



A monthly newsletter of
Bulkley Valley Christian School

Operated by the Christian School
Society of Smithers and Telkwa

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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.



From the Board Chair

Yesterday we marked Remembrance Day, a day to focus on the many servicemen and women who sacrificed their lives in the wars for our country. We live in times of such freedom that war and the sacrifices made in the past are often not easy to feel connected to. I often feel the same about thanking God for food; very few of us have ever gone without a meal let alone been truly hungry. Are we truly thankful? Next week students try to appreciate hunger by participating in the Hunger Auction. How about our Christian school? We have been blessed to have a school society for 50 years now, do we appreciate the effect God has had through the many students and staff over these decades? What would our community be like without our Christian school?

It is good to reflect as we move ahead to a unified campus next year. At the Board level we are nearing the completion of writing an Educational Creed that aims to make a more inclusive Christian School community. This project was a result of feedback from parent interviews last year. We will bring this document to society members later in the year. The Board has been very busy with the processes required to get the best possible classroom, teacher, staff and administration structure for our students. It seems like a giant jigsaw puzzle dynamically moving together to make a picture of who we will be for the next decade. We are also moving ahead in developing good policy for the Distributed Learning (DL) program for BVCS, perhaps you have heard of DL and noticed some children at the campuses who are in the program. Please feel free to ask any questions you might have about the DL program or our move towards a unified campus.

Barry Lester

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Editorial **Full Day Kindergarten?**

About a year ago the government announced plans to move to a Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) program. This program would start in 2010 for 50% of the Kindergartens in the province, leading to 100% participation by 2011. School authorities were informed that only schools offering a FDK program would receive government funding.

Since that initial announcement, the provincial government has gone ahead with its plans, with one exception. Recently it was announced that independent schools would continue to be eligible for government funding should they decide to operate a half-day program. The Society of Christian Schools in BC welcomed this change, saying that it allowed for choice for families when it came to deciding in what kind of program they would enroll their children.



While the concept of choice is a good one, for many smaller schools such as BVCS, this decision actually complicates matters; we are not able to offer both a half-day program and a FDK program. We will have to make a choice. In order to make a well informed decision it would be good to know a bit more about the thinking behind the development of FDK.

First of all there are educational considerations. A government pamphlet for parents states: *“Full day learning is associated with improved reading and numeracy, smoother transitions to Grade 1, and increased post-secondary graduation rates. Full day kindergarten enables teachers to give their students more individual attention”.*

However, there are other reasons as well. Offering FDK provides the parents with an opportunity to access affordable childcare. The same pamphlet makes clear that this too is one of the motivations of the government to offer FDK. Among its list of benefits it mentions, *“Economic benefits if your childcare expenses are reduced. Greater work/life balance, allowing parents more time to work or study”.*

Furthermore, the government is quite well aware that the number of children attending school is shrinking across the province. This is leading to empty classrooms and unemployed teachers. Extending the Kindergarten program to FDK addresses this somewhat.

So what are we to make of all this? Opinions about FDK will most likely be quite polarized. There may be those parents who feel quite strongly that their child is much better off spending a large portion of their time at home. They may feel that the activities in which their child is involved more than adequately address the healthy development they are looking for. They may feel that a FDK program would take that away from them.

On the other hand there may be those who see FDK as something that would perfectly meet the need of their child. They may feel that attending FDK with a play-based program will help their child be better prepared for the more formal learning of grade 1.

It is not likely that the one parent will be able to convince the other. And from my perspective, there is no need for this. What is important is that we all have a clear understanding as to what Kindergarten is all about. Let me share a few facts with you that may be helpful.

1. **Kindergarten is not mandatory.** Even right now, parents have the option to send or not send their child to Kindergarten. Not until the year they turn 6 are children required to attend school. If a child is in need of a break from a day in Kindergarten, it is perfectly okay for parents to keep their children at home. Likewise, if in a FDK program parents feel that their child can only handle three days, or mornings, or every other day, it is perfectly fine to use that option. No-one forces you to enroll your child in Kindergarten whether it is a FDK or a half day program; it is your choice.
2. **Kindergarten is not a prerequisite to enter grade 1.** Some parents worry that their

child will not have the literacy and numeracy skills required to enter grade 1. In reality, as parents you could decide not to send your child to Kindergarten but start school in grade 1. The grade 1 program should then adequately address your child's needs. In fact, the Kindergarten program is a play-based program, in which children learn to socialize, explore, investigate and share. This is what helps them to be prepared for grade 1. Most Kindergarten programs will also spend time with pre-reading and pre-math activities, but entering grade 1 does not depend on whether your child has participated in these activities.

