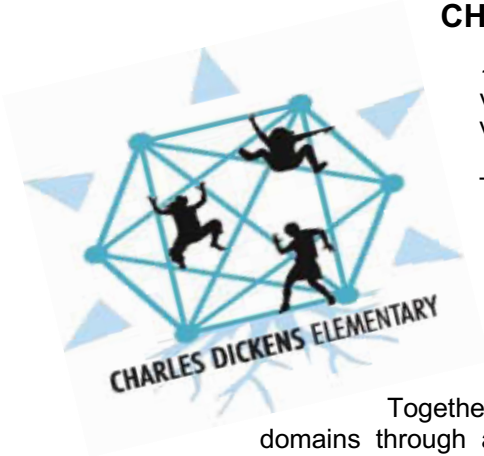


CHARLES DICKENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



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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

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.

May 2021

We acknowledge that we *learn*, work together, and play on the unceded and traditional territory of the x̣m̄əθk̄əȳəm (Musqueam), seɪl̄wɪt̄ul̄h (Tsleil Waututh) and s̄k̄w̄x̄w̄7mesh (Squamish Coast Salish) peoples.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Monday, May 24th: Victoria Day

Wednesday, May 26th: Welcome to Kindergarten 9:15 – 11:45 – Outside in the Red Courtyard

Friday, May 28th: Photo Retake Day

Tuesday, June 29th: Last Day for Students

Dear Dickens Community:



Last month, using money from a grant for outdoor learning, we had 12 bright sidewalk games painted on the pavement around our school, adding colour and an invitation to activity. Kids are hippity-hopscotching as they go from one place to the next – even when they aren't playing a game. Others are using the games by finding a creative new approach – shape hopscotch becomes Twister, for example, and the grade 6's are using the alphabet hopscotch to challenge themselves to jump as far as the first letter of their name. Wow – could you jump clear to N? Some of our students can.

As we head into the last weeks of this COVID year, we are all grateful for the sunny days and the chance for learning to take place outdoors. At any given time throughout the day students can be seen walking or running around the school, going for neighbourhood walks, and taking reading, journaling or art outside. The rooftop outdoor classroom is back in use with literature circles and French plays among other activities taking place throughout the

day. As well as the money PAC so generously donated for individual classes to purchase equipment for indoor and outdoor activities, we have an additional \$4000 from the Federal Government to spend on outdoor education.

June is usually full of events – Welcome to Kindergarten, Sports Day and the Grade 7 Leaving Ceremony, to name a few. Dickens staff are busy finding ways to hold these events in spite of the restrictions imposed by COVID protocols. On the morning of May 26th we will have our Welcome to Kindergarten in the Red Courtyard. This year families will come in small staggered groups and will have a chance to meet the teachers and receive their WTK bag of educational goodies. Centre activities will be offered online. Sports Day will extend over a week in June and will be a smaller, shortened version with Learning Cohort groups having a morning or afternoon session on the field with some adapted COVID-friendly races and relays. Even though parents will not be able to attend, it will be fun for the students. The grade 7 teachers recently met to plan a Leaving Ceremony for our grade 7s. If nothing else, COVID is teaching us how to be creative as we come up with alternate ways to hold events and honour rites of passage in spite of the many restrictions.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND CLASS PLACEMENTS

This is also the time when we are busy planning for next year. Schools receive staffing entitlement based on student numbers, and organize classes accordingly. Traditionally Dickens has had multi-aged groupings with 2 or 3 grades in one class. This varies from year to year depending on the number of students in each grade, and the class size and composition guidelines. There are many benefits of having multi-age classes. Teachers develop strong relationships with their students and families; they already know exactly where students are academically when they are in the class for a second or third year; and students know the routines and expectations of the class. Multi-age classes break down the notion of grades and support continuous, child-centred learning. They facilitate the continuous progress model that has long been part of the Dickens philosophy, and is now part of the BC Redesigned Curriculum. Multi-age classes allow for scaffolding of the curriculum to meet the needs of all students ‘where they’re at’ by providing extra support for some and enrichment activities for others. Older students in the class have many leadership opportunities, while younger students can learn from their older classmates who act as role models.

