

Indus School

SPiRiT

Some Pertinent Information Regarding Indus Today

Parent Newsletter

November 2009

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Student Count 169

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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.



We have a nut free policy. Please do not bring any nut products (or traces of nuts) into this environment - it could endanger the lives of those with allergies to nuts and processed products.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

It's funny to think about job training in an elementary school, but a lot of what we do is directly related to the skills that are needed in the workplace. Simple activities like taking turns, following direction, and completing assignments evolve into the workplace abilities of following meeting protocols; understanding and interpreting manuals, instructions, or company policy; and ensuring business deliverables meet time and quality standards.

Employment Ontario produces a web site

called *Youth Skills* (<http://www.youthskills.llsc.on.ca>) that connects various types of jobs to interests and abilities in such categories as Communication, Dealing with Numbers, Problem Solving, Leadership, Demonstrating Positive Attitudes & Behaviours, Responsibility, Working with Others, Participating in Projects & Tasks, Hands on Skills, and Creative or Artistic abilities.

It is easy to see how Indus School's focus on the '5Rs' (Reading,

wRiting, aRithmetic, Reasoning, and Relationships), despite being school work, evolves to help students develop the skills considered essential in the workplace. Robert Fulghum may have exaggerated a bit in his poem, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, but during the years we have students here, we do foster the foundational skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed for work.

SCHOOL ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT

Attached are the results of the parent, student and staff surveys, along with results from the Provincial Achievement

Tests (PATs). Analysis of those documents provides the summaries on the attachment. Watch for the entire

SARR under 'School Info' in the near future on the plone site at <http://plone.rockyview.ab.ca/indus>.

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www.rockyview.ab.ca 403-936-5855 <http://plone.rockyview.ab.ca/indus>

SOCIAL STUDIES AND SCARY STUFF WITH THE SEVENS

Our Grade 7 students finished off the month of October in two original ways. In Social Studies, they had a chance to teach each other about three of Canada's First Nations: the Mi'kmaq, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinabe. Presentations included a

PowerPoint, a model, and a television news show. Everyone in class has gained a better understanding of these three First Nations societies.

Our month concluded on the morning of October 30, with our spine-tingling sharing of stories.

Within the dimly lit classroom, we read each other stories written by the students. A chilling morning! Happy Halloween!

GRADE 3 CONSTRUCTERS

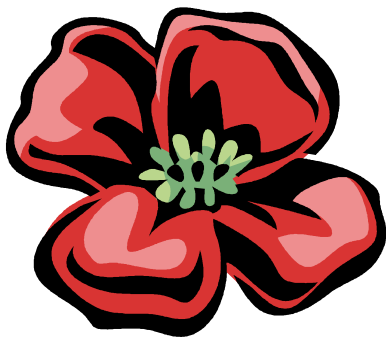
As we continue with our building unit in Science, we are discovering that old scraps can be helpful in creating some inventive pieces of art. So far, the Grade 3 students have built a vase that holds five paper flowers, a napkin holder that is sturdy enough to hold 20 napkins, and a gift box with a specially designed lid. Almost all of the materials that we use are recycled materials.

Since we are in the midst of the Hallowe'en season, the Grade 3s have decided that they would make paper Mache masks to celebrate the November 1 holiday of the *Day of the Dead*.

In Social Studies, we discussed the importance of our ancestors and traditions, and constructed a mask to remember someone who was special to us. Despite the fact that many balloons

have already exploded, they are enjoying the process of making their masks. They are learning the importance of having a strong plan before you build. Reusing materials to make useful things is proving to be an exciting task. The students are amazed at what they can build with other people's "junk"!

REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY



The Remembrance Day Ceremony will be held in the school

gym on Tuesday, November 10th from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. If your child is a member of Brownies, Beavers, Scouts, Guides, etc., we would encourage them to wear their uniforms that day and be part of the Colour Guard. The Colour Guard will be led by Mr. Paul Walsh, a Veteran from the Indus School community.

Parents and members of the community are invited to attend the

ceremony.

The Royal Canadian Legion has dropped off Poppies which will be available to students and the community as of October 30th.

Donations to the Poppy Fund are gratefully accepted

HAPPENINGS IN THE GRADE 6 FISHBOWL!

There were a few unexpected waves in the fishbowl last month, mostly to do with teacher and student absenteeism. The teacher, that would be me, is back and things are getting back to normal. Students who are absent should not stress about the work they are missing. Ms. Hart will help each student make a plan to get caught up on the most important assignments. Energy should be spent on getting healthy and not sweating the small stuff.

Evidence and Investigations in Science are wrapping up, with

the students creating their own "Who Dunnit?" skits. We will soon be starting an Air an Aerodynamics unit and thinking Science Fair project ideas. Developing and using an individualized "6 Traits of Writing" resource will be the focus of our Language Arts program. Giving and using feedback to help improve pieces of writing will be a major objective for this unit.

