



September 12, 2011

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to a new school year. I look forward to working with you and your children. For some of you, this will be the first time you have a child entering the junior years. I will be guiding your child as he/she becomes more independent. Each student will take on more responsibility for their own learning and organization.

During the month of September, I will be assessing your child's **reading** and **writing** proficiency. More emphasis will be placed on comprehension of what your child has read, rather than just decoding the words on the page. Spelling will also be tested to see which sounds and letter patterns your child needs more practice with. Then a path for your child's reading and writing growth will be planned.

For some, this will be the first time your child has **French** lessons. Miss Gretsinger will focus on active participation through speaking and listening. Written work will be emphasized later in the year.

The grade four students will begin **science** with the study of rocks and minerals. The grade five students will have Miss Gretsinger teaching the science curriculum. They will be learning about properties and changes in matter.

Social Studies will explore the provinces, territories and regions of Canada for the fours, while the fives will examine the structure of government in Canada. Since a provincial election will occur in October, this is a perfect time to discuss the various parties' candidates and platforms with your child.

Mrs. Hartig will be your child's **music** teacher, while Mrs. Pyper-Coombs will be responsible for **drama and dance**. Your child will certainly benefit from the talents of these two teachers.

Patterns in **math** will be our initial focus, which will lead to early algebra. Review of place value will also be a focus as both of these concepts provide a strong base for flexible thinking and problem solving in more complex math.

Finally, there is a slight change in the **P.E.** program for all junior and intermediate students. Your child will be expected to change into appropriate gym attire each class. This includes a change of non-marking running shoes, T-shirt and shorts or track pants.

At this grade level, your child may also try-out for a variety of school teams. During September, Smith will compete in soccer and cross-country running. The basic skills for each of these events will be practiced during P.E. class. Please encourage your child to participate in the many sports and clubs that Smith offers. School is not all about the academics. Social skills and confidence are also developed through extra-curricular activities.

Near the end of the month, all grade four students across the board will write the **Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test**. It will assess your child's ability to reason and solve problems using verbal, numerical and geometric symbols. Individual learning styles and abilities will be determined so effective programming can be provided. The test will be administered on three consecutive mornings. Each time-limited session will be approximately 50 minutes. Responses are simply 'circle the correct answer' from three or four choices. I will familiarize the students with the test and the answer format prior to the actual test. No studying is required.

I hope this overview is helpful for the beginning of the year. There will also be a timetable coming home with the agenda, once the schedules have been confirmed. Each month I will send home a newsletter that will include more specific details about what is happening in our class. (You will also find the newsletter posted on our school web site.) If you have any questions or concerns, please jot down a note in your child's agenda. I read each agenda, every morning and your child will record any homework or important information in the agenda at the end of the day. I kindly ask that you sign the agenda each night, after your child has shared it with you. Your interest in your child's learning will reinforce the importance of their education and ensure their success.

As a reminder, please be informed that there is a student in our class that has a peanut/nut allergy. Your cooperation is paramount, so please read food ingredients when packing your child's snacks and lunches. Thank you for your diligent attention to this matter.

I look forward to meeting each of you at the school BBQ on September 21, and anticipate an exciting year.

Working together to educate your child,

C. Mojeski