

The Grapevine

Bulkley Valley Christian School Vision Statement

Our goal is to prepare young people to live fully for God with the ability to understand, evaluate, and transform their world from the foundations of God's infallible Word, the Bible.

*A monthly newsletter of
Bulkley Valley
Christian School*

*Operated by the
Christian School Society
Of Smithers and Telkwa*

*November 2011
Volume 27, Issue 3*

Inside

- *Message from the principal*
 - *Highlights of Board of Directors meetings*
 - *Song of the Month*
 - *Message from the Development Director*
 - *Student Contributions*
 - *Sports Updates*
 - *Calendar of events*
-

Editorial

Changes to Provincial Exam Rules

Changes to provincial exam rules provide opportunity for our school to define its Christian character.

Last August the Ministry of Education announced that it is cancelling all high school optional exams. Starting this year students are required to write no more than five mandatory exams. Passing marks for these exams and for 80 credits of course work in grade 10 - 12 will earn them their BC Dogwood diploma.

This ministry decision almost brings full circle a story that started in 1983 when then Minister of Education, Bill VanderZalm, announced the introduction of mandatory provincial examinations for all grade 12 students. The intent then was to "measure the effectiveness of teachers and schools, and increase the confidence of students, parents and the public in the status of public education." Those exams counted for 50% of the final grade.

The concern of the day was clearly on school performance. The effect, however, was felt significantly in the area of curriculum content and freedom to teach according to locally determined priorities. Prescriptive provincial standards were thought to be an effective means to streamline and assess the system's quality, and maybe they were. But opponents to the move, not least of which the independent schools of BC, feared that it would result in a tendency to 'teach to the exams'. Those exams, of course, would be based on content that was determined by authorities other than the local school board. Indeed, that is what happened. Grade 12 exams became a significant shaper of high school course curriculum content. Christian school curriculum, which had previously had its starting point in local priorities bound within BC core curriculum, began to look more similar to the public schools', be it with 'Christian emphasis and alterations'. Extensive discussions have taken place since, about the tension between the importance of provincial standards and Christian identity.

Exam policies have undergone changes in the last two decades. In 1990 the weighting of exams was reduced to 40%. In 2004 educational emphases shifted to account for local goals and standards, freedoms regarding curriculum, and personal choice. In that year the ministry began to spread some of the exams out over the three years of the Graduation Program. Along with it the weighting of the exams was further reduced to 25 and 20%, except for English/Communications 12 which remains at 40%. Many exams became options with only core subject exams remaining compulsory.

These developments happened simultaneous to a number of other changes in society. The public's desire for flexibility and choice in education increased. Distance Education options over the internet became feasible and popular. Research regarding multiple intelligences considered the (lack of) effectiveness of traditional instructional methods and forms of assessment, and the need for differentiation for different needs.

BC has now taken the lead in our country in advancing the notion of personalized learning. This is freeing up schools in BC to provide the kind of instruction that is considered in tune with the local needs of the students and the institution's priorities for learning content. Personalized learning assumes that students learn more and achieve better if they have greater ownership of the choices and methods that are involved in learning and teaching.

All of this can be a good thing for our Christian school. We are afforded more freedom to develop a curriculum with goals that are appropriate to the conditions and needs of our own students, and that are thoroughly Christian in content and method. The ministry actually

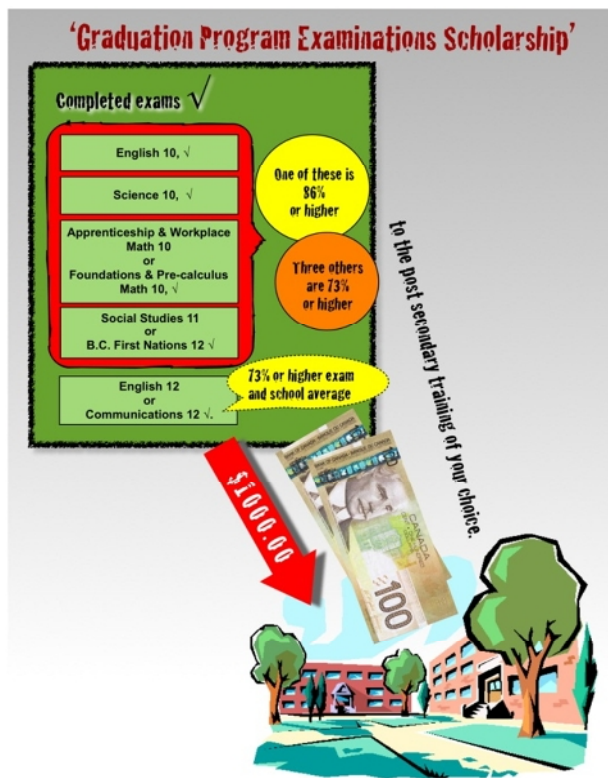
encourages us to think of methods of delivery and assessment that uniquely suit the identity of our school. At the same time we can remain sufficiently connected to provincial curriculum so that we can set and maintain standards for foundational skills that allow our students a good standing in the market place of academic achievement and job opportunities.

