

Note from Administration

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS ABOUT THE 2009-10 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

Under the provincial government's Education Act it is mandatory for Ontario school boards to submit to the Ministry of Education an annual school year calendar that provides for a school year of no less than 194 days.

As you may be aware from recent media reports, the fact that Labour Day is very late this year (Monday, September 7, 2009) poses some challenges in determining the school board's calendar for the 2009-10 school year.

School traditionally begins each year on the Tuesday immediately following Labour Day.

However, this coming school year there are only 192 school days available in the period between Labour Day and the end of school on June 30, 2010. Therefore, any planned school year that would begin on the Tuesday following Labour Day and end on June 30 would not meet the requirements of the Education Act.

Both the Waterloo Catholic District School Board and the Waterloo Region District School Board are planning to bring their recommended school year calendars forward for approval on March 30, 2009.

This is a province-wide issue and we ask that you please be aware the 2009-10 school year will commence during the week prior to Labour Day this year.

We suggest that you consider vacation and child care plans that are appropriate to your family's needs under these circumstances.

The final 2009-10 school year calendar will be communicated to you immediately following its approval.

- Mr. J. McKinnon, Principal

Administrative

ATTENDANCE ISSUES If your son or daughter is absent from school on a particular day, please try to call the school by noon **that same day**. **The direct phone line for the attendance office is (519) 621-4001.**

UNIFORMS During the winter season, we remind students that non-uniform clothing is not permitted in the classrooms, and should be left in your locker. This includes hats and scarves. Students who want to wear a sweater in class must wear a Benny's sweater with the **B** logo. These can be purchased at Mark's Work Wearhouse.

WHO IS YOUR ADMINISTRATOR?

The administrative contact for your son or daughter is based on your last name:

A to F - [Mrs. Daly](#)

G to O - [Mr. Bellini](#)

P to Z - [Mrs. Leusink](#)

As always, feel free to contact our principal, [Mr. McKinnon](#).

Academic

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

By Mrs. D. Lowe

Students of Mrs. Lowe's grade 12 Religion course (12UC) period 5, are working in cooperation with the grade 7's of Mother Teresa School on an important environmental initiative. In alignment with the course curriculum, students know that it is their responsibility, as stewards of the Earth, to take care of the wonderful planet that God has created. It is their hope to drastically decrease the use of plastic water bottles by bringing awareness to both school communities, as well as to members of the city of Cambridge. This project will connect the elementary students with the secondary students in a positive and pro-active way. Look and listen in the coming months for our

campaign and, if you would like to become involved, contact [Mrs. Lowe](#) at St. Benedict.

GET YOUR BIT CERTIFICATE

Before you know it, it will be time to select courses for next year. Students who are interested in business and computer courses should consider getting the BIT certificate. The Business & Information Technology Certificate is a certificate that complements your high school diploma with an area of concentration.

WHY GET IT?

- Acquire knowledge and skills suited to the workplace or for further study at the post-secondary level
- Photocopy and include with applications for employment

HOW DO YOU ATTAIN IT?

- One Business Technology course (BTT or BTA) or Computer Science course (ICS 3M)
- One additional "B" coded Business course

Plus any three of:

- All Business Studies courses ("B" codes)
- All Computer Science courses ("ICS" codes)
- Economics (CIA4U)
- 1 Law course (e.g. CLU3M)
- Mathematics for Personal Finance (MBF3C)
- Business or Information Technology Co-Op (counts as 2 credits)

And a minimum average of 60% across the five eligible BIT courses

For more information, please have your son or daughter talk to one of the Business Teachers, or visit <http://stbenedict.wcdsb.ca/business/> for details.



ADVERTISEMENT

DOES YOUR CHILD EXCEL IN BOTH THE ARTS AND SCIENCES?

Saint Benedict offers a course for those students who excel in both the Arts and Sciences, and enjoy examining issues from a variety of perspectives. An interview for placement may be requested.

GRADE 12 INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES: IDC4U

The Interdisciplinary Studies Course is appropriate for students with diverse abilities, interests, and learning styles. In their focus on real-life contexts, interdisciplinary studies courses tend to be highly motivating. They help students develop their knowledge and skills as a result of working on meaningful projects. They also provide opportunities for students to explore issues and problems that interest them from a variety of perspectives. This course is offered to students who wish to pursue advanced-level studies and theories in thinking, learning, and leadership. Students should be self-directed, autonomous learners.

You must show excellence in both academics and learning skills:



- Ability to work independently
- Ability to work in teams
- Organizational skills
- Initiative
- Effective work habits
- Homework completion

THE PLACE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN THE CURRICULUM:

Our world is increasingly interconnected and interdependent. Communications networks exchange information around the globe, creating new forms of collaboration and transforming the nature of work and learning. New areas of study develop to advance human knowledge and respond to the challenges of our changing world with insight and innovation. These include areas that often combine or cross subjects or disciplines, such as space

science, information management systems, alternative energy technologies, and computer art and animation.

