

# Indus School SPIRIT

Some Pertinent Information Regarding Indus Today  
Parent Newsletter

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## READING: THE MORE YOU DO, THE BETTER YOU GET

We all know that practice is the only way to get better at something, but why is that? In 1998, some Australian research coined the term *Cognitive Load* to describe the amount of brain power a person is using. The *Cognitive Load* one experiences is based on two main factors: short and long term memory.

Short-term memory is only capable of holding five to nine ideas at one time. This decreases to between two and four new ideas at a time unless they are refreshed in about 20 seconds.

Long-term memory does not have such restrictions. Memory here is stored in clumps of information called *schemas*. An example of this might be knowing how

to ride a bicycle or the lyrics of a song. These schemas are extremely helpful in our thinking because they are treated as one block of information by the short-term memory. Thus extremely complex ideas can be thought about at the same time because each is treated as only one bit of information by the short-term memory (that's why it is easier to remember a phone number with a familiar prefix).

When it comes to reading, young children are using all of their short and long-term memory to decipher the letters on the page and turn them into words. As readers practice, these decoding skills become automated, common letter sequences be-

come stored as schemas and their recall becomes automatic. With this decrease in cognitive load, young readers are then able to not only decode words, but also comprehend them.

The critical element here then, is that a young reader must practice continuously so that the *schema* for reading skills in his or her long-term memory becomes automated to the point that fluent reading may occur with little effort spent on decoding. The conclusion to this rather complicated process is extremely simple: the more students read, the more automated reading becomes, and the more brain power they have left to understand the ideas in the material they are reading.

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### Raison d'être

**The purpose of Indus School is to build in students a multi-faceted personal foundation to carry them successfully through life.**

## GRADE 6 - WELCOME TO THE FISH BOWL, LUXURY EDITION

WE ARE IN! It has been a longer wait than expected, but we (the Grade 6s) are in our glorious new space! Students and teachers alike are enjoying our "low hum, naturally lit, expansive" room. Stop by and have a peak! January is the month that student expectations are picked up a notch. Students will be given clear criteria for in class assignments, but many students may need to do more work at home. We will be using agenda calendars to make note of due dates

and timelines. Students will be encouraged to use this calendar to look at events happening in and out of school and plot their work timelines. Development of these independent work habits will be an important focus for the rest of the year.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP** with editing and revising student writing in our class. Any Tuesday and Thursday from 1:00 – 2:00 you are invited to drop in and lend a hand. This invitation is open to all Indus parents, grandparents,

or siblings. No experience necessary! Any level of competence and confidence is welcome! It is important for students to get a chance to read to and hear feedback from other people to improve their writing. If necessary, the teacher will bribe with treats and student entertainment. Hope to see you there!

Exciting things happening with Air and Flight and remodeled fairy tales.!

## GRADE 7 - POSTAGE STAMP DESIGNERS

In the month of January, the Grade 7 class has been busily placing themselves in the shoes of postage stamp designers. Excellent work has been done on creating stamps that honor and recog-

nize the early explorers to Canada and what they did to help in the formation of our country. This exploration of the explorers will continue as they begin working toward either creating

a set, character design, or audition tape for a dramatic historical production. For an example of what type of play they are being asked to design, search *Dramamuse* on the Internet.

## GRADE 2 - CONSTRUCTING SWEET IGLOOS

The Grade 2s have been busy learning about the communities of Iqaluit, Meteghan and Saskatoon. We are studying how the people survived in the early days and how they used the natural resources available to them to function in every day life. We are also studying *hot* and *cold* things in science and have learned how to read a thermometer and record temperatures. To bring the two units of study together, the Grade 2 students recently finished con-

structing igloos out of sugar cubes. We learned how an igloo keeps people warm and we

worked together to help everyone finish their creations. We had a few messy afternoons with sugar and glue but we had a great time building them and we learned a lot! The igloos will be on display at the Science Fair next week, so please come and check them out!