BVCS is in a good position to engage these changing expectations. We have a small staff that communicates well on student needs and courses expectations. We have a good support system in place that serves to help all students be successful. We have the benefit of our own distributed learning courses that we can bring into the mix of high school course choices.

There is one more thing to note about the changes that government introduced over the summer. To encourage students to do well on the five remaining provincial exams as well as in their regular course work, the government is offering scholarship money to all students who meet a set level of achievement. Going by our students' averages on exams and subject grades over the last years we think it is safe to

assume that at least half of our graduates will be able to qualify for that scholarship.

Good news all around for our school and for our students and their choices regarding learning.



Hugo VanderHoek

From the Principal



As we are moving into the month of November students and teachers have settled into the daily routine of teaching and learning. A short while ago we had the opportunity to meet with parents to discuss student progress on the academic as well as the social front. I had the privilege of reading all the comments for students in grades seven to twelve. I was struck by two things: The comments reflected the generally positive atmosphere among the student body, as well as the effort most students put into their work. It is my hope that we will continue to walk down this road. At the same time I want to challenge those who are maybe not quite in this 'positive realm' to reflect on why this is, and if necessary, make changes in effort or attitude.

At the end of October we had a wonderful opportunity to meet with our Kindergarten parents over dinner and a few group games. All, not in the least the children, enjoyed this time. Parents also had a chance to listen to two grade twelve students who shared their BVCS experience with them. From the presentation it became quite clear that not only does BVCS challenge students to think Christianly in their academic pursuits, they are also exposed to many opportunities outside of the classroom to let their light shine. The students shared with the parents that using opportunities such as drama, trips to Haida Gwaii or Bard on the Beach, and sports, have contributed to shaping them to be well rounded individuals.

During October a number of opportunities arose for students to increase their awareness of how blessed and privileged they are in terms of material goods. The elementary students were challenged to bring items for the local food bank to a Thanksgiving assembly, while the students in grades 9-12 held the annual 'hunger auction', raising \$7000 to aid those suffering in Eastern Africa.

The multi-purpose room is becoming a hub of excitement. Auditions for our musical, which will be held in the spring, have taken place, and students are being assigned a variety of roles. The excitement does not stop there, however. I can't help but notice how students are lining up at the end of recess or lunch to make sure they are not late for band or choir. Exciting things are happening during those classes. Already mini performances have taken place in stairwells around the building, allowing the 'little ones' to listen to beautiful voices. I also witnessed a grade three performance of a rather complicated folk dance while preschool and kindergarten watched in amazement. And there is more to come. We are looking forward to an official concert in December where the months of hard work will be shared with you, parents and other supporters. You will not want to miss this!

As you can see BVCS continues to be a place where lots is going on. As we move into the darker days of winter I hope this place can continue to be a bright spot in the lives of the many people involved in its day-to-day operations. One way I want to ask all of you to make this happen is by continuing to pray for your school, its staff and students. In particular please continue to remember our student Noah Stolte and his family, as well as Pat Taekema and his family. Pray for God's healing hand to be on them. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

K. Kort, Principal

Highlights of the October 2011 Board of Directors' Meeting

Al Brandsma opened with devotions and prayers.

The Consent Agenda of October 25th, 2011 was approved by the board with one minor correction. Included in the Consent Agenda were:

- Minutes of September 27th Board Meeting

- Education Committee Report
- Finance Committee Report

A group of three board members has been put together to come up with some recommendations on Board Member Recruitment and how this should take place in the future.

The board then took some time to discuss Strategic Visioning for BVCS over the next year and beyond.

Al Brandsma spoke about the school visit that he did. He found the atmosphere around school to be very positive. He was very impressed with the staff and support staff – their love of the job was evident! He also wanted to commend our education assistants. They do a very good job working with our special needs students.

Admissions Committee

- We welcome **Jenneh and Derek Meerdink** to our school community as full members!

Education Committee

- The Home and School Meeting will take place in February 2012. Look for more information in future newsletters.
- Staff attended a retreat at Rough Acres on October 6th and 7th. It went very well! Neil and Virginia Lettinga were the speakers and the topic was “Building Community”.

Financial Report

- Financial Report of September 2011 was received for information.

Building, Grounds, and Transportation Committee

- Playground equipment has been moved. Thank you to Al Brandsma for his hard work in organizing this project!

Klaas Kort and Glenn Bandstra will be attending the Board Chair/Principal's Conference in Langley on November 4th. Please remember to keep them in your prayers as they travel to this conference.

