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# NEWSLETTER

## SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD SCHOOL

Home of the Mustangs!  
Together We Make a Difference  
January 2012

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### PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year! I hope that you had a restful break over the holidays and enjoyed time with family and friends. 2012 looks to be a great year for the Mustangs.

Thank you to the students and school community for their generous donations in December to the annual Toy and Food drive. Over \$3600 was given to the Calgary's YWCA's Sheriff King Homes, along with large quantities of food for several families in the school community.

We would like to welcome three new staff members to our school for the month of January. Mr. Simon Zullian (teacher) has come from Australia to swap places with Mr. Miller on a one year teacher exchange program sponsored by Alberta Education. When Mr. Zullian arrived at the Calgary airport he was treated to the official "White Hat" ceremony as part of welcoming him to the city. In the front office we welcome Mrs. Sheila Wood (Administrative Secretary) and Mrs. Leslie Cropper (Secretary). Mrs. Wood brings a wealth of experience to our school and will oversee the day to day operations of the office and support staff members. Mrs. Cropper who will be working part time, lives in our community and will be providing additional support to better serve the school community.



### REPORT CARD TIME

January marks the end of term two and the completion of complementary courses for the first half of the year. Many students will be busy completing final assignments and writing exams throughout the month of January. Report cards will be distributed to students on Monday February 6, 2012. This report card is weighted as 40% of a student's final year end mark. We ask parents to encourage their child to complete all necessary assignments and prepare for exams.

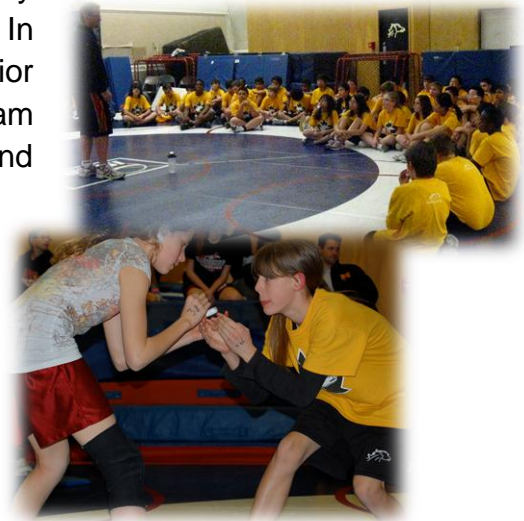
## ATHLETICS



The Mustangs Volleyball and Wrestling teams completed their seasons with fantastic results. Congratulations to the Jr. Girls volleyball team who won the “Divisional Title with incredible performances in their final games.

SJAM demonstrated amazing school spirit in the wrestling arena as we hosted three evening meets at our school. Over 120 students tried out for the wrestling team with 88 making it to the divisional finals at Cardel Place on Nov. 30, 2011. We had the largest team in the City of Calgary with 23 Mustangs winning gold and 29 winning silver. In addition all four divisions (Senior Boys and Girls; Junior Boys & Girls) won the division titles. The wrestling team is now in full swing and basketball season is just around the corner.

Thank you to all the students, parents and volunteers for coming out to cheer on the teams and help with the athletic events. We look forward to the regular session of basketball games that begin the first week of January. See you on the hard wood cheering on the Mustangs!



## NOTABLE ITEMS

Thank you to the School Council for their efforts with the book fair. Amanda Trudel Book Fair Chairperson, reported that the school made over \$3000 towards the purchase of literacy resources for the library.

Congrats as well, to 44 art students, whose art entries received recognition in a North American Art competition called Celebrating Art.com. Several pieces of SJAM student art have also been placed on display at the Calgary Board of Education central offices. I also want to thank our SJAM musicians for the incredible performance they put on at the Winter Concert.

As always, thank you for your feedback on how we are doing and for your continued support of the school.

Michael Bester,  
Principal

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Jan. 9 - Classes Resume
- Jan. 11 - Sir John A. Macdonald's Birthday
- Jan. 13 - Gr. 9 International Baccalaureate (IB) Forms Due
- Jan. 19 - School Council Meeting @ 7:00 p.m.
- Jan. 27 - Dance a Thon / 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Jan. 30 - Organizational Day - No school for students
- Jan. 31 - Third Term Begins – New Option Courses
- Feb. 2 - SJAM Open House for New students of the 2012-13 School Year  
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
- Feb. 3 - Organizational Day - No school for students
- Feb. 6 - Report Card #2 Goes Home
- Feb. 14-15 - High School Registration in the SJAM Library @ 3:30 p.m.
- Feb. 16-17 - Teacher's Convention – No School
- Feb. 20 - Family Day – No School

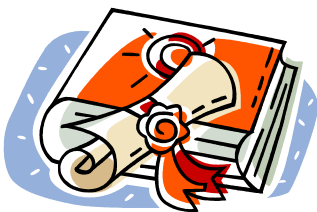


## HIGH SCHOOL REGISTRATION (IMPORTANT DATES)

- (1) Jan. 23-Diefenbaker High School Tour: This tour will include all Grade Nine students and will happen during the morning, facilitated by SJAM and Diefenbaker High.
- (2) Feb. 6-Crescent Heights High School Tour: This tour will include only students designated to Crescent Heights. These students will be contacted by Mr. Wylie in January and information will be shared then.
- (3) Feb. 14&15-High School Registration Nights at SJAM: Grade 9 students and their parents will receive High School pre-registration information in early January. On the two February nights listed, students and parents will come to the school on one night only to complete the registration process. Students will be registered to their designated school only: transfer requests must be completed by March 15 and are at the discretion of the receiving High Schools.

If you have any further questions about registration, please call:  
Mr. Wylie at (403) 777 7670 (Ext. 2044).

