

## Principal's Report ~ May 22<sup>nd</sup> SJAM School Council Meeting

### 1) **Principal Retirement** – (Email sent to our SJAM community, Friday May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019)

*Hi to all in our SJAM community –*

*It's with a heavy heart that I write this email to all in our SJAM community...*

*At our May staff meeting, I announced my retirement for the end of June this school year. For me, the decision has not been an easy one - but is a next step in my life journey and career path that I am fully ready for and embracing. While I have been the Principal at Sir John A. Macdonald PS for a short time (since February 2017) – I have been working in public education since 1989. I truly feel blessed to have been working with children in schools for the past 30 years. I continue to have a passion for teaching and learning and a deep affection for instilling the love of learning in others. As such, I do plan to continue working in the field of education supporting student achievement and well-being.*

*No surprise to you I am sure, but our SJAM community is a very special one – and one that I will miss dearly! I would like to wish you continued success in your partnership with your SJAM neighbours, with our SJAM staff and your new incoming Principal. At our School Council meeting May 22<sup>nd</sup>, I will be reviewing the process the YRDSB takes to place new Principals to schools. Over the coming weeks, when YRDSB appointments are made/announced, I will share with you information about the newly appointed Principal for SJAM.*

*A sincere and heartfelt thank you for all that you do for our SJAM children and school community.*

### 2) **SPRING REMINDERS ~ Communication going out to our community later this week...**

At Sir John A Macdonald PS, we are committed to creating an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and families. We know that Equity and Inclusive Education is a foundation for excellence. We believe all students must be treated with respect and dignity and know that they are safe, welcome, accepted and included. At SJAM, we model and teach character education. As a whole school community, we recognize strength in character each month at our Character Matters assemblies.

The past few years at SJAM, we have had a focus on creating a sense of belonging and mattering for all. Together, we aim to develop resilient students who are engaged in their learning, who feel like they matter and know that they belong - so each student feels supported to reach their highest potential.

#### **As a professional learning community, our staff learning this year has included -**

- Safe and supportive schools education
- Mattering and belonging projects
- Knowing how to respond to discrimination
- Having a greater understanding of our school's social identities
- Mental Health awareness education
- Allergy-related discrimination
- Looking at true historical perspectives through indigenous education and equity
- Identifying what we can do differently for our students who are underperforming and underserved

**A few of our key, intentional planning for our SJAM students includes-** (this work is on-going)

- Caring and Safe Schools assemblies every September to review what bullying is, how to include others, how to act as an upstander, restorative practices, and our school progressive discipline policy
- Daily teaching and modelling of our YRDSB character attributes and SEL (social, emotional learning)
- Monthly assemblies to recognize and celebrate individual achievements of those students that have shown strength in character
- Ensuring the literature in our classrooms and school library are reflective of our learners
- Roseneath Theatre - Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls
- Shaun Boothe/Black History - a hip hop artist who presented musical biographies and explored the life lessons we can all learn from these icons
- Youth Wellness Network and Student Leadership
- Student Senate Leadership Groups: (Equity Team, Well-Being Team, Social Justice Team)
- New Perspectives - our very own SJAM Student conference on anti-bullying and inclusionary practices
- Celebrating and teaching cultural diversity
- Partnership with the YR Police/School liaison officer to help teach & reinforce positive behaviours
- Autism awareness
- Gender stereotypes
- Responding to discrimination in our school

At times, we do see examples of bullying, homophobia, racism and other expressions of discrimination. As indicated in the [Indigenous Education and Equity Strategy](#), one of our YRDSB actions is to “interrogate and remove systemic barriers to well-being and achievement for underserved students through an anti-oppression lens.”

As lead learners at SJAM, we believe in the quote “any behaviour we ignore, is behaviour we accept”. Hateful behaviour and discriminatory language is addressed and students will be held accountable for their actions and their language. When responding to discrimination we involve parents in the process as we work through progressive discipline and accompany any consequences with education - as our core business is education.

**COMING SOON.... June is Pride Month around the globe!**



Recently, all YRDSB schools have been invited to participate in the flying of the PRIDE flag for the month of June. We welcome the opportunity to fly the PRIDE flag here at SJAM! The Pride Flag is internationally recognized as a symbol of pride, hope and diversity. In 1978, Gilbert Baker, a San Francisco artist, designed the Pride Flag as a response to the need for a symbol to support the LGBTQ rights movement. Check out our SJAM Twitter feed throughout the month of June to learn more!