The next regular board meeting date: November 22nd, 2011.

Recording Secretary for the Board, Yvonne Tucker



Janitorial Assistance Required

Bulkley Valley Christian School has a position available for an individual interested in providing janitorial assistance for approximately 13 hours per week. The successful candidate would be a committed Christian who supports Christian Education at BVCS, and is able to work with staff and other custodial workers.

Preference will be given to candidates who have prior experience in institutional janitorial work and/or have obtained their Custodial Worker Certificate.

For more information, call Hugo VanderHoek, 250-847-4238. Applications may be dropped off at the school office.

Mid-Season Sports Review

The fall season of play has reached its mid-point and things are progressing well. There are six volleyball teams on the go and one soccer team.

The senior boys' soccer team, coached by Mr. Steenhof, recently defeated Hazelton Secondary and GM Dawson to win the school's first ever zone title! With the victory, the team is off to Kamloops to participate in Provincials from November 3-5. Congratulations and all the best as you represent the Northwest Zone and BVCS.



Jessica Adema is in charge of the grade 7/8 girls' volleyball team. They are playing great three touch volleyball and in the process are winning a majority of the matches that they've been involved in.

Calen VanCadsand coaches the grade 7/8 boys and they have improved a lot over the season and now are winning some matches against teams that they were losing to earlier in the season. Keep it up!

John Vis is working with the junior girls' volleyball team and they are working on consistency in both passing and serving and he feels that if they can get that, they can be competitive with some of the top teams in the zone.



Travis Nanninga has the smallest team, in numbers, due to injuries and not a lot of players coming out but they are a competitive group and he's happy with their progress and play. The play in the zone is very tight with three to four teams very close in ability.

Terri-Lynn Swanson coaches the senior girls' team and they also have been improving as the season has gone on and they've been competitive with the A schools as well as the AA and AAA schools.

Ron Van Driel works with the senior boys' team and they've had some mixed results as the season has gone on. They also are working on consistency, especially in the passing department, as they have some strong offensive weapons but need to get the ball into the setter's hands at a better rate.

Some Sharing by BVCS Students

A Story from Ethan Grasmeyer, Grade 2

There are two different kinds of grouse. The two kinds of grouse are called the spruce grouse and the pine grouse. They have meat in them that you can eat. And they are very easy to find. My dad is not very good at shooting grouse; the grouse just sits until my dad takes enough shots.

The grade 2/3 class was asked to share some of the things they liked and didn't like about the new school

- I sometimes get to see my sister
- I see my dad, he is a teacher
- I like the library, it has lots of books
- I like the gym here because it has washrooms
- I like the new gym
- It has a bigger gym
- My mom works here
- I like the old gym because it has a stage
- I don't have to walk to school and back because my mom works here
- I miss the old playground because we barely even play on the new playground. I want the old playground
- I miss the old school very much
- I miss Mrs. Mel

- I miss the giant snow hill
- We moved to the new school because we didn't have enough people

On September 23 our school went to the Community Forest. There were several stations set up. The students learned to make and put out a fire, tell the age of a tree, look for animal tracks and berries, check out the pine beetle and the damage it does, put duct tape on our fingers and did some tree planting and dig in the dirt. It was a lot of fun in the forest.

Mr. and Mrs. Penner (our librarian) came into our classroom and shared about bees. Mrs. Penner was dressed in the bee suit, however, she didn't fool any of the students. The students saw the tiny little wax cells made by the bees. Everyone enjoyed a taste of the honey.

From the Development Director **Please Mark Your Calendars**

Over the years, our school society has held a number of fundraising auctions. These events have been wonderful opportunities for our school society to come together; they have also served as successful fundraisers. Typically, these auctions have raised somewhere between \$10 000 - \$15 000 for our school society. Our 2009-2010 auction brought in significantly more than that as an all-time high of \$23 000 was raised. This year, BVCS will again be hosting an auction. **The date is Saturday, March 10; please mark your calendars and make plans to attend.**

During this year's auction, we are excited to again offer an internet auction in addition to the silent and grand auctions that will take place. We are also excited to be including "**a taste of BVCS**" to this year's event. What exactly is "a taste of BVCS" you might be wondering? We will be approaching a number of individuals in our school society who are known for their cooking and/or baking abilities. We will be asking them to make smaller portions of their favourite desserts, appetizers, main dishes, drinks etc., and there will be opportunity during our auction evening to sample a wide variety of these tasty food items. Our hope is that "a taste of BVCS" will be another exciting addition to this fundraising event.

As this event draws closer, there will be lots more information to come.

Year-end Drive

As mentioned in last month's *Grapevine*, our school will be holding a year-end fundraising drive. Letters will go out at the end of November.

