

Gordon Gazette



General Gordon Elementary School
2896 West 6th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6K 1X1
13-5403 Fax 713-5405
Website: www.gordonelementary.ca



Safe Arrival ☎ 713-6000 (press 2880 without waiting for the prompts)

Principal: Margaret Davidson
Associate Superintendent: Jordan Tinney
Trustee: Patti Bachus



Vice-Principal: Nathalie Morissette
Administrative Assistant: Marilyn Grant
Extra-clerical: Kelly Loconte
PAC Chair: Miriam Grob

2011 September 6

Newsletter #01

NEW SCHOOL HOURS: Monday-Friday 9:00am-3:0

Lunch-12:15-1:

Supervision for students at recess and lunch

Supervision in the mornings on the playground for students 8:40-9:00am

Supervision after school on the playground 3:01-3:20pm

CALENDAR REMINDERS

Wednesday	September 7	Students go to last year's classes
Thursday	September 8	Regular day of classes
Thursday	September 8	Performance- "Digital Guize" 1:30pm
Friday	September 9	Professional Day
Monday	September 12	Students will go to their new classes
Monday	September 26	PAC Meeting (7:30-9:00pm)



SCHOOL NEWS



Welcome to another exciting year at General Gordon. We look forward to meeting all our new students and their families. We have a number of new staff and welcome them to our learning community. Our Code of Conduct reflects how the Gordon community is caring, respectful and safe.

Choose to be Kind! Choose to be Safe! Choose to be Fair!

Gordon School has followed William Glasser's Choice Theory, and we focus on three of his main criteria for a "Quality School:" meaningful work, a non-coercive environment and self-evaluation (where students reflect on their learning).

William Glasser states that "relationships are based upon trust and respect..." and that "staff, students, parents and administrators view the school as a joyful place." We are proud to be following these words of wisdom and we are anticipating an extraordinary year of fun events, enriched learning experiences and many opportunities for children to demonstrate their skills and talents.

We would like to welcome the following new staff to our school: **Linda Wong** (Grade 3/4), **Christine Papau** (Kindergarten), **Ginaya Peters** (French Immersion Resource) and **Jennifer Mitton** (K/1) Welcome back to **Kelly Smith** (Kindergarten), **Nathalie Menard** (Grade 7 LFI) and **Amanda Wardrop** (Grade 7 LFI).

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION: I would like to thank the parents and the staff for being patient as we work on putting a school organization together that is able to meet the needs of most everyone. There are a number of factors that become important when looking at the make-up of the different classes. Some of the factors are that we are bound by a collective agreement, others are Ministry guidelines that we need to follow, and others involve individual children and looking at their learning styles, their friendships, their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers spend hours and hours of their time making the best educational decisions for grouping the students. It is difficult for us to organize our classes by the first week as families move in and out of our catchment area throughout the summer. We hope to have everyone in his or her classes by Monday, September 12th. Thank you for your input with letters and know that we try to accommodate everyone but are not always able to do this, however please know that we will always support your children so that they get the best learning experience possible.

COMMUNICATION:

Administration: At General Gordon there has always been an open door policy where students and parents are able to come and speak to the administration when they have concerns about their child's education. We found last year that with our schedules being so busy either at meetings; teaching or working with students it was difficult for parents to know when we are available. In the mornings the office area is very busy and we are usually working with the student morning announcers and it is a difficult time to talk to parents. It also makes it a very noisy place where it is difficult for the office staff to concentrate. This year I will be placing a schedule of 15-minute time slots on the days and times that I am available outside the office. If after that meeting we need more time we can arrange another meeting. Thank you for your patience and I look forward to meeting all of you.

Teaching Staff: Please be respectful when setting up meetings to talk to the teachers about your child's learning. Right at the beginning of class is not the best time as teachers are prepping for the day and need that time to organize their lessons. Please speak to the teacher at the end of the day to make a convenient time for both of you. We thank you for your consideration towards and respect of our amazing staff at General Gordon.

Newsletters/Information Bulletins: Regular communication is one important way that parents can be well-informed about what goes on at school. Please expect two newsletters a month. We have been posting the newsletter on the website that Ingrid and Paul Sulston have set up for us at www.gordonelementary.ca. In the information sheets sent home next week you can opt to receive the newsletter as paper or by e-mail. ***You can sign up for e-mail now by going to the newsletter page of the website.*** There will also be hard copies of the newsletter available in the office for those families who need it. Also on the website there is the school calendar for the year 2011-2012 showing our professional days, holidays and parent-teacher conferences (see attached calendar –hard copy). If at anytime you have questions about the school or your child's learning please don't hesitate to make an appointment with your child's teacher or phone the office for an appointment with the principal or vice-principal.