## GRADE 4 - TWO OPERATIONS ON ONE FLASH CARD?

The Grade 4 Math students spend part of every Math period working on their basic facts in order to make them more automatic. This past month saw them working hard on their multiplication and division facts. First came a refresher on how these facts are linked to each other, allowing them to use one in order to figure out the other. This was followed up by the development of individual triangular flash cards for the facts from 2 to 12. Each card consists of a multiplication/division fact family that can be used to re-

inforce the student's knowl-



edge of their basic facts. Through daily practice the students are seeing their progress, particularly in the area of division. Additional practice at home, of even 5 to 10 minutes per night, will help them to progress even faster through continual reinforcement of their basic facts.

## SCIENCE FAIR - FEBRUARY 4

All students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 will be participating in the Science Fair on Thursday, February 4th at 9:00 a.m. in the school gym. Parents are welcome to attend. Once again, the

Grades 4, 5 and 6 science projects will be critiqued by a panel of judges. Three students will be selected from Grades 5 and 6 to go on to the Calgary Youth Science Fair held at the Big 4 Build-

ing, March 17–20th, where they will compete with students from in and around Calgary.

## GRADE 3 - 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AUTHORS

The Grade 3 students tested their 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy skills last month. Each student went through a long story writing process, which consisted of a complex story plan, a written story, editing, illustrating and practicing vocal expression. They enjoyed illustrating pictures to accompany their stories and had an opportunity to use a digital camera to take pictures of their illustrations. After downloading

their pictures onto the mini laptops, they added their voices by



speaking into a headset. To enjoy each author's story please head to the Indus School website and find the folder on Ms Broxham's website containing each of their personal story retells.

## POLICY REGARDING ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN SCHOOL

Many students are bringing expensive electronic devices to school. Please understand that these devices can break, become lost, or possibly even be stolen. Anyone bringing to school MP3 players, cell phones, mobile gaming systems, or the like, does so at their own risk.

While these can be very helpful in passing the time on a long bus ride, or helping some students to focus during class work, they can also be an impediment to academic and social development. In an attempt to find an appropriate balance between benefits and drawbacks, Indus School has the following policies in place:

**Mobile gaming systems (Nintendo DS, PSP, etc.):** These may **not** be used at school.

While some students have made arrangements with bus drivers to use them on the bus for particularly long rides, the devices must be turned off and stored while at school.

**MP3 players:** Students may use these before and after school, at lunch and at recess. Some teachers have made provisions for students to listen to these devices during specific classes, or parts of classes, but this is a privilege that is dependent on the impact of the device on learning.

**Cell phones:** Cell phones must be turned off while at school. They may only be used with special permission from the home-room teacher. In the event of an emergency, parents can reach students through the office (403)936-5855, and students can call home from classroom or

office phones.

**Cameras:** Students or parents may **not** photograph or record in any way a person at school without that person's knowledge and permission. Images and recordings by staff are done in keeping with the permission forms included in student registration packages. Cameras are **not** permitted on buses.

**Hybrid devices:** Some devices contain multiple functions (iPods, cell phone cameras, etc.). Each function may only be used in keeping with the rules above.

Failure to comply with these rules, may result in the loss of the privilege of bringing electronic devices to school.

## HELPING HANDS FOR HAITI

The grade 1 and 2 students have undertaken the task of raising money for Haiti. After learning of the devastation, the students were very passionate about try-

ing to help the Haitian children. "It's like kids helping kids", Kobe Gosling said. The grade 1s and 2s will be hosting a bake sale as well as a hot dog lunch the week

of February 8th before the break. All of the money raised will be donated to the Red Cross. Please help the our students help Haiti. Details to follow!

## KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FOR 2010-2011

Just a reminder that if you have a child who will be attending Kindergarten for the 2010-2011 school year, you can come to the school to register between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday to Thursday, and between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00

p.m. on Fridays.

Your child must turn five years of age on or before the last day of February 2011. Please bring a copy of your child's birth certificate at the time of registration.

School registration fees for next

year have not yet been determined by Rocky View Schools. Last year the registration fee for Kindergarten was \$25.00.

We will be holding a Kindergarten parent orientation meeting on May 26, 2010.

## GRADE 5 - GOING FOR THE GOLD!

The Grade 5 students won't settle for the bronze or silver; they all want to earn the gold medal in research. During the month of January, students have been very busy in their quest for interesting and pertinent facts about the Olympic Games and their history. They have discovered what the colours of the Olympic rings represent. As well, they have looked into

which cities have played host to the games and which countries



and sports are included in the Olympics. Based on their research, students have chosen to either write a story or create a brochure about the Olympics. Our goal is to create an Olympic bulletin board that will be updated while the Olympics are taking place. Students have captured the Olympic spirit and are very excited to follow the progress of the games in Vancouver.

