



Rainy River District School Board

# Parent Involvement Committee Newsletter

Spring 2016

## Spring is STEAM Season!

Have fun and learn together at Family STEAM events, and Play Dates.

The Parent Involvement Committee is following up last year's Family Science Nights with this year's sponsorship of STEAM-powered family events!

**STEAM** connects the foundations of science, technology, engineering, arts and math, showing how technical concepts relate to real-world situations and providing students with hands-on projects and problems that help them apply concepts in a new context. It's about nurturing curiosity and helping develop creativity, problem solving and critical thinking skills.

Parents, along with their children, are invited and encouraged to participate in these exciting and engaging learning events that will include special guests.

**Play Dates**, including STEAM components, are designed for younger students and their families. Registration support for Early Years in Fall 2016 will also be available.

Family STEAM events, and Play Dates engage students, and encourage inquiry-based learning. Help show your excitement for learning and fun by joining us at an upcoming event.

## Inspiring Your Child to Learn and Love Math

### Parent engagement



The Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) recently launched new materials, developed to assist parents to inspire their elementary school children to learn and love math. The goal of this resource is to provide parents with the most significant research-based information to help them be the best, most knowledgeable and most confident supporters for their child's mathematics education.

We invite and encourage you to take the time to view or download the videos and resources that apply to your child's age group by visiting:

[http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent\\_engagement-math/en/index.htm](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement-math/en/index.htm)

## Math For Young Children project reveals exciting results!

The Math for Young Children (M4YC) from the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Studies in Toronto has been working with RRDSB teachers, and recently presented their exciting research results from the work in Early Years to Grade 3 classrooms in 5 schools of the RRDSB. They found that if you can improve children's spatial knowledge, it builds foundation in mathematics.

"The findings suggest that employing an inquiry-based approach to early mathematics with a major emphasis placed on increasing students' spatial reasoning skills offers an effective means to improve student achievement in mathematics. Children who took part in the spatial approach to math demonstrated remarkable gains in their spatial reasoning abilities. To our knowledge, this is the first study to show that improvements in a foundational understanding of numbers can be achieved through a spatial approach."  
~ Excerpt from M4YC Research Results 2015



Spring 2016 Newsletter

### Family STEAM Events

#### Upcoming Family STEAM dates:

- J.W. Walker—May 5, 2016
- Mine Centre—May 13, 2016
- North Star Community—May 25, 2016
- Robert Moore—June 9, 2016

#### Previously held STEAM dates:

- Crossroads—April 26, 2016
- Donald Young—April 19, 2016
- McCrosson-Tovell—April 14, 2016
- Riverview School—April 21, 2016
- Sturgeon Creek—April 21, 2016
- SCAP—April, 27, 2016

### Play Dates — Join us!

- Crossroads—May 24, 2016
- Donald Young—June 16, 2016
- J.W. Walker—June 9, 2016
- Mine Centre—June 2, 2016
- North Star Community—June 7, 2016
- Riverview School—May 31, 2016
- Robert Moore—June 8, 2016
- Sturgeon Creek—June 3, 2016

"Together, we empower all students to believe in themselves, to achieve, and to dream."

This publication is available in accessible formats upon request.

## Tips on packing a healthy lunch

The foods you pack for your child will give them the energy and nutrients they need to learn and play at school. Aim to have at least three of the four food groups in your child's lunch. Check out Canada's Food Guide to review the food groups.

Here are some ideas to help you pack a healthy school lunch:

- Vegetable and fruit ideas include: Red, green or yellow pepper strips, baby corn, peas in a pod, cherry tomatoes, cauliflower or broccoli trees, apple slices or orange segments, melon balls.
- Grain products: Using pita, flatbread, tortilla, bread sticks or cereal can make lunch more interesting. Pasta, brown rice, or quinoa can be combined with other ingredients such as black beans or chickpeas and diced veggies to make a hearty salad.
- Milk and Alternatives: Try yogurt dip (tzatziki) for vegetables, cheese cubes, cheese string, or milk or fortified soy beverage.
- Meat and Alternatives: Tuna, salmon, or chicken salad, hard cooked egg, ham slices, or hummus. Canned legumes like chick peas, black beans, and baked beans in tomato sauce.

### Snack Ideas:

- Whole grain crackers with a cheese slice or stick.
- Fresh cut fruit with yogurt dip.
- Yogurt tube and small oatmeal muffin.
- Guacamole and bread sticks or whole grain crackers.

~ Courtesy of the NWHU

For more health tips for school aged children, visit:

<https://www.nwhu.on.ca/Audiences/Pages/Parent-of-a-School-Aged-Child.aspx>

For links to school websites, parent resources, the latest news, upcoming school activities and more, visit the Board website at: [www.rrdsb.com](http://www.rrdsb.com).



## Parent engagement in high school

### If it's so important, why does it reduce?

When you review any literature on the effects of parent engagement in schools, the main points include increased student achievement, more regular attendance at school, greater graduation rates and increased confidence. At what time are these factors more important than in secondary school when our children are facing their most challenging times in school and are working towards their graduation from the secondary level while preparing for the next step in their lives.

It is sometimes a difficult time for parents to stay involved because children begin a new chapter in their lives where they want to be more independent and often don't want to have their parents present at the school.

Often, when a parent becomes involved in the school council, the positive work of the council and its support of the students in the school changes the child's concern about having their parent volunteering as part of the council.

It is a time to engage the parent community in events which include topics like "supporting your child's transition to high school", "building academic confidence in an adolescent", "beyond secondary school, the path to work, college and university", etc.

It is important for school council leaders to communicate with the parent community the message that parent involvement is crucial. Ongoing communication and regular agenda items for school council meetings providing tips for parents on how to effectively engage with their children in areas of homework assistance, supporting their child by attending school events, participating in teacher conferences, how to support their child's goals, how children learn differently etc., may assist in increasing parent involvement at your secondary school.

It is difficult to determine how to get parents into the school so that you can begin spreading the message about the importance of parent involvement. Perhaps consider speaking at an event such as a school performance or parent-teacher interview evening.

You may consider working with the school administration and teachers to host a multicultural night with families providing a dish and information on their home country. This is an excellent opportunity for the students to learn and for parents to meet on a more casual basis. It is a great time for current school council members to circulate and discuss upcoming meetings or events that will focus on issues that are a priority for the school community.

The message that our children need us even more in secondary school will be one that may surprise many parents, but hopefully will encourage them to participate more actively in their children's education and school.

~ Excerpt, Parent Engagement Consultants Group School Council Newsletter, Sept. 2015

## Creating Pathways to Success through student voice

Creating Pathways to Success sets out the new career development policy, which involves the implementation of a comprehensive Early Years to Grade 12 education and career/life planning program designed to help students achieve their personal goals and become competent, successful, and contributing members of society. The two components of this program are:

- All About Me programming for Early Years to Grade 6, which encourages students to document what they are discovering about themselves and their opportunities — through pictures, comments, letters to parents or peers, or through any other way they might choose — in a portfolio called "All About Me".
- The Individual Pathway Planning tool for Grade 7 to Grade 12, which encourages students to build on the learning reflected in their portfolio as they develop their Individual Pathways Plan that has a particular focus on making successful transitions to secondary destination.