

## Mount Benson Elementary School

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Principal: Mr. Gary Dodd

Secretary: Mrs. Jill Williamson



# NEWSLETTER

ISSUE # 4

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## Principal's Comments

We are half way through the school year and the staff and students of Mount Benson Elementary continue to participate eagerly in the opportunities for learning provided each and every day for our students.

Unfortunately the shadow of possible school closure has darkened our school and is draining many of our parents who are actively leading the struggle to keep our community school open. It is very important that parents keep informed regarding the Facilities Renewal plan and how they can comment on and provide input to the Board of Education on the plan that is being considered.

It is not an easy time for parents, students and staff. We need to ensure that students are supported and kept informed but not alarmed about the possibility of our school closing.

**Facilities Renewal Plan**—Tonight's meeting at 6:00 pm in the school gym is an extremely important meeting for parents and others in the Mount Benson Community to attend. The Facilities Renewal Plan that the School Board is considering proposes the closure of several schools including Mount Benson Elementary. The closure of Mount Benson would be effective June 30<sup>th</sup> 2008. The meeting tonight is part of the public consultation on closures and will provide an opportunity for members of the public to obtain information and to comment on the proposed closures. In addition to the meeting at our school there will also be public meetings at the other schools considered for closure as well as a special public meeting of the Board of Education on Monday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm in the multipurpose room at Wellington Secondary School. Please see the attached notice (sent out previously as a separate notice) for details of the proposed closures and dates and times of public meetings where parents can provide input to the Board of Education and you are encouraged to do so.

**Pyjama Literacy Night**—thanks to Ms. Williams for organizing and for all the parents and their children who attended our pyjama reading night last month. It was very well attended and encouraged the pleasure to be found in reading with children.

## Dates to Remember

Feb 20th – One Woman Circus  
Feb 25th – Pro D -**no school for students**  
Feb 26th – Implementation Day – **no school for students**  
Feb 28th – Parent Tea 11:00 a.m.  
March 7th – Taekwondo Demonstration 9:30 a.m.  
March 12th– Report cards home to students  
March 14th– Last day for students before spring break  
March 26th– Students return to school

**Gotta Dance**—Last week our students enjoyed a visit from Keon Birney, a French horn player from the Vancouver Island Symphony orchestra. Keon instructed and entertained two groups of our students ranging from Grade 3 to grade 7. Later that week over 100 of our students attended the VISO performance at the Port Theatre of "Gotta Dance".

## Monday and Tuesday February 25/26<sup>th</sup>

These days will be professional learning days and school will not be in session. Your teachers will be involved in a number of professional development activities on Monday when the NDTA host their District Pro-D day and on Tuesday, teachers will convene at Mt. Benson where they will be reviewing and revising our Earthquake evacuation and preparedness plans.

## Parent Appreciation Tea Thursday February 28<sup>th</sup>

--A separate notice advertising this event went home last week. Please plan to attend between 11:00 and 12:30 pm in our gym and enjoy a fabulous programme of song, reader's theatre and music performed by the students. It is a wonderful opportunity for us to demonstrate our appreciation for the wonderful support Mt. Benson receives from parents and the community.

## One Woman circus coming!!

--Sand Northrup, the one woman circus is coming to our school for the full day on Wednesday February 20th. She does a workshop for all of the students in their gym classes. Unicycle, wire spool walking, juggling, and other fun circus themed activities are taught. Parents welcome to attend any time during the day. Thanks to the Mt. Benson PAC for sponsoring this performance.

**Assembly Friday February 29<sup>th</sup>—9:30 am** in our gym come and enjoy a programme of song, music, and reader’s theatre.

**Kindergarten Registration**

Children born in 2008 are eligible to register for kindergarten beginning September 2008. Please bring in your child’s birth certificate and CARE card to the school office Monday-Friday between 8:30 am and 2:30 pm to register with the secretary.

**World Taekwondo Demonstration Friday March 7<sup>th</sup>**

—In our gym at 9:30 am Master Kim and a group of his students will return to our gym for a demonstration. Several of our current and past students have participated in this activity and you will be amazed and entertained by another exciting and disciplined performance by Master Kim’s pupils.

**Boys and Girls Basketball**—Thanks to Mrs. Christensen, Ms. Favelle for coaching the Bantam Girls BB and to Mr. Snowden for coaching the Bantam Boys BB teams. The season is just underway and we are proud of our teams representing Mount Benson Elementary School.

**Chess Club**—A chess club under the sponsorship of Ms. Williams meet in the library every Thursday at lunch. Thank you to Ms. Williams for this activity.

**Healthy Schools Initiatives**

Many of you are probably aware of our morning fitness runs for the Grade 5 and 6 classes. This daily event supports the brain body connection and gets students off to a great start for their day. This activity means that at least two of our classes are already meeting the Provincial government requirement of 30 minutes per day of physical activity which comes into effect in September 2008. Thanks to Mr. Kirby for keeping this healthy tradition alive at Mt. Benson. Students celebrate their success every couple of weeks with a swim day or a games period in the gym.

In addition your Mt. Benson PAC is showing leadership in the area of healthy schools initiatives with their sponsorship of the family games nights on Tuesday evenings in our school gym. Parents and their children are invited to come out on Tuesdays from 6:30 pm-7:30 pm to participate in active games in the gym.

This time also provides an opportunity for parents to get together. In recent weeks there have been as many as 35 children enjoying these activities. Thank you to the adults in our community who are leading the way and providing great role models for our students.

**Student Supervision**--Parents are reminded that students are supervised at school from 8:30 am until 3:00 pm. Before and after these times, staff is not on supervision unless a club or school team practice is being held for selected students. Students should arrive shortly after 8:30 am if they are not in the care of their parents. We have several students who are dropped off as early as 7:30 am and some who remain on the school grounds until after 4:00 pm. Staff is concerned about the number of parents who are jeopardizing their children’s safety by leaving them without care before and after school.

**Spring Break March 15<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> inclusive**— Because Easter Friday and Easter Monday fall within the Spring Break this year, students will return to school on Wednesday March 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Ready, Set, Learn Event Thursday April 17<sup>th</sup>**

**1:00-2:30 pm**-- Come out and bring your pre-school child to learn and play at Mt. Benson’s “Ready Set Learn” program. The program is targeted at 3 year olds but we welcome all pre-schoolers. You’ll be introduced to the school and provided an opportunity to learn about the importance of early learning. You will receive a “Treasure Bag” to take home to develop fine motor skills and coordination. You will also be given a children’s book to take home to read with your child. Please phone the school to let us know if you’ll be able to join us. Please let parents of pre-school age children in your neighbourhood know about this program.

**Report Cards**--Teachers are beginning to busily prepare second term report cards, which will be distributed on March 12<sup>th</sup>