**Flying the Pride flag at SJAM -**

- shows our commitment to safer environments
- demonstrates our commitment to eliminating harmful biases and prejudice that lead to discrimination and exclusion

- signals our commitment to upholding the principles outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which reflect the values held by Canadians and Ontarians
- aligns with the Director's Annual Plan which identifies Equity and Inclusivity as a priority area
- will help to ensure that ALL in our SJAM community feel a sense of belonging and pride!

**Parents as Partners in Education** - SJAM is your child's home away from home, a place for all children to learn and develop into a young adult who will move on to secondary school with an understanding that in life it is important to be kind, to stand up for what is right and to recognize and celebrate differences. Please help to reinforce that hateful behaviour (e.g. antisemitism, anti-black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, homophobia, Islamophobia, transphobia, and/or ableism) is discriminatory, derogatory and unacceptable at school.

We have high expectations for all in our SJAM community. When we hold high expectations for our students and believe in their abilities - they will make a difference in our world because we have taught them to accept nothing less.

**We need your voice!** If you have ideas about how to further create an inclusive and safe learning environment at SJAM - we would love to hear from you. We are interested to learn more about how your child talks about SJAM at home - particularly if they share that they feel unsafe at any time. If you have anything to share - please do email me at [kathy.lott@yrdsb.ca](mailto:kathy.lott@yrdsb.ca). Our goal is for every child to wake up in the morning and want to run to school. It is important to us that all SJAM students feel safe, that they belong, that they matter, and that are ready to contribute to the day of learning ahead.

- 3) **Message from the Director - May 17, 2019** - On our SJAM Twitter Feed - a message from Director of Education, Louise Sirisko, regarding addressing anti-black racism in our communities.
- 4) **Parent, Family and Community Engagement Advisory Committee** - may be for you! Interested in providing advice to the Board on strategies to support and strengthen the engagement of parents, families and communities? Click on the link above.
- 5) **Upcoming...**
  - May 22-23-24 – Junior EQAO
  - May 27-28-29 - Primary EQAO
  - May 27 – Bike to School Week across Ontario
  - May 27 - [Coffee Chat with Trustees and Board Chair](#), 3:30 – 5:00 PM, Markham District HS
  - May 31 - Character Assembly, 1:00 PM
  - June 1 - [Indigenous History Month and Indigenous Peoples Day](#)
  - June 1 - [Pride Month at YRDSB](#)
  - June 3 – PA Day, Teacher Assessment Day
  - June 4 - [Faith Day - Ramadan](#)
  - June 6 – Junior Achievement (Grade 7/8)
  - June 10 - Area Track and Field (Grade 4-8 athletes are chosen from HPE classes)
  - June 11 - SJAM School Council Fundraiser Carnival
  - June 12 - Year End Firefighter Visit!
  - June 13 – Grade 8 Graduation Rehearsal

- June 17 - Grade 8 Graduation
- June 19 - Lead Team Meeting
- June 20 – last Astoria lunch – Thanks School Council!
- June 24 – last Pizza lunch
- June 26 - Character Assembly, 8:30 AM; Students will find out who their 2019-2020 homeroom teacher is and will have a transition opportunity to move to their new room and meet with their new class community; Report Cards sent home
- June 27 - SJAM Student Dismissal at 11:05 AM; Grade 8 Clap-out
- June 28 – PA Day

6) **2019-2020**

- ✓ **Class Lists** – are completed! Thanks to all families for input as requested to help us set each child up for success. We appreciate working together with you on this.
- ✓ **Teacher Assignments** – will be shared later in June.
- ✓ **Student Agendas** – Agendas will be provided to all students in grades 1-8 (no charge to students as the Student Agenda is an essential learning/communication tool)
- ✓ **First day of school** – Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019
- ✓ **School Organization** – has been approved (see tentative school org below)  
K12A, K12B, K12C, SK/1, 1/2, 1A, 1B, 2, 2/3, 3A, 3B, 4, 4/5, 5, 5/6, 6/7, 7/8, 7/8, SSCA, SSCB, Community Class