

The Current - Monty Middle Newsletter

Volume # 39 June 16th, 2014

Timeline Summary

Last Thursday June 12th, was a very hectic day around Monty as we received notice that Thursday would be our last day at school barring any new changes towards a negotiated deal between the BCTF and the BC Public School Employer's Association. This placed all of us in a very challenging position to prepare for school closure in one day while at the same time honouring the work of six classes who were celebrating their Renaissance Faire, which was already adjusted ahead of schedule on our school calendar. The day unfolded and students responded to a wide array of directions placing them into short timeframes and long winded instructions, all of which they completed with a clear purpose and supportive work effort.

Renaissance Faire: This was a great culminating event to weeks of creative work and design by our staff and students. This was a celebration of recreating life during the Renaissance with students bringing to stage the many aspects of daily life at this time. We had students recreating the roles of blacksmiths, archers, magical chemists, Renaissance dancers, fortune tellers, farmers, royalty, bakers and many more societal roles all on display. Costumes were authentic, chemical concoctions were adapted and the daily chores and activities were being lived by real people portraying their everyday lives. We want to thank the students for their creative energy in designing their costumes, their working storefronts, their fields of toil and for knowing the background of their characters and the challenges of their community role. We thank our teachers for their support in allowing our students to live Renaissance life beyond the textbook or the voyeuristic watching of a movie. We thank the parents and invited guests who came to share in the activities and interact with questions and inquiry about the specifics of each societal component. If only the day could have been longer with our Renaissance Faire being the one and only focus for the day.

Cancellation of School Band & Choir Performances: This was not an easy decision and it was one that we had divided up in terms of calendar and timing of labour dispute information. Last Monday we had cancelled the evening performance of our Year End Band & Choir performance once the confirmation for the upcoming week was that teachers were locked out of doing schoolwork after the end of day @ 3:45. We held onto the idea that we would be able to adjust the parent evening to be absorbed into our school wide rehearsal planned for the afternoon of Thurs June 12th. This was the plan up until early Thursday morning as we received notification that Thursday had an extremely high probability of being our last day with teachers in session and full access to our student community. With a myriad of key tasks to accomplish in one day we made the decision to cancel the Band and Choir performances set for the afternoon and proceed with our rapid school closure process. We apologize to our students for not being able to truly honour their work and achievements in a culminating celebration as we all would have desired. We appreciate the thoughtfulness of all involved in understanding the challenges that were faced by students and staff on that last day of school, as it stands so far for this current year.

School Closure Assignments Completed: Due to the ongoing labour dispute/partial lock-out involving the BC Teachers' Federation and the BC Public School Employer's Association there continues to be a need to alter many of our traditional year-end practices. On this last Thursday our administration team put together a day plan that worked with students and parents to ensure as smooth a year-end as possible. We are asking for the assistance of parents and students to continue in a few of our year-end tasks.

- **First** - Textbook collection was initiated on Thursday and may need some final support to be completed by asking that all students bring their textbooks and library books from home to school on **Monday June 16th**. Schools will be open and free from any labour protest to receive students returning books to the main office throughout the day. We have received the majority of textbooks but we also know that some students had them at home and want to return them to school as soon as possible.
- **Second** - We will also have had the vast majority of students complete their locker or desk clean-out last Thursday with the provision of garbage bags to help support students in returning their personal belongings. We are requesting that students who did not have a chance to complete their locker /desk clean out to please return at some point during the day on **Monday June 16th** to ensure that they bring all personal items home.
- **Third** – The distribution of yearbooks was completed last Thursday and students had a short window of opportunity throughout the day to sign and manage their yearbook messages. The yearbook is a student's private memoire that they should never leave unsecured or unwillingly provide to another student who does not show respect to their private property. We thank our student leadership team for their help in the yearbook distribution process.
- **Fourth** – The Much Video Dance Party has been cancelled and once again the vast majority of students who purchased tickets were responsible in ensuring that they received a full refund for their pre-purchased dance ticket.
- **Fifth** - As the labour process stands currently at this time, modified report cards and reporting information will be mailed to families in July.

Gr. 8 Year End Celebration Parent Organized Activity: A strong , committed and dedicated group of Gr. 8 Parents have organized a year end celebration at *Blue Mountain Park Picnic Area set for Thursday June 19th from 4:30 – 8:00.* This is a parent run event to honour the leaving process of our Gr. 8 students and will require volunteer support from you the parent community in terms of potluck food, student activities and cost sharing donations for the park rental. Please contact Elaine Querengesser @ equereng@hotmail.com for more information about how you can be involved in joining and supporting this parent supported event.

McFaul's Chat and Chew: Social Closure – Saying goodbye is best done with a period of reflection, time to reminisce about challenges overcome, successes achieved and time to honour the commitment of one's passion, service and generosity. We were not able to do this with our students and with many of our staff who at a point in their lives are making professional moves to enhance their experiences and continue modelling life-long learning. Usually, we get together to have some fun highlighting individuals and their quirky uniqueness with creative assemblies and a sense of tradition. This was not achievable for this year and for this I feel a great loss. To our students we say thank you for your perseverance towards being your best, for your courage in experiencing new learning, for your caring to make Monty your home and goodbye to those students who are moving on to new communities. To our staff members who have accepted a new challenge to work in a new environment, we wish you all of the best of what you have learned at Monty and hope that you can share these qualities with the students and staff at your new venue. Leaving Monty as we know of today are the following: Mr. Nordby, Ms. Patching, Mrs. Weger, Mrs. Sievers, Mrs. Rowat, Ms. Graham, Ms. Chan/Diep, Ms. Carruthers, Mr. De Vita, Mrs. Clarke, Mrs. Eaton, Ms. Wallat, Ms. Ellison, Mrs. Macdonell, Mrs. Yahemech, Mrs. Cheah, Ms. Harper and Mr. Alexandre. Hopefully returning through the process of teacher recall are, Ms. Smallwood and Mr. Kwok who continue to face the challenges of being youthful in a time of teacher layoffs. To all we wish you a professionally enlightening period of growth and a safe healthy journey to your new home.

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