Outdoor School has been confirmed for May 17 – 20, 2010. The approximate cost for each student will be \$175 for three nights and four days. The cost of the bussing, approximately \$500,

is usually covered by Parent Council, as well as a \$250 donation towards a raffle prize. It would be helpful to have a group of parents to organize fundraising activities. If you are interested, please call and leave your name at the office.

That's it for news from the "Fishbowl"!

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

We've been busy line dancing and developing dance sequences in the last few weeks.

An intramural program will be starting soon. Students will have the opportunity to participate in

games and activities at lunch hour.

SUPER SENTENCES—GRADE 2

The Grade 2s have been busy learning what it means to write super sentences! They have been working very hard at creating complete sentences and they are becoming terrific writers! Way to go, Grade 2s! Here are some sample sentences that were written about Hallowe'en:

The ghost chased me and my friend Josh down the street and into the graveyard and scared us. By Gavin

The witch flew on her broomstick and scared me on Hallowe'en at 1:00p.m. By Austin



SLEEPING WITH THE DINOSAURS—GRADES 4 AND 5

October brought the Grade 4 and 5 field trip to the Royal Tyrrell Museum. We thought we'd let the kids tell you more about it.

Taylor L. – I really liked sleeping beside the T-Rex. I felt like he was looking right at me the whole night and as soon as I woke up, it was right there.

Brianna – The coolest parts were going into the Cretaceous garden at night and going to the Aquaplex.

Zeshaan – I liked swimming at the Aquaplex. The swinging rope was great. But my favourite part was the slide.

Josiah – I had a lot of favourite things, but the one I preferred the most was sleeping under the Tyrannosaurus Rex with Evan and Ace.

Lauren – The best part was going down the water slide with my friends because three of us could go at one time.

Ryan M. – My favourite part was looking at all the dinosaur exhibits in the museum.

Camila – I really liked running through the Cretaceous garden at night.

Charlene – My favourite thing was Reptile World. I got to hold a snake named Brittney. She felt really scaly.

Carmen – What I thought was the most fun was learning more about dinosaurs.

Justin – My favourite part was making the fossil casts.

Mark – My favourite part was taking my Mom with me.

Ryan K. – My favourite part was swimming at the Aquaplex. It was really cool.

Evan – I had fun at the Aqua-

plex, but the slide was slow. We made it fun by having races down it.

Miranda – Something that was really neat and also very unique was getting to sleep with all the awesome dinosaurs.

Caleb – I really liked the Aquaplex.

Gordon – I liked seeing the dinosaurs.

Austin – I really liked the giant alligator skull.

Brian – It was fun when we got to make fossil casts. I made a sea scorpion.

Jewel – I really liked making fossil casts.

holding Brittney the boa constrictor.

Keelan – I liked the Aquaplex.

Kiersten – I liked looking at the lizards at Reptile World.

Easton – I liked the water slide.

Kylie – I liked sleeping in the museum.

Jayce – I liked the snake, it felt weird.

Braxton – I liked everything.

Kale – I really liked holding Brit-tany the snake around my neck.

Ahren – I liked that I got to sleep beside the T-Rex.

Carli – I liked a little bit of everything.

Nathan – One of my favourite



Jamil – It was cool when we saw the buffalo skulls.

Emma – I really liked holding the boa constrictor.

Amy – My favourite part was when I saw the salamanders that stay babies their whole life.

Jocelyn – The mammoth skeleton was really cool and interesting.

Olivia – My favourite part was

parts was the underwater tube you walked through.

Nadia – My favourite thing was going to the gift shop.

Taylor B. – My favourite part was sleeping with the dinosaurs.

Abby – My favourite part was going to the gift shop.

Tristen – What I liked best was going to the gift shop.

HALLOWE'EN MATH IN KINDERGARTEN

Thanks to the generous spirit of Mr. Silvester, Mrs. Reisz and Mrs. Zambory the Kindergarten students carved jack-o-lanterns and engaged in Halloween Math!

We arranged our three pumpkins in ascending order and estimated and then measured the circumference and weight using yarn and a bathroom scale. While carving, decorating and naming our jack-o-lanterns, we scooped out the seeds, sorted them into groups of ten, (our zero hero) put them in tiny cups and counted the cups by tens. Surprisingly all three pumpkins had 80 seeds! Multiply that by three pumpkins and you will know how many seeds we roasted and enjoyed for a snack. Students were eager to demonstrate their sorting rules

at our math centre, discovering that candies can be sorted by shape, colour, packaging, points, and with sticks or without. While our pumpkins glowed brightly,

singing the Five Little Pumpkins, each anxious to sing the part of the first... second...third...fourth... and fifth little pumpkin! It was especially fun to scare our parent



the students unknowingly learn their cardinal numbers while

volunteers with our spooky Halloween songs!