## EMERGENT READERS IN KINDERGARTEN

When a child begins to read it is such an exciting time and an amazing process to observe. Confidence grows as a child expands his/her reading vocabulary and finds success in using reading strategies taught in the classroom. In Kindergarten, children learn the letters of the alphabet together with the corresponding sounds. They are taught to hear the smallest parts of sounds called phonemes, and knowing the correlation between letters and sounds provides children with the tool to "decode" new words using a blending technique. Some words like *the* can not be sounded out and must be learned and memorized. Repetition at this level is essential to build confidence and to respond automatically to words and develop fluency.



Reading word by word is not effective because reading is not

just words; it is meaning. Reading makes sense of words, and makes connections with background knowledge while forming mental images. Rich experiences are important to a child

because readers build on background knowledge and will draw on their own experiences to form mental pictures while reading. Good readers think about what they are reading and may need to stop to reread for clarity of meaning if it does not make sense. The most valuable way to support a child's literacy development is by providing a daily reading experience. Don't forget to continue to read **to** your child because their listening vocabulary is very important too. When they hear a new word and add it to their own understanding they will already have a reference for that word (meaning and pronunciation) when they read it on their own. Family literacy experiences will make a real difference to your child's ongoing success in learning to read. Praise your child's efforts and accomplishments. Remain loving and supportive. This is your child's first attempt to read and it should be a positive experience. Success is very important to this process. We want to foster a love for lifelong reading.

## NEW INDUS SCHOOL LOGO

We are inviting students, parents, community members, and staff to submit their ideas for a new logo for Indus School to replace the flying geese. We are

looking for the best idea rather than the best artistic drawing. For example, a kindergarten student may submit an excellent idea, but the drawing may

require fine-tuning. So put your thinking caps on and send us your best ideas. **The deadline for submissions is March 17th.**

## GRADE 6 OUTDOOR SCHOOL FUNDRAISING DATES

Please note the following fundraising events:

Bottle Drive - Feb. 13

Skate-a-thon - Mar. 10  
Craft/bake Sale – Mar. 29  
Raffle. Draw – May 5

Details regarding each event will be sent home in advance.

## GRADE 1 - LEARNING ABOUT COLOURS

The Grade 1 students have been hard at work learning about colours. We have covered primary colours and what happens when they are mixed together

to create secondary colours. For our Science Fair project we are conducting felt pen chromatography experiments, separating colours into the various shades

that make them up. Our results are very interesting, but you will have to come to the Science Fair on the 4th to see what they are!

## LIBRARY NEWS

We are promoting several literacy programs right now to keep our students reading and enjoying it!

**Reading – Give it a Shot!** is a literacy program offered to Grades 4, 5, and 6 students. This special program shows what can be done when the community works together with our schools to inspire the joy of reading! **Reading... Give it a Shot!** runs from January 12 to March 30, 2010. Students record their reading time - whether it is books, newspapers, magazines, computer programs, or the Internet - on a student tracking sheet. The student's parents, guardians or teachers can sign-off on the student's reading. After every 100 minutes read, students are rewarded with a **Calgary Flames** bookmark. Counting minutes

rather than books allow all students, regardless of their reading ability, to participate. This year, a total of 24 bookmarks are available for the students to earn. The object for the students is to collect the entire Calgary Flames Set. Keep reading, everyone!

**Fundraiser for Haiti** On Monday, January 25, we had an author visit from Lori Callaghan, author of *Gogglz, Quest One: "A Whale of a Tale"*. She is a local author (from Carstairs), a teacher, and a Mom. Her book deals with using your imagination, and not judging others by appearances.

The oldest & only students in our school were given a package to take home for each Indus family, that is a fundraiser

for Relief in Haiti. We are selling the book for \$10, and we get to keep \$3 of that for our cause. The author of the book has generously donated another \$1 for each book sold. I plan to buy some for Easter gifts, birthday gifts for kids, and to save for next Christmas (if I remember where I put them!).