If the *Interdisciplinary Course* interests you, select it under "Guidance and Career Education" IDC4UI. For further information contact [Mrs. D. Wittmann](#).



FROM THE RELIGION DEPARTMENT...

By Miss A. Whalen

We have had an exciting few months in the Religion Department. Our very own Ms. Hunt won the OECTA Beginning Teacher of the Year Award, a much deserved title for such a fabulous and dedicated teacher.

Last month, we had the fortunate experience of having the Sacred Encounters Experience presented to all Grade 11 students in the World Religion courses. The presentation involved various artifacts representing the five major religions from around the world.

This semester, we look forward to more retreats, and several guest speakers, including Holocaust survivors.

Also, stay tuned for our very exciting Social Justice work led by the wonderful and passionate Mrs. Lowe! She has been leading the "Message in a Bottle" campaign in partnership with students from Mother Teresa school. This initiative has been bringing awareness about the environmental impact that plastic water bottles have on our planet. This campaign has ignited controversy which has even gained the attention of Canada's own David Suzuki. Way to go Saints! This just goes to show we really can make a difference.

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Clicking on the blackboard on the Benny's website will take you to ClassNet

WHAT DO YOU HAVE FOR HOMEWORK? NOTHING?

Ah, that timeless answer students give to parents... Many of our teachers are now posting homework assignments on the board's homework repository, ClassNet. In order to get to ClassNet to check for homework, assignments, or other information for classes your son or daughter has, go to <http://classnet.wcdsb.ca>.

On the Benny's website, simply click on the blackboard in the bottom left corner of the screen and it will take you there.



Literacy Prep

When? Mondays and Wednesdays, starting on February 16th until March 25th (2:30 – 4:00)

Where? Room 210

Who? Any student in grade 10 or any student writing the literacy test on April 2nd

Why? To get some help studying, practicing and preparing for the literacy test

How? See Mrs. Temple in the SST office or Mrs. Ahrens in the main office to register

LITERACY TIP #6

Literacy Online (taken from Literacy Matters)

Technology is a part of literacy and learning. Most of our children/students use computers and various other pieces of technology on a regular basis. Students can use the computer for word processing, email, spreadsheets, graphical presentations, and research to stimulate the reading-writing process.

Word Processing

- writing, editing, rewriting, formatting

E-mail/Texting

- communication with other students, parents/guardians
- contacting experts in a particular field of study

Spreadsheets

-collecting, organizing and manipulating data

Graphic Arts

- adding graphics, slides, and sound to presentations, or book reports
- creating illustrations for projects, seminars, or reports

Research

- searching the Internet to research a topic and to learn how to search, survey, prioritize, and to evaluate critically
- using information efficiently and intelligently for purposeful learning

WCDSB STUDENT SUCCESS SITE

<http://bss.wcdsb.ca>

Resources to help you help your son or daughter succeed.

IMPORTANT LITERACY TEST DATES

Literacy Parent Night for all grade 10 parents will occur during the interview night March 9th from 6:30-7:30, weather date the Tuesday, March 10th (we thought having it during the interview time may encourage more parents to come to the meeting and/or interviews)

February 16 to March 25: every Monday and Wednesday - after school literacy prep in room 210, 2:30-4:00

Beginning the end of February until the test date: period 1 and 5 Grade 10 classes using the computer lab for test practice and skill building.

March 3: all grade 10s will write the literacy practice test in period 2- we can then mark the test and have some directive support for those students who were unsuccessful

March 11: grade 9 English classes will write a practice literacy test- all classes in second semester

March 23 to 27: Literacy Lockdown week- all program areas reviewing and preparing for the test- various periods during the week

March 24: Grade 10 information session period 2 for the literacy test- set up in the caf (30 minutes)

March 25: All students who are writing a second time- information session in the chapel period 1 (30 minutes)- slips will be handed out via homerooms for attendance purposes.

March 30, 31, April 1: Lunch time test practice, free pizza and literacy help

Clubs & Athletics

SENIOR BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM WINS STRATFORD TOURNAMENT

By MR. J. VALE

The Senior Boys Basketball Team captured the gold medal at the St. Mike's Warriors Invitational Basketball Tournament this past weekend. The boys began the weekend with an exciting 58-53 victory over Stratford St. Mike's. Shayne Kux led the attack with 26 points and Dane Osborne chipped in with 8 points. This victory set up a tough game against powerhouse London South Secondary School. The game was a defensive battle that came down to a Shayne Kux buzzer-beater to put the game into overtime. In the overtime period, the Saints' hustle and determination prevailed as they walked away victorious, 37-35.

The gold medal game featured a monster match-up against the local favourite Stratford Northwestern. After a see-saw battle in the first half, the Saints let the game get away from them and found themselves behind 51-35 with 5:30 remaining in the game. Some key defensive stops and some "lights-out" shooting by Dane Osborne propelled the Saints to 58-53 victory.