JOB ACTION NEWS: Teachers will continue to plan lessons, assess, evaluate and mark students work. We have attached a letter from the Superintendent outlining other information on the Job Action of Teachers. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to e-mail Ms. Davidson.

MEET THE TEACHER NIGHT- Meet the Teacher night ***will be cancelled*** as teachers will not be participating in events outside of school time during phase 1 of Job Action. In its place we will have a "Meet the Parents" night hosted by the PAC and the Principal and Vice-Principal. The meeting will be on Wednesday, September 21st from 6:00-7:00pm in the gym.



SEISMIC INFORMATION-see attached

GORDON SCHOOL AGENDA PROGRAM and PERFORMANCES

Agendas: Student agendas are another very useful communication and teaching tool. The cost of the agenda for the Grades 4-7 students is **\$10.00**.

Performances: Catherine MacIntyre, our music specialist has taken the time to research and book some exciting performances to show our children and school community this year. These performances are costly and in order to maintain the variety of experiences and number of performances we are asking for **\$15.00 from each student**. We have added \$5.00 from last year because of the number of students in the school now we need to have 2 performances so that there is enough room in the gym for all the students. Parents and younger siblings are encouraged also to come and watch the performances. Catherine will sometimes book performances appropriate for all grades (odd and even divisions can watch) or performances that are appropriate for primary or intermediate. The school and the PAC will also be providing funds for some performances. Catherine always chooses a variety of performances for the students to enjoy. These performances will be described in the upcoming newsletters. She will book five performances and then our PAC sponsors two extra performances so that our students benefit from numerous enriching experiences. We welcome families to come and join us for these performances and times will be posted in the upcoming newsletters.



Intermediate students (4-7)	Agenda/planner & performances	\$25.00
Primary students (K-3)	Performances	\$10.00

Please send cash or write a cheque made payable to General Gordon School by Friday, September 23

Please don't hesitate to contact us at the school if you have difficulty with finances as all our students need to benefit from the ongoing learning experiences we provide at the school.

- **During the Phase 1 of Job Action** Margaret (Principal) and Natalie (VP) will be coming to the classes to collect the money for the student's agenda and performances. Thanks for your patience at this time.

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE- IAP Kids Plus™ Accident Insurance:

Did you know our school board does not insure expenses for student injuries that happen on school grounds or during school activities? You are responsible for these expenses as a parent or guardian. IAP Kids Plus™ Accident Insurance offers protection against the unexpected costs of injury from accidents, and is especially valuable for families who do not have medical or dental plans, have limited plans, as it may help supplement health and dental benefits, or have active children who enjoy sports and outdoor activities. For your convenience, we have made arrangements for families to voluntarily purchase student accident insurance through the IAP Kids Plus™ Accident Insurance program, underwritten by Industrial Alliance Pacific Insurance and Financial Services Inc. ("IAP").

If your address changes during the school year, your IAP Kids Plus™ Accident Insurance plan is transferable from school to school, anywhere in Canada. Insurance premiums range from \$13.50 to \$31.95 per year, depending on the plan selected, and your child is covered all the time, not just while at school. A discounted premium is available for families with 3 or more children. For more information or to apply online, please visit www.iapkidsplus.com, or speak with an IAP Kids Plus™ Client Service Representative at **1-800-556-7411**. **Pamphlets will be in the hallway for interested parents.**

ANAPHYLAXIS (PEANUT/FISH/ BEE STINGS ALLERGY):



Emergency

Important Notice re: PEANUT ALLERGY (anaphylaxis)

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction, which requires immediate treatment to prevent sudden death from suffocation or cardiac arrest. **One of the life threatening allergens is peanuts.** We have a few students in our school that have peanut allergies. **We have a few students in the school who have peanut allergies that are life threatening.** Not only is the direct ingestion of nuts life threatening, but also contact with peanuts. **We are asking our school community to please AVOID snacks and lunches containing nut products.** We would like our school community to be "allergy aware" and work together to minimize the risk of exposure for the allergic child.