There is a two week turnaround on this - **orders are due back by February 10** and the orders will be filled at the school right after the Teacher's Convention week. **The plastic bag and its contents must be returned to school, along with your order and payment.** Thank you for supporting the unfortunate people of Haiti by selling as many of these books as possible. If you wish to see the actual book, there is a copy in the library for viewing.

## SOCCER REGISTRATION

Soccer Registration forms will be sent home with students in the

very near future.  
If you have any questions, please

call Brenda Kuryk at 403-279-3588.

## LOST AND FOUND

We have moved the *Lost and Found* box to the vestibule as you come in the main doors. Please check it out whenever you are in the school. Two or

three times a year we lay out all of the items for students to view. Unclaimed items are then sent to Goodwill.

It would be very helpful if you

would label children's clothing, especially sweaters, hoodies, jackets, mitts and toques.

## SKATING SCHEDULE

The skating program takes place at the Indus Recreation Centre from 10:40 to 11:50 a.m., Monday to Thursday, beginning January 25th. The schedule is as fol-

lows:

Jan. 25 – 28	K, Grades 1 and 2
Feb. 1–4	Grades 3 and 4
Feb. 8–11	Grades 5, 6 and 7

If you are volunteering, please meet us at the arena at 10:40 a.m.

Just a reminder that all students must have a CSA approved helmet, skates, gloves or mitts.

## LINKS TO LEARNING RVS GOLF TOURNAMENT

After two successful tournaments in 2008 and 2009, we're back at the Links of GlenEagles this August.

More than \$40,000 has been raised to support citizenship awards, academic scholarships, supplementary learning materials, extra-curricular activities, and RVS' breakfast and lunch program, *Food For Thought*.

About twenty percent of the proceeds of this year's tournament is ear-marked for board-sponsored bursaries, scholarships and awards. Remaining funds will go directly to schools! Parent councils, community partners and staff are rallying around this exciting fundraising opportunity.

The tournament will be held on

Monday, August 23rd at Links of GlenEagles, Cochrane, with a shotgun start at 8:03 a.m. Player registration is \$250 (Foursome is \$1,000).

For more details call 403-945-4054 or visit the website at [www.linkstolearning.golfreg.com](http://www.linkstolearning.golfreg.com)

Registration and Sponsorship forms are also available at the school office.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

Feb. 2	Hot Lunch	Feb. 13	Bottle Drive (Gr. 6 Outdoor School)
Feb. 4	Science Fair	Feb. 15-19	<b>NO SCHOOL</b>
Feb. 9	Hot Dog Lunch (Haiti)	Feb. 23	Star Lab Gr. 6/7
Feb. 10	Due date for Gogglz book order forms	Feb. 23	Hot Lunch
		Feb. 24	Executive Council Meeting—6:30
Feb. 10-12	Bake Sale (Haiti)		

## ACCOUNTABILITY PILLAR SURVEY

You may have recently seen newspaper articles on Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) or changes to the Grade 12 Diploma Exams. Both PATs and Diploma Exams contribute to the Accountability Pillar, a tool used by Alberta Education to evaluate how well the education system is meeting the expectations of parents and the public. All parents want to know that their children are receiving a quality education. Grades are important but there is more to it than that. A quality education helps all children make the most of their talents and abilities.

The Accountability Pillar uses a set of 16 indicators consisting of surveys of students, parents

and teachers on various aspects of quality; student outcomes such as dropout and high school completion rates; and provincial assessments of student learning.

From January to the end of February, Alberta Education will be conducting the annual Accountability Pillar Survey. In January, parents of students in Grades 4, 7 and 10 (*change to Grades 4-12 if applicable*) will receive a survey from Alberta Education. In February, students in Grades 4, 7 and 10 (*change to Grades 4-12 if applicable*) and all teachers will be completing their surveys online at school.

All surveys are anonymous and ask questions about ex-

periences with this school. In addition to English and French, the parent survey is available in Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi, Arabic, Blackfoot, Cree, Korean, Spanish and Tagalog.

As an annual check-up on the education system, the Accountability Pillar provides an opportunity for Alberta Education and school authorities to ensure that we're equipping students for success. Your participation in the survey helps, so we encourage you to return your survey promptly.

Survey results will be available to jurisdictions in May 2010, and will be reported publicly by jurisdictions as part of their 3-Year Education Plans and Annual Education Results Reports.