## YEARBOOK PRE-PURCHASES



“Pre-purchase a full-colour and hardcover copy of the SJAM 2012 Yearbook at the office by January 27th to guarantee your own copy for only \$30. Price will increase to \$35 afterwards and availability can't be guaranteed.”

## **SJAM Music Program**

Bravo to our Musical Mustangs for an excellent Winter Concert! Performances were fantastic by all of our bands!

Thank you to Mr. Lancaster for his special appearance as Beethoven!

Also, thank you to Diefenbaker Jazz 1 for their pre-concert performance and joint piece with our own Jazz Band



## **SJAM Music in the Classroom**

During the month of January students will have performance tests based on the music they performed at our Winter Concert. Students will be working on small ensemble projects, where they are creating a performance project with 2 to 5 other instruments. Some of these ensembles will perform at the Art Show in April.

We have started a Music Mentorship Program with Diefenbaker High School. The high school students will be coming into music classes to work with our students.

All music students will resume working on improving their music literacy with a software program called Alfred Essentials Music Theory, visiting the computer lab once a week.

## **Home Practice**

A reminder that music students need to continue building their skills individually at home! Please ensure home practice of 30 minutes three times a week is being completed.

December practice sheets were due before the winter break. January practice sheets are due January 31<sup>st</sup>. Parents must sign practice sheets to verify that home practice has occurred.



## **Field Trip**

Grade 8 and 9 music students will be attending a CPO dress rehearsal on January 20<sup>th</sup>. Music of Tchaikovsky will be featured. Forms will be sent home the week of January 9<sup>th</sup>, please return ASAP. Parent volunteers will be required. The cost will be \$15 - \$20.

## SJAM ART STUDENTS SHINE

On May 24, 2012, one of SJAM's art students Simran B. will join Alberta Art Teachers and other students in a unique art exhibition exploring how the arts impact their lives. Each work submitted will explore the artists' personal journey and reflect the importance of the arts in the development of self, culture and society. By participating in this Art Exhibition, Simran is encouraging support for the Arts and elevating the importance of art education in the province of Alberta. The net proceeds of all sales will support a local children's charity, Dreams Take Flight. All submissions will be completed on a 24x24" canvas and include a narrative, which will be published in a book. Below is Simran's painting and narrative.

### Cultural Sparklers

Simran B.

Sir John A Macdonald Junior High School, Calgary  
Mixed Media on Canvas

My name is Simran and I am a grade nine student at Sir John A Macdonald Junior High School. I am 13 years old and live with my parents and older brother in Panorama Hills, Calgary. I enjoy playing soccer and teaching youth about the Sikh religion.

I've been interested in art my whole life. For as long as I can remember, I've been drawing, painting and creating whenever I could. My formal art education began in grade seven and I have continued to take art up until grade nine. Art helps me express what I feel in a positive manner. I use my sketchbook as a venue where I express my feelings through line. Sometimes they evolve into works of art, other times they remain hidden behind the cover.



Within me is a deep desire to be knowledgeable about my culture and to remain close to my roots. My painting represents the happiness and joy I feel when I am immersed in my cultural surroundings. The background work for this painting began during a trip to India. My use of vibrant colours represents my personality. I want to be unique and I want to stand out. I used several different patterns within my piece, which represent the beauty found in Indian culture.



January 2012

## Listening to parents and students

Listening to parents and students is important to us in the Calgary Board of Education.

As we work to personalize learning for students we also work hard to listen to what students and parents tell us about how each student learns best. It is part of how we keep our promise to know our students and to create learning as unique as every student.

Teachers and principals listen to students describe their thinking and aspirations. This understanding of each student's abilities, gifts and interests is used to create their learning plans. As Chief Superintendent I meet regularly with student representatives from our high schools to understand their experiences and to hear from them what works best in our schools. The ideas and feedback from students helps me ensure the Calgary Board of Education responds to the needs and interests of today's learners.

Listening to parents and students also helps us stay connected with our diverse community. We listen to parents as they work with our school staff. We respond to information gathered from Calgarians through our online surveys and engage with those who contact our offices directly. We listen to our school councils and neighbours, elders from our Aboriginal communities and representatives from cultural groups within our city.

At least one in five Calgarians is directly connected with the CBE and all Calgarians are impacted by the work of public education. Listening to students, parents and community members talk about what they want for the children of Calgary is work we've highlighted in our Three-Year Education Plan.

Although we've done a good job of listening in the past, we want to get better. As part of our focus on hearing from our parent community, we hosted Area meetings across the city last month to have

open discussions with parents and key communicators.

The conversations covered some of the issues we face as a system. We asked about transportation fees, school and system policies and how to communicate better. The input will inform our decisions. The questions parents asked will improve our communication.

With each student in mind we build the capacity of our system, training and developing our people to deliver the best education. The CBE has over 12,000 employees. All employees—whether or not they work directly with students—contribute to student learning.

Public education requires significant funding and we do our best to make every penny a worthwhile investment. By listening to parents in meetings, in schools, and online, we engage the community we serve. These connections support success in learning for more than 104,000 students.

We think of our promise to provide excellence in education as one we continuously strive to fulfill. We think of our promise to listen and respond as key to our students' success. And we know we have much more to hear from our community. We invite you to tell us more about what you want in Calgary's education system by visiting [cbe.ab.ca](http://cbe.ab.ca) in January.

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## 2012-2013 School Instructional Calendars

The traditional and modified school calendars for 2012-2013 are approved. There are changes to dates from the previous *tentative* calendars such as the first day of school for students. You may access the 2012-2013 instructional calendars at the following link:

<http://www.cbe.ab.ca/calendars/default.asp>