ANTI-BULLYING PRESENTATION

An Anti-Bullying Presentation, "*Be Aware and Care*" by Motivational Magic, will be held on Tuesday, November 3rd at 10:00 a.m. in the

Gym. This presentation will address Indus School's goal of meeting basic social and emotional needs, and will broaden students'

horizons through diverse experiences.

READING WITH GRADE 1

This month, the Grade 1s have been placed into small reading groups with Miss Gelinias, Mrs. Hamel, Miss Allard, and Ms. Oloman. In these groups, we have been working directly with students on reading skills such as letter awareness, sound blends, rhyming, and 'Word Wall' word recognition. The 'word wall' has been the center of our morning

literacy activities. Everyday during our morning message, the class is introduced to a new word. In addition to sounding out this word, we practice it by singing, cheering and stretching it out. All of these efforts, along with other specialized programs that have been adapted to meet each child's needs, have helped the

Grade 1s to begin reading!

Our focus in November will be to continue to learn new sight words and develop language skills in order to further develop our reading fluency and journal writing skills. Keep reading Grade 1s!

HALLOWE'EN IN RESOURCE

This week our students took advantage of the generosity of Sue Lefebvre. She brought us some pumpkins and we immersed ourselves in pumpkin activities, including describing the pumpkins, writing about them, carving them and counting the seeds.



LIBRARY NEWS

Thank you for supporting our Galaxy of Books Book Fair. Thanks to your amazing support, we received a huge pile of free books for our library, and teachers really appreciated the classroom wish list items you purchased for them.

As you settle in to the routine of your family's busy schedule, be sure to make time to read with your children. Children in the earlier grades should be read to and with EVERY DAY! There is no other single activity that is

more important! Older students should also be given a time and place to read daily, and you should ask them to read out loud to you regularly. They can read to you while you prepare a meal, or on the way to the arena. They can read to you at the arena while they wait for their sibling to get on or off the ice!

Carve some time out of your day for this important activity – it will pay dividends!

Author Visit – Wednesday, November 18

As part of *Canadian Book Week*, we are very excited to host Canadian author, **Larry Verstraete**, on the afternoon of November 18. All students in Grades 1-7 will enjoy an hour with Mr. Verstraete, who has written several exciting books of true stories of survival, lost treasures and daring acts.

INFLUENZA

We sent home a letter to all parents last week regarding the latest updates on the flu.

We would remind you to please keep your children at home if they are sick. Flu-like symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, dry cough or extreme

tiredness.

Should a student become sick while at school he/she will be sent to the flu isolation room and the parents will be contacted immediately to come and pick-up the child. The child will not be allowed to take the

bus home.

New information will be posted on the school's plone site at <http://plone.rockyview.ab.ca/indus> as it becomes available.

Other sources of information include Health Link at 403-943-5465 or toll free at 1-866-408-5465.

2009 SAGE CONFERENCE

Looking how to best serve your 21st Century gifted learner?

Plan on attending the 2009 SAGE Conference, "21st Century Gifted: The Future of Gifted Education in Alberta" on November 13 and 14, 2009, at the University of Calgary. This year's

key note speaker is Don Treffinger.

Participants can access the conference registration by visiting www.crcpd.ab.ca program registration, search by "category" and select "conferences". The program fee is \$130 for p artici-

pants. Please email the Gifted Centre (gifted@ucalgary.ca) to obtain a coupon code for the special pricing.

Registration deadline is November 7, 2009.

HOLIDAY/PL DAY CHILD CARE AVAILABLE

Just a reminder that Child care will be available at the Indus Arena on November 11th (Remembrance Day) and on November 30th, a Professional Learning Day for Indus Staff, provided they have a minimum of 5 children registered. Registration

fee is \$35.00, payable to Bow Valley Agricultural Society. Please refer to notices being sent home. Registration forms are available at the school office or you can call Aimee or Lisa at 403-936-5474, Ext. 3.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Nov. 3 "Be Aware and Care"
Magic Presentation
Great Pumpkin Fling
Hot Lunch
- Nov. 10 Remembrance Day
Service 10:30–11:30 a.m.
- Nov. 11 Remembrance Day — **NO SCHOOL**
- Nov. 17 Photo Retakes
Hot Lunch
- Nov. 18 Author Visit — 12:30–
3:30 p.m.
7:00 p.m. Council
General Meeting
- Nov. 30 Professional Learning
Day — **NO SCHOOL**
- Dec. 4 **REPORT CARDS HOME**



OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the past year, Indus School has begun a concerted effort to meet the goals set out in Rocky View Schools Three Year Plan. Building on the strengths we see in our current programs and procedures, we have looked for ways to address the areas of concern. In the pages following are the results of parent, student, and staff surveys, along with the results from the Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs). Analysis of those documents provides the summaries on this and the following page.