3. **FDK will not see a shift in the curriculum with a greater focus on academics.** The fact of the matter is that there is no change in the actual Kindergarten program. The only change is that instead of covering the program in 2 or 3 days, a Kindergarten teacher has the luxury of spreading it over five days. The teacher will likely focus on the core subjects in the morning when the children are alert and eager, while the afternoon will probably have more of a center focused approach.

As we work towards making many changes at BVCS we will need to consider how we balance the approach of the government with the wishes of our parent community. It may mean that we will offer FDK, with a clear understanding that parents have the right to have their child participate either full or part-time. As parents we need to respect the decision other parents may make regarding their child. After all, it is the parents, not the government, who know best what their child's needs are.

If you want to read more about FDK, you can check out the government's website at: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/fdk/

K. Kort

From the Elementary Campus Principal

This month we were able to meet with you, our parents, to discuss how your children are adjusting to their new classroom environments. It was good to sit around the table and share the successes and challenges that come with moving to a new classroom, a new teacher, or even new classmates. It appeared that by and large you are satisfied with what is going on at the elementary campus, something for which we are very grateful. At the same time I do want to encourage you to bring any concerns to the teachers' attention.



We are very happy to announce the arrival of a new student, Reinhard Jonker. The Jonker family recently moved here from Sarnia, and they are also recent immigrants from South Africa. We are glad you have chosen to join the BVCS community and hope that you, Cobus and Corlia, as well as Reinhard will soon feel at home here.

During our parent-teacher conferences we were able to sell necklaces and other jewelry as part of a fundraiser to assist women in Africa make a better life for themselves or their families. These kinds of events help us to focus on the needs in our 'global village', rather than on our personal wants. It is my hope that, as we participate in these events, we as parents and teachers, reflect on how we live as Christians in a country of plenty. Is our own life based on *needs*? Or are we, like so many in our society, succumbing to the culture of *want*?

In this context I am looking ahead to our upcoming outreach project. This year we have chosen to support an organization called Sowing Seeds, which supports improving educational opportunities for children in Sierra Leone. We chose this organization because it was started locally. Instead of donating money, students will produce Christmas items such as cards and wrapping paper which will then be sold at a local craft fair. In addition, sometime later this year we will organize a fundraising event for the orphanage in Haiti, which we have been supporting for a number of years now. In light of our theme of developing global disciples it may be time to establish closer ties with the orphanage.

K. Kort, Elementary Campus Principal

From the Secondary Campus Principal



It is often said that quality comes before quantity. It is a good principle to go by but one so difficult to apply in days of downturn. When the student numbers go down the math would suggest class combinations that involve fewer teachers and more students in a room. In planning for the next years the staff, Education Committee, and School Board are really struggling with the question of maintaining quality education in a time of financial stress. Since the start of the school year there have been various meetings and many more discussions aimed at gaining an understanding of what decisions serve the best interest of our school and students. It is good to know that everyone takes the question of quality very seriously and wants students to be in the best place for learning. It is good to realize also, that many of the adults involved have children in the classes that might be affected by various possible combinations.

Student report cards went out on October 27. They showed grades for the work in semestered courses. Consequently there was a lot more to report and discuss for high school students than for those in grade 8 & 9. The overall picture of student performance is very positive. It was really good for teachers to be able to talk with parents during the parent-teacher conferences that followed.

Students are enjoying a variety of activities and events in addition to their academic work. Justin Steenhof made an informative assembly presentation about his trip to Ottawa resulting from winning the 'Create your Canada' contest. Mrs. Lester and Mrs. Van Veen did a moving presentation of poverty in Africa and the efforts of 'Bead for Life' to give hope. For career day the students had fun dressing up as their future career. During lunch hours there are occasional sports activities. Meanwhile six volleyball teams are practicing after school and playing competitive games, leading up to zones, the next few weeks.

During the last two months staff has been engaged in a number of meetings in regards to the best possible classroom allocations for our amalgamated campus. The choices basically came down to which grade levels would best function in the modular buildings. Eventually we came to a conclusion that we think will serve our students well for the years to come. We envision that the elementary grades will be downstairs in what used to be the middle school wing. Grades 7 - 9 will have most of their classes in the modular building. High school classes will be mostly in the upstairs of the main building with some of the specialty subjects happening in the modular building as well.

We are continuing our conversations regarding further details, especially as it pertains to any remodeling that would need to take place. A small group of teachers has since come together to prepare a list of suggestions for renovations and changes in the modular building. The Special Needs staff is currently looking into what spaces they will need throughout the building.

