

April 18, 2017

Hello Students and Families,

All year, beginning back in the Fall with our Orthography and our Beyond Classrooms experience, we have been developing our skills of **inquiry**. Our "Speaking Out" projects and our recent word investigations have been among the opportunities the Grade Fives have had to pursue their own learning. Though not an entirely new way of teaching or learning for me, trying to expand our inquiry approach into all subject areas has been an interesting challenge this year.



I thought it made sense to end the year with a final large project that again lets students follow their own path of inquiry. This is along the lines of the wide-open "Genius Hour" and "Passion Projects" you may have heard of, and that I know they will participate in at Calvin Park in Grades 7 and 8.

We are not going to be *quite* that wide open. For our project, students must choose an inquiry topic that roughly links to our studies in Social Studies or Science this term. **Real inquiry begins with a question.** I've attached lists of subtopics as well as many examples of inquiry question ideas to choose from, modify, or be inspired to find your own.

The project will have three main parameters:

- a) **Your project has to be some type of new learning.** (i.e. If you did a project on "The Haida" last year, that would not be a choice this year).
- b) **You must document your research, reflection and progress.** (I will give you some templates you might fill in).
- c) **You will present your learning in a format of your choice.** (Some possible formats are attached).

➤ **How will the Spring Inquiry Project work in our classroom?**

Students will have one or two one-hour periods a week in class to brainstorm ideas, research, record, practice, explore, write, illustrate and create their final project displays. It is **very important** that we consider the **time available** in developing the **project proposal**.

I will be meeting with students weekly to help facilitate their projects. Each student will be responsible (with our support) for reflecting upon their progress and planning their next steps. Please look through this project journal.

Students are encouraged to choose a project they can complete at school. However, some may want to do a project that requires extra work at home, and all students may require help from home to collect appropriate resources or complete the presentation. (Students and families are *not* expected to spend money for this project).

➤ **How will the Spring Inquiry Project be assessed?**

As the projects progress, I will be working with students to develop goals and criteria for evaluating the depth of their inquiry question, time management, critical thinking and the final project. Each student will submit their weekly reflection journals in which they have documented their research, progress and next steps.

Attached are a rubric for self reflection and examples of templates for recording research.

Timeline for Spring Inquiry Project:

Five weeks is not a great deal of time, so we will try and stick to a pretty strict schedule:

Pre-Week 1 (now): Begin discussing inquiry topic ideas at home and school

Week 1: (April 24th -28th): **Develop Inquiry Question and Project Proposal** parent and teacher signature required to begin project)

Weeks 2-5: (May 1st-26th): **Research, Project Completion, Weekly Reflection Journal, Student-Teacher Conferences**

Week 6: (May 29th – June 2): **Final Passion Project Sharing, Reflection Journals Due**

This is meant to be challenging but fun. Thanks for your support! If you have concerns or questions, please get in touch soon!

Sincerely,

Skot Caldwell

FIRST NATIONS AND EXPLORERS

Some of the topics that we will cover this term that someone might like to dig into further:

- The traditional lands of the First Nations
 - in Ontario
 - across Canada
- A focus specific First Nations including the Wendat
- Various explorers:
 - Jacques Cartier
 - Henry Hudson
 - Samuel de Champlain
 - Radisson and Groseilliers
 - James Cook
- The French Fur Trade and the *Coueurs de bois*
- *Les Filles du Roi*
- The Hudson's Bay Company
- The role of First Nations men and women in the Fur Trade
- Fort Frontenac and the Cataraqui People

Some examples of possible inquiry questions include:

- What would it have been like to be a woman living in early Quebec?
- How did the early Quebec settlers live?
- How do other Aboriginal cultures in Ontario (e.g. Anishinabe, Mohawk, Algonquin) compare to the Wendat?
- What was it like in Kingston at the time of the first European settlers (or before the Europeans)?
- Could I draw two maps that showed change in Kingston between now and the past?
- What are First Nations communities like today?
- Could I learn some of the knots a sailor would have had to know?
- How do Aboriginal people contribute to Canada today?
- What can I learn about First Nations or Quebecois music/dance/art?
- How has the map of Canada changed since Cartier first came?
- What are challenges facing First Nations people in Canada today?
- What are aspects of First Nations culture, knowledge or language that were adopted by Europeans?
- Could I learn to cook a traditional Anishinabe, Cree or Quebecois meal?
- Could I build a shelter that kept the rain out using only natural materials?
- What would I need to know to make a pair of moccasins?
- What are some traditional medicines from our Aboriginal peoples?
- Can I learn some of an Aboriginal language – Mohawk, Ojibway, Inuit, Cree?
- Is hunting wild animals a sustainable way to eat today?
- What were Residential Schools and what were their effects?
- How did the Inuit survive in the harsh climate of the Arctic?
- How is today's Quebecois/Francophone culture connected to the past?
- What are some different perspectives on Canada's 150th?
- What are the stories or the history of *my* family coming to Canada?

Energy Conservation

Some of the topics that we will cover this term that someone might like to dig into further:

- Energy transformations
- Non-Renewable Energy sources (Fossil Fuels)
 - Advantages and disadvantages
- Renewable Energy sources
 - Advantages and disadvantages
- Conservation of resources

Some examples of possible inquiry questions include:

- How much energy could solar energy produce in Canada?
- How much energy does the Wolfe Island Wind Farm produce?
- What I can learn about an inventor like Thomas Edison or Nikola Tesla?
- Why do light bulbs burn out? What is the difference between light bulbs?
- How does a steam engine work?
- Can I create an insulated container that keeps things cold or warm?
- What are ways we can use less electricity in our homes?
- How does recycling work? (Does it?)
- What are ways that fossil fuel use has been made cleaner or more efficient?
- Can I create a solar-powered toy (like a car that moves)?
- How is food transformed into energy by our bodies?
- Does a *Tesla* car really cut down on pollution?
- Can I make a bread oven out of natural materials?
- What are some causes of climate change?
- How can I do an “energy audit” of my home or school?
- How is Kingston doing at becoming a “Green” City?
- How can I show that energy is never lost, just transformed? (Light? Sound?)
- How does a car engine turn gasoline into kinetic energy?
- How does a “hybrid” car work?
- How can I cool my house without using an air conditioner?

Some possible ways of presenting your project include:

- *iMovie*
- *stop action film*
- *poster-board*
- *experiment*
- *model or*
- *presentation*
- *Powerpoint*
- *Book Creator*
- *illustrated map*
- *presentation*
- *website or blog*
- *poster*