CLASSROOM PLACEMENTS 2021-2022

At this time, schools are in the beginning stages of planning for the 2020-21 school year. This process involves working to best support our students in having a smooth transition to the next school year. As a staff, we know our students in the school context and engage in a rigorous class placement process. This involves thoughtful collaboration and consideration of a number of factors including:

- social connections
- learning styles and strengths
- English language learning needs
- special learning needs
- leadership abilities
- previous classroom/family history
- class size composition (Ministry / VSB)

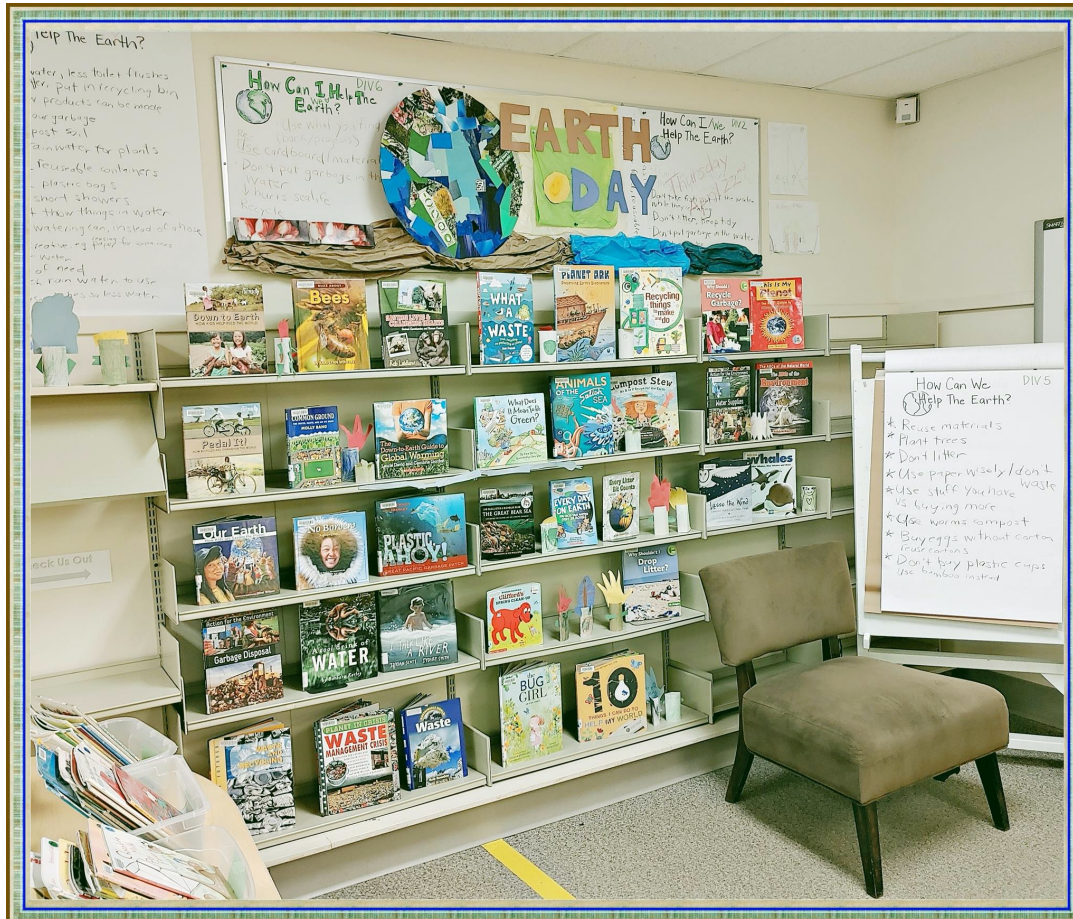
We approach placement decisions carefully. Each student’s social, emotional, and academic needs are considered. Please note that parent letters about class placement are not being accepted at the office. If you have some additional information regarding your child’s learning,

please share this directly with your child's teachers. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Earth Day - Library