There is a sense of excitement and gratitude that comes with this transition. Many of the discussions highlight the positive possibilities and opportunities for good teaching and for strong community. We are encouraged by this and by the support from parents and school board.

L. VanderHoek, Secondary Campus Principal

Educational Creed Committee

The school board's Ad Hoc 'Educational Creed Committee' has been working on the formulation of some foundational documents that clarify the purpose of education at BVCS, the underlying assumptions of our aims, and the goals we have for our graduates. These documents are proposed to engage parents, school society members, potential school society members, and teachers in thinking about the essentials that tie us together as the BVCS community.

This month the committee will present these documents to the board.

- **Basis and Principles for Education at BVCS** - central principles about good quality education that shape our educational institution's faith and scholarship.
- **BVCS Educational Creed** - distinctive insights that shape the character of learning and interactions in our Christian School.
- **Profile of a BVCS graduate** - descriptors of the kind of student BVCS strives to graduate.

To give you a taste, here are just two of six central principles about good quality education that are under consideration:

Education is informed by the unique authority of the Bible: We are committed to the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures. We recognize that the Holy Bible, including both the Old and New Testament, represents the whole counsel of God and is the ultimate authority for the life and practice of all believers. It instructs us on how we are to treat people and things in God's creation.

Education belongs to the parents. We recognize that it is God's special gift when he chooses to place children and adults in a context of a community where people love God and desire to live for Him. This covenant relationship obliges Christian parents to engage their children in education for a life of obedience to their calling in this world as image bearers of God.

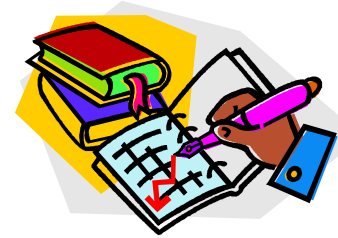
Request for Volunteers

At an earlier occasion we have requested parents to consider volunteering some time for lunch hour hallway and field supervision at the secondary campus. So far we have one dad who is here for two lunch times a week. We would welcome and appreciate any other parent who could join in with that as well.

Book Report by Joshua Mann

Title: Flying Ace

Author: Jim Eldridge



Jack Fairfax, compared to his brother Oswald, isn't very smart academically. After he finally

finished high school, he and his buddy Alan decided to join the Royal Air Force and get involved in the war with the Huns. His father, Lord Fairfax, made him aware of the family tradition of fighting the Huns on foot as a soldier. Eventually, after a lot of convincing, Jack gets his approval and started his training. When he finally gets his wings he escorts the scout planes over enemy lines to get updated photographs of their movement.

Jack lives for the open air and the adventure of the skies. He likes to be with his pal Alan because they've been friends since grade school. This book influenced me as a Christian to be thankful for what you have and a free country. It taught me that God made it possible for them to make airplanes so that we could win the war. It also showed that people from his hometown in 1915-1918 didn't live in fear because they had an army to protect them.

October Teacher's Conference

Dan Egeler's keynote address spoke to my heart. Egeler's description of a Christian school being both Christian and a place of learning - and doing both well - is a simple idea, yet remarkably profound. It's true, it's not new to hear rhetoric on doing things "Christianly". But, how often do we really look at ourselves as a school and acknowledge that we bear the name of not

any king, but the King? To ask ourselves "What does our Christian school look like? Does it bear witness to the one whose name is on the building?" He certainly is on the hearts of many inside. But, not all. Are we reaching those who have not yet personally asked Christ to be their Lord and Savior? Are we reaching our community with a clear message that we are Christians seeking to renew and reconcile all of creation unto himself? Are we teaching our students to be global Christian citizens? There are times when it can be frustrating to have a question answered with more questions; however, I feel that asking some of these questions may help define who we are as a school, what our place is in the local and global community. Tough questions...but so good to talk through.

Egeler also stated that "Christian schools need to deal with cultural lies". At first, I too was hoping that he would elaborate on what those lies were. Yet, we, as educators, are working alongside children in a place to be able to start answering those questions. If we can address the cultural lies that the students are growing up in, we can better pilgrimage with them on their journey of faith. I find myself with a bit of homework: what are the cultural lies for our students?