It is critical to note that the small size of the sample group increases the threat to the reliability of the results. In some cases, results have not been released by the surveying organization (Alberta Gov't or contracted pollsters) because there were not enough people responding to accurately represent the opinions of all school community members. Anyone with general or specific concerns, questions, comments, or kudos should feel free to call, email, or drop in to discuss the issue.

Goal One – Learners have their basic and diverse needs met.

One of our greatest achievements over the past few years has been to change the general attitude of students regarding their feelings of safety at school. Up from a low of about 50% three years ago, we now enjoy over 90% of our students feeling physically and emotionally safe at school.

Another source of pride for Indus School is our extensive Resource program that provides support and appropriate challenge for over 25 of our students. This has contributed to almost 90% of survey respondents expressing their belief that Indus offers a high quality education for all.

Goal Two – Learners are competent, qualified and dedicated.

Perhaps the greatest source of pride revealed by the PATs is that 100% of our Grade 3 students who wrote the test met provincial expectations in Language Arts. Another indicator of progress toward this goal is found in the student engagement survey where the percentage of engaged and tactically engaged students is at or above Rocky View averages. We also enjoy a population where 92% of those questioned believe our school will foster in our students success as 21st century learners.

Goal Three – Learners are civic, social and environmental stewards.

From turning off the lights when leaving a room, to recycling juice boxes and using both sides of paper, our students are learning that the simple things can make a difference. Almost 90% of respondents think we are teaching and engaging in conservation effectively, while such projects as *Spread the Net*, *Adopt a Family*, and food drives have convinced a similar number that Indus students are learning the importance of civic and global responsibility.

Goal Four – Learning opportunities are distinct, continuous, and systematic.

Driven by provincial curriculum, our classes teach specific skills and concept each year. This avoids overlap between grades and, along with significant communication within the school, creates the situation wherein just under 90% of the school community feeling the transitions are smooth and the overall quality of education is high quality.

Internally, over 90% of staff feel the Division operates as a community of learners and see numerous opportunities to take leadership roles within the school.

Goal Five – Instruction challenges and engages the learner.

Of all the individual questions on the student surveys, one indicated the greatest success in our journey toward this goal: 100% of the Grade 6 students found that their teacher made the lessons interesting and 80% of all students thought their classes were student centered.

Goal Six – Learning environments enable the acquisition of 21st Century skills.

Our healthy complement of classroom and lab computers, OPAC (electronic "card catalogue") and Accelerated Reader stations in the library, and middle school One to One computer project have resulted in 89% of respondents agreeing we have the materials and are on track for developing skilled citizens of the 21st century.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

While Indus School has enjoyed some notable achievements over the past years, we recognize that there are still areas for growth and some significant challenges to overcome. As mentioned on the previous page, quantitative results purporting to summarize opinion or achievement must be examined in the context of sample size. Some results have been withheld by the surveying agency due to insufficient response numbers, while others reflect only the results from groups as small as six people.

Goal One – Learners have their basic and diverse needs met.

As Indus School grows, it will be increasingly critical to ensure that teachers are able to form positive relationships with students, and that the school culture evolves in positive ways.

Goal Two – Learners are competent, qualified, and dedicated.

An ongoing struggle for Indus School has been the number of students achieving both the acceptable level and the level of excellence on the PATs. Continued training on data informed, differentiated instruction, coupled with increased intervention and support will form the foundation of improvement in this area.

Goal Three – Learners are civic, social, and environmental stewards.

Increasing our students' awareness of local regional and global issues is a growth area for Indus School. Having students take a greater role in gathering food for the SERV food bank, *Spread the Net*, and similar causes, along with organizing school social activities, are steps in this direction.

Goal Four – Learning opportunities are distinct, continuous, and systematic.

The number of optional courses Indus School is able to offer is limited due to our enrollment. Continuing to offer the broadest range within the number of courses offered will continue to be a priority.

Goal Five – Instruction challenges and engages the learner.

While Indus School is on its way to becoming a 21st Century learning environment, we must continue to develop skills in teaching the multifaceted literacy, inventive thinking, effective communication, and high productivity that will be required of tomorrow's workers. Increasing understanding about the diversity in how students learn obliges us to improve the manner in which we differentiate lessons to meet everyone's needs. Finding ways to instruct that not only address different ability levels, but also different strengths in cognitive and sensory modalities continues to be our top priorities.

Goal Six – Learning environments enable the acquisition of 21st Century skills.

Indus School, the building, is an amalgam of various additions and renovations dating back to the 1950s. While that poses certain challenges to a modern school (the lack of electrical outlets, for example), RVS maintenance and technology services have done yeoman's service in modernizing our building. As needs evolve, we must be creative in providing optimal learning environments and utilizing current technology.