There are two very significant reasons why this drive will happen. First of all, our buses are not getting any younger. The daily runs out to Telkwa, Quick etc., the frequent field trips (both near and far), and the weekly sporting trips are taking their toll on our buses, and a new bus will need to be purchased in the not too distant future. Secondly, our school society has spent over \$600 000 in the last year and a half on the new modular building, on renovations to our existing building, on technology improvements, on fencing, on parking lot paving, etc.

As a result, a fundraising drive is a definite need. Please consider a gift to BVCS when you receive your year-end letter.

'Something to Remember'

Come out on Remembrance Day to a classical concert, giving you a different way to spend the holiday. Miss R Dykstra, professional violist and music teacher this year at BVCS, will be presenting a concert of some of the unaccompanied Bach masterpieces for violin and cello and some compositions based on well-loved reformation hymns. The concert will offer a chance to remember and reflect on Remembrance Day in a beautiful

setting. If you love classical music and welcome the opportunity to hear it live, do come - the concert will be held at the Smithers Old Church at 7:30, November 11.

Hunger Auction

This year's Hunger Auction was another great success. In chapel students had learned about the ongoing famine and humanitarian disaster unfolding in East Africa, particularly in Somalia and Kenya. Then, on October 14th students in grades 9-12 were given a hands-on lesson about global inequalities with a snack that represented the unequal distribution of food and wealth in our world. About 10% of each class enjoyed a fresh-baked cinnamon bun, another 80% enjoyed a graham cracker, and the remaining 10% each "enjoyed" a single serving of a Cheerio. Then, all students bid on and bought back various food and drink items that they had earlier donated to the hunger auction. The end result? Over \$6,000 in donations were collected or pledged within one hour! All monies will be donated to the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee to alleviate the suffering in East Africa. Well done everyone!

Students (Past/Present) Accomplishments

For the past 12 years the Vancouver Canucks have been part of the Sports Celebrities Festival, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Canucks for Kids Fund and Special Olympics BC. Featured this year in a full-page thank-you ad in the Vancouver Sun were two BVCS alumni: Dan Hamhuis, star defenseman for the Canucks, and special Olympian Ben Walker. Pictured are Ben and Dan during the Festival.



Scholastic Book Club

Book club flyers are available in the library. Deadline for Christmas orders is December 5th. See Mrs. Franken for more details.

November Song of the Month

O Canada

O Canada! Our home and native land
true patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise
the true north, strong and free
from far and wide, O Canada
we stand on guard for thee.

Refrain

God keep our land glorious and free
O Canada! We stand on guard for thee
O Canada! We stand on guard for thee.

Ruler supreme, who hearest humble prayer,
hold our dominion in thy loving care;
help us to find, O God, in thee
a lasting, rich reward,
as waiting for the Better Day,
we ever stand on guard.

Calendar of Events

- Nov 11 Remembrance Day. Concert at the Old Church at 7:30 p.m.
Nov 24 Early Dismissal (1:50)
Nov 25 No public school buses
Dec 9 BVCS Winter Concert at the Canadian Reformed Church 7:00 p.m.
Dec 16 Last day of classes before Christmas break

Christian School Society of Smithers and Telkwa

<u>Board Members</u>		<u>Teaching Staff Members</u>	
Chairperson	Glenn Bandstra	Jonathan Boone	
Vice Chairperson	Irene Bakker	Shawn Boyes	
Treasurer	Fred Reitsma	John Buikema	
Corresponding Secretary	Cornelia Huisman	Jennifer de Boer	
Admission Committee	Irene Bakker	Roxanne Dykstra	
	Kristine Huxtable	Deb Groot	
Building/Grounds/ Transportation Committee	Steve deHoog	Myrna Johnson	
Capital Development Committee	Glenn Bandstra	Klaas Kort	
Education Committee	Al Brandsma	Christa LaFountain	
	Vicki Veenstra	Winette McEwen	
Finance Committee	Glenn Bandstra	Julie Monn-Djasngar	
Promotion Committee	Irene Bakker	Elaine Nanninga	
	Kristine Huxtable	Peter Rhebergen	
Employee Relations Committee	Dave Ripmeester	Chris Steenhof	
Standing Grad Committee	Cornelia Huisman	Tom Stolte	
Secretary for the Board	Yvonne Tucker	Hugo VanderHoek	
		Ron VanDriel	
		John Vis	
		Carolyn Visser	

The Grapevine is a monthly newsletter for members of the Christian School Society of Smithers and Telkwa as well as others interested in news from Bulkley Valley Christian School. It is distributed via school children and to others by local churches and by mail. We welcome your contribution but reserve the right to edit for suitability.

If you wish to submit an article, please contact Wilma Numan by email at wnuman@bvcs.ca.