The treatment if the child is exposed to peanuts is to call 911 immediately and use an "epipen." The community nurse, Sarah Thorsteinson will be do a review workshop with the staff on how to use the epipen. There is an epipen in the child's classroom and in the medical office. The Ministry of Education's publication **Life-Threatening Food Allergies in School and Child Care Settings** lists great ideas for nutritious no-nut lunches and snacks, a few of which we include here:

- String cheese or cheese & crackers, celery or bread stick wrapped in swiss cheese
- Raisins, dried apricots, fruit leather, salads (pasta, mixed bean, potato, bulgur wheat)
- Noodles, carrot sticks or baby carrots; hummus or other dip with veggies, macaroni and cheese, pizza
- Pepperoni stick or beef jerky, animal crackers, graham wafers, yoghurt drink or chocolate milk

The school and particularly the families of our anaphylactic students, thank all students, parents and staff for their cooperation and support.

WELCOME BACK!!!!!!!!!!

SEISMIC UPDATE FOR GORDON

PROCESS SO FAR:

- **2005** Ministry of Education announces support to seismically upgrade General Gordon
- **July, 2007** Feasibility study was completed. **September 2007** Due diligence Review completed. Results of study and review recommended a replacement school as the existing building and its internal systems were at the end of their useful life and recommended a replacement school would be the preferred renewal option
- **2007-2008** Ministry of Education areas standard's replacement school formula would have yielded a significantly smaller space
- Gordon parents advocated with the VBE and the Premier for more space
- **September 2008** Premier responded with money for *Neighbourhoods of Centres of Learning and Development (NCLD) Program* with the objective to optimize the use of upgraded school facilities by bringing together education and community services in a single neighbourhood hub. (Queen Mary, Gordon and Strathcona participated in the program).
- **2009-2010** NCLD process with *Brook and Associates, parents, staff and community members* to discuss space allocations for the Neighbourhoods of Learning concept
- **2009** Ministry announced that all schools going through seismic renewal receive a 15% top-up of space for shared community use
- **2010** NCLD and Core School space allocation agreed to by Board of Trustees and Ministry
- **January 2011** Ministry funds comprehensive building assessment and integrated design process to explore options of building retention, half-retention, or replacement that works well with the NCLD space allocations. Process led by *D & A Architects and City Spaces Consulting with parent, staff and community reps*. During the process 17 different options were considered.
- **June 2011** Option 4, a replacement school becomes the preferred option accepted by the VBE Project Team, City of Vancouver's Development and Planning staff, the school staff and some parents at Gordon. Some community members and parents prefer Option 1 (with heritage facades being retained).

Replacement school is being recommended based on the following major factors:

Poor quality of existing structure

Exterior of building has been significantly altered over time affecting its heritage status

School site is extremely small, resulting in difficulty with accommodating portables with suitable outdoor play area during a phased construction. (26 portables on site for 22 months)

Cost of retaining the existing building has proved to be significantly greater than a replacement school

WHERE WE ARE TODAY:

September 2011- The Project Definition Report outlining the concepts that have been explored, including the VBE Project Team preferred Concept will be presented to the VBE Board of Trustees for review and approval in the fall of 2011.

If approved by the Board, the Report will be submitted to the Ministry of Education. This should then result in a "Project Agreement that will be a commitment of capital funding by the province for the project. Ministry review processes will largely determine the timing of finalizing a Project Agreement to proceed to Design development and construction.



VANCOUVER BOARD OF EDUCATION

School District No. 39

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Letter to Parents Update on Job Action

As you are probably aware, the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF), which represents the province's public school teachers, is involved in negotiating a new collective agreement with the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA), the bargaining agent for the province's school boards. These discussions to date have not produced a settlement and the parties have indicated that they are not close to an agreement. As a result, the province now faces job action. The BCTF has said that the job action will be in phases. The first phase is a "teach-only" campaign which will restrict teachers' ability to participate in administrative duties and other non-instructional activities.

Despite these challenges, the good news is that schools will remain open. While job action may be frustrating for all, it is important to keep in mind that students will not be put in an unsafe or harmful situation. No matter what happens as a result of job action, your children will continue to be educated in a safe environment in the care of dedicated professionals in the classroom, the school office and on the playground.

We continue to hope for a speedy resolution to the contract negotiations. In the meantime, the Vancouver School District will keep parents informed of any developments around job action and its possible impact on student learning. As more information becomes available, please check back to our website at <http://www.vsb.bc.ca> where we will be posting updates.

The district is committed to keeping parents informed of developments and providing current information. As a demonstration of this commitment, we have recently developed an app for the iPad and iPhone. The app will give parents current information and updates from your children's schools. You will find a link to this app on our website and we welcome your feedback.

For information and updates regarding bargaining positions, see the BCTF website at <http://www.bctf.ca/> and the BCPSEA website at <http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/>

Steve Cardwell
Superintendent of Schools