Julie Monn

From the Development Director

1. At our Fall Society Meeting, I shared a copy of the alumni newsletters that went out last May. Our next newsletter will go out to alumni in early December. If you want your son or daughter to be added to our list of e-mail recipients, please supply me with their e-mail address. You can send it to me at jbuikema@bvcs.ca.
2. Because the focus of the Development Committee has been on getting ready for our two fundraising dinners, we have not done much work on planning our 50th Anniversary Celebrations. However, we do have some information to report, and we do have some specific dates that you probably want to be aware of. We will be having a 50th anniversary banquet on Thursday, May 26, 2011 @ the Hudson Bay Lodge. There will be

room for about 375 guests, and it is our hope to have a full house that evening. On Saturday, May 28, we will hold our annual fundraising golf tournament at the Smithers Golf and Country Club, and we hope to connect this event to our 50th anniversary celebrations. There will also be additional 50th anniversary activities scheduled for Friday, May 27. If you know of someone from out of town who might like to be a part of these events, please let them know these dates.

3. As mentioned in our previous Grapevine, the sale of grocery gift cards (vouchers) has tailed off as of late. At our September Development Committee meeting, a decision was made to try a system where people could pre-order these gift cards. Please take note of the order form on the last page of this Grapevine to see how this works, and we again encourage you to support this program. (For those of you who are new to our school community, our school earns \$8 for every \$100 in Safeway gift cards that are purchased, and 5\$ for every \$100 in BV Wholesale vouchers or Extra Foods gift cards that are bought.) Don't forget that these gift cards can be picked up at the homes of Aleeda Vis, Pat VanderMeer, or John Buikema if you find yourself needing them at a time when school offices are closed.
4. For those of you who are new to our community or for those of you who need a reminder, pop cans/returnable bottles/juice boxes can be brought to the local recycling depot and the proceeds donated to BVCS. All you have to do is put these items in a bag and clearly write on the bag that your donation is for "Bulkley Valley Christian School".

J. Buikema



We Hope You Can Join Us

During the last couple of weeks, we have tried to inform as many people as possible about our two upcoming fundraising dinners on Friday, November 26 and Saturday, November 27. If you have not yet reserved your spot, please call either campus by Tuesday, November 23 to make your reservation. (Making these reservations is crucial so that we know how much food to prepare.

We believe that these two dinners will be very special events. There will undoubtedly be a great meal in store for those who attend. We will also have opportunity as a community to reflect on God's past faithfulness, and opportunity to look ahead with anticipation to God's continued guidance and care. The entertainment planned for the evening should provide numerous opportunities to enjoy God's good gift of laughter. What will especially make this a memorable event is the fact that it will, in all likelihood, be the last opportunity we have to hold a dinner for our community in the elementary campus gymnasium. **(What a host of memories are contained in that old gymnasium for so many of us.)**

As already mentioned these two dinners are fundraising events. In fact, it is our goal to raise \$100 000 over the course of those two nights. The monies raised will be used to help offset the many costs associated with amalgamating our two campuses into one unified campus.

Dinner will be by donation; no tickets need to be purchased. We especially want to highlight that this dinner is for all who are friends of Christian education. If someone can only make a small donation, that is perfectly fine. We don't want anyone to stay away for financial reasons. Events like this build community, and community can only be built if all members of the community feel welcome to attend.

Hope to see you there!

November Hymn of the Month

Abide With Me

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;
the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away.
Change and decay in all around I see.
O Lord who changes not, abide with me.

I need your presence every passing hour.
What but your grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like yourself my guide and strength can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no foe with you at hand to bless,
Though ills have weight, and tears their bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, your victory?
I triumph still, if you abide with me.

Hold now your word before my closing eyes.
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks and earth's vain shadows flee;
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.



Christian School Society of Smithers and Telkwa

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	Yvonne Tucker	Ron VanDriel
		John Vis□



Grocery Gift Card Order Form

I would like to order the following gift cards/grocery vouchers:

Extra Foods

_____ x \$25

_____ x \$50

_____ x \$100

_____ x \$200

_____ Total dollar amount of Extra Foods gift cards

BV Wholesale

_____ x \$25

_____ Total dollar amount of BV Wholesale vouchers

Safeway

_____ x \$25

_____ x \$50

_____ x \$100

_____ x \$200

_____ x \$300

_____ Total dollar amount of Safeway gift cards

_____ **TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT OF YOUR ENTIRE ORDER**

(Please make your cheque out to *Christian School Workshop*, staple your cheque to this order form, and return both to either campus office.)

_____ I will pick up my gift cards at the elementary campus office.

_____ I will pick up my gift cards at the secondary campus office.

_____ You can give my gift cards to my son/daughter named _____

_____ Please deliver my cards. (The Development Office will happily arrange for delivery if this is what works best for you.)