Thursday, April 22nd was **EARTH DAY!** It is a day when we celebrate our world. This tradition began in 1970, however, it did not start up again until 1990. Now we acknowledge Earth Day annually. It is a time to reflect and react to protect our planet. [more info avail. earthday.org]

With this in mind, we have many titles available to borrow from our new **EARTH DAY Library Display** - accompanied by primary student art reusing materials. 😊 Jaze – Teacher Librarian



Project Opera

On Friday, May 14th I was invited to the opera. Divisions 9 and 10 did a 6-week virtual residency with Project Opera through the Vancouver Opera Society. Students from each class adapted a picture book (*When I get Older* with K'NAAN's story and *My Name is Sangoel*, both books about refugees coming to North America). The students wrote and memorized dialogue, wrote lyrics for songs, made props, painted backdrops, and performed live for parents on a Zoom link. It was spectacular! The few privileged staff members who were invited were all teary-eyed, especially at the end when the two classes sang 'Wavin' Flag' by K'NAAN.

Divisions 9 and 10 singing 'Wavin' Flag' as the finale of their Project Opera performance.

Here are some student reflections on the experience:



I like how we tell a story by singing and acting and how we make up almost everything. * I like the singing. * I like the acting. * I like Project Opera when it's not on Zoom – when it's in person. * I like the acting part of it, and I also like when you have to create dialogue for the acting. * I like how we make our own songs. I like how we make the lyrics to the song. * I like project Opera because

you get to sing, dance and act and those are my favourite things. * I thought the transitions were really smooth this time. * I like the Arias. * I liked the singing part and I also liked making props – it was really fun. * It was fun to go behind the brown paper (i.e. backstage) with everyone. * I like when you get to do tableaux. * It was fun!

What I liked about Project Opera was how it covered so many parts of the curriculum (Language Arts, Social Studies, Art, Drama, Music and Applied Design and Skills Technology) as well as the Core Competencies of Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Identity, and Communication. And there is the added bonus of demystifying Opera for a new generation. This was the first year that the program was delivered online, and Peggy and Chloe and teacher candidates Diane and Meghan were thanked for the extra work involved at the school level.

I'm Feeling So Alone (Lyrics to Aria 1)

Leaving my friends behind/ I feel so alone/ I want to stay home but/ Somalia is a war zone/ I'm gonna go and get on a ship/ And ride to Canada/ A life changing trip.

(Chorus) I feel so sad/ I have to leave my home/ Everything is changing/ I'm feeling so alone.

I was riding on my skateboard/ Now I'm running away/ Is this what war feels like?/ I wish I could just stay.

Non-Fiction Scavenger Hunt in Division 7



I was invited to a Scavenger Hunt in Division 7 to find features of nonfiction on their research posters. I had the chance to learn about a variety of topics, from Whales, Tornadoes, Amelia Earhart, Dragonflies, and Tigers, to Underground Cities. Students shared their projects with each other by participating in the scavenger hunt. They had to look for 6 different nonfiction pages, learn 2 new facts about the topics that interested them most, write down facts about 2 animals, jot down information about a place

they'd like to visit, and record 5 facts about something that was new to them from the range of topics in the class. What a great way for students to practice their presentations, answer questions about their own research, learn about a variety of subjects from their peers, and become nonfiction experts!



Host an International Student - Join Langara Homestay

Langara College invites you and your family to join our highly regarded Homestay Program by hosting a VSB international student this year. Our students come from Europe, Asia and South America - usually stay for five to 10 months, and are keen to experience life with a Vancouver family. Generous reimbursement is provided. Please call [604.323.5696](tel:604.323.5696) or email homestay@langara.ca for more information.

The Dickens Kindness Tree Continues to Bloom



Julie Weatherall,
Principal, Dickens Elementary