Shayne Kux led the attack with 30 points, Dane Osborne had 14 and Kevin Crosby contributed 13 points in the final. The boys now shift their focus to league play where they have two huge games against Resurrection and St. Mary's which will determine their playoff lives. Go Saints Go!

AFTER SCHOOL FITNESS CLUB

It is that time of year to start thinking about bathing suits and beaches!!! Come to the weight room after school to start working on those rippled abs. Students and teachers welcome. Open 2:30- 3:30 Mon - Thurs.

GOOD LUCK... to our students going to the Provincial level of the DECA Business Competition in Toronto this coming weekend. Results will be posted in our next issue.

Student Activities

By TONG SHI, SAC EXECUTIVE

February is a month of much significance. February 2nd was Groundhog Day, the 15th is Flag Day, and the entire month is Black History Month, both in Canada and for our neighbours to the south.

In our beloved St. Benedicts, February also marks the dreaded Singles Awareness Day. Of course, the media and corporations have spun what this grim day truly represents into a free-for-all-buy-a-lot-of-chocolates-fest. I am referring to February 14, otherwise known as Valentine's Day. The day represents many things for people besides chocolate binging, as approximately one billion valentines are sent each year worldwide, second only to Christmas. Surprising, considering the holiday possibly originated from the story of Saint Valentine, who upon rejection by his mistress took a knife to his chest and sent her his still-beating, heartbroken heart as a token of his undying love for her.

Naturally, in celebration of a cheerful holiday, SAC has planned many activities for Bennies. Candy grams and Crush pop are on sale, with free delivery to the special someone in the student's life. On February 11th, students can also wear red shirts (with uniform bottoms!) in celebration. Brave couples can also have their pictures taken!

The fun continues with Semi Formal on the 13th at the Armenian Hall. On the 18th is Matchmaker, where courageous students can sign up to have their personality coupled with like-minded students.

On the 25th, we are back to our regularly scheduled programming, with Sports Trivia. Coffee House ends February with a healthy dose of St. Benedict's artistic talents.

Phew... and this is just February. More to come in March besides the coveted MARCH BREAK! Jersey Day, St. Patrick's Day celebrations, and Multicultural week are only a few, so look forward to it!

Other News

MS. HUNT RECEIVES OECTA BEGINNING TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

By MR. A. MILARDOVIC

Last month, Ms. Karen Hunt was informed that she was the recipient of the Beginning Teacher of the Year Award, an award presented annually by the local Unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association. The term "beginning teacher" is defined as a teacher within their first five years of teaching. The award recipient is selected from nominations submitted to the Unit office.

The award was presented to Ms. Hunt at the annual OECTA Awards and Appreciation Dinner on Thursday, January 29. The award was presented to her by Mrs. L. Temple, who used the following to describe Ms. Hunt: "[she] is a positive, energetic, and overly enthusiastic teacher who strives constantly to begin each day with a smile, a kind word, or a friendly compliment... her students appreciate this, as do her colleagues... Ms. Hunt, although a new teacher, is well beyond her years in regards to how she reflects on lessons, her willingness to try new things or revamp something that didn't quite go as she wanted. She uses many strategies to engage her students on a daily basis as well. She consistently wants to grow and change in her practice in order to reach all students."

We are very proud of her on winning this award, for which she was most deserving. She is truly an example of what our motto *A Celebration of People* is all about. Congratulations Ms. Hunt!



SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING Parents are invited to get involved in the St. Benedict community by joining our school council. Our next meeting will be Thursday, February 26 at 7:00 pm in room 103. New members are always welcome.

If you are interested in helping with school council activities, but cannot commit to the monthly meetings, we still want to hear from you! Send an email to our principal, [Mr. McKinnon](#), or to one of the school council co-chairs, [Andrew Bagley](#) or [Belinda Lutes](#).

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HOSTS NEEDED Is your family interested in hosting an international student in your home? We are looking for people to make a commitment to hosting a student from September 2009 to June 2010. If you are interested, please contact: Margo Jones, Coordinator, International Program, 519-578-3660 x 2332, email margo.jones@wcdsb.ca.

Dates to Remember

February 6: Report Card distribution

February 6-7: DECA Provincials

February 10: Semester 2 photos

February 11: Valentine's Sweetheart Red Dress-up Day (red tops, uniform bottoms!)

February 13: Spring Semi-formal, 7:00-10:30

February 16: Family Day holiday

February 18: SAC Spirit Day

February 18: Jr. Math Contests

February 19: Course Selection Night

Miscellaneous

We want to know what you think and how we can improve communication with you. Please email the Newsletter editor from the link below.

Check out our website at <http://stbenedict.wcdsb.ca> for news and information updates.

TWO HUNDRED AND GROWING! Encourage other parents to join our emailing list! We've now put an image right on the Benny's homepage--click on the icon, and fill in the form, and voila! There are currently **216** people on the list.

This newsletter is also available on the school website if you [click here](#). You may want to send this link to other parents rather than forward your email--doing so may alter the layout and generate the page incorrectly.

Any comments? [Send us an email!](#)

