



BLUMENORT SCHOOL

BENGALS UPDATE 19 - JANUARY 19, 2024

Black History Month @ Blumenort School

In the month of February, we will be celebrating Black History Month. In next week's Bengals Update we will share our monthly plan and include some important dates on our February calendar. What we can share today is that we are kicking off our month with two virtual presentations by our friends at Inspiration Republic on Thursday, February 1st. Please note that parents are very welcome to attend! Here is an overview and how it will look for both assemblies...

Anti-Black Racism Presentation: "People You May Know"

"People You May Know" is an anti-Black racism presentation that promotes inclusion, racial equality, and allyship. This powerful virtual presentation highlights the origins of African Canadians and helps bring attention to the different ways in which anti-Black racism still exists in Canada today, by sharing stories from present-day African Canadians. Through these presentations students of all backgrounds will be equipped with the understanding of allyship and practical ways they can practice allyship in their own context. Our speaking team keeps students engaged with the use of media, personal experiences, interactive games, and inspiring stories.

Kindergarten to Grade 3 Presentation - Thursday, February 1st from 9:15-9:45am

This presentation serves as a great age-appropriate introduction for grades K-3 to important topics that our society is facing surrounding race and diversity. We take concepts that are complex and often very heavy, and are able to distill them down to their most basic form. With the use of story-telling, dynamic multimedia, and interactive moments, young students gain an important foundational understanding regarding these topics in a fun and engaging way.

Subjects Covered:

- Racism: Simple definition and cartoon providing a quick history lesson.
- Microaggressions: Simple definition, combined with a video and fun exercise.
- Allyship: To be an ally is to be a good friend, with 3 simple action steps.
- Celebrating Diversity: Interactive moments with students, and fun song that celebrates our differences.

Grade 4-8 Presentation - Thursday, February 1st from 10:00-11:00am

In this presentation our speaking team empowers students to put an end to Anti-Black racism, and stress the importance of treating everyone with kindness and respect no matter what they look like.

Subjects Covered:

- In the Beginning: Students travel with iREP team to the historical African Canadians community of Buxton, Ontario to learn more about the history of African Canadians and systemic racism in Canada.
- Microaggressions: Bringing simple definition as to what they are and helping students understand the negative impact they can have.
- White Privilege: A clear understanding of what it is and why we need to change it.
- People You May Know" - students are introduced to a number of outstanding everyday African Canadians of various ages and professions, and get to hear about their personal experiences through an interview video we produced.
- We Stand Together: Inspiring call for the school community to create a safe and inclusive climate for all. Practical strategies on how to become an "ally".



**INSPIRATION
REPUBLIC**

The Umbrella Project @ Blumenort School

HELP YOUR CHILD SHAPE THEIR AUTHENTIC SELF

Your child is crafting the story of their identity - listen closely. As children become more aware of themselves and their position in the world, they start to crave something we all want, a sense of unconditional belonging. Each experience a child has builds on their sense of identity, and they slowly start to develop the story of who they are. Who we are is in fact a story that is pretty open to interpretation. Some of the most formative experiences in our story are the ones that made us feel accepted or on the other side, isolated.

As your child's story emerges, start to look for *conditions of worth*. Conditions of worth are the things that we feel will give us value to others. These can range from being pretty, smart, funny, strong, to never getting upset, never losing etc. While these aren't bad qualities, we don't want our children's self esteem to be tied to these, creating anxiety every time they can't fully meet the expectation. This can cause a mix up in their authentic story and starts to create a social mask that they need to put on to feel accepted. Ever wonder why your funny friend doesn't seem to know when to turn it off? It's likely that they have created a condition of worth around being funny. Unfortunately, what this mask actually does is prevent them from ever feeling unconditionally accepted.

When you recognize these conditions of worth in your child, counter this message with two key parenting strategies:

1. Unconditional Love and Respect (Harder than it sounds)

While most parents can say that they love their children unconditionally, it is not the message we *give* but the message they *receive* that is most important. To learn more, about this, please check out the following...

<https://umbrellaproject.co/2017/10/04/what-does-it-mean-conversations-with-your-kids/>

To streamline the message you are trying to give with what they are actually receiving, try not to tie good behaviour with love and connection and bad behaviour with anger. This subtly tells kids that your affection does in fact have conditions and that they are less lovable when they aren't doing what you want them to. Instead, try to keep anger out of discipline and love out of praise. Avoid phrases like, "I love you...you're so kind" when your child is doing well at their condition of worth. Praise them without tying it back to your love for them. When discipline is necessary, try to zoom in a little and see the feeling - sadness, anger, jealousy, frustration. It will help you keep your cool and not bring anger into the equation. Remember their feelings are normal and suppressing them with anger doesn't make that feeling go away; but it can lead to a child who has trouble sharing their true feelings.

2. Parent in the Grey Zone

Help your kids find the normal exceptions to their conditions of worth in the *grey zone*. The more black and white our view of the world is, the easier it is to get caught up in our conditions of worth. In the black and white world we are either one way or another - smart or not, kind or not, funny or not. We can't be any of these things all the time and this is a clear set up for never feeling comfortable with your imperfections. This is especially true if, each time you fail at one of your conditions, you feel less loved or accepted. The permission to be imperfect and human like everyone else is a great way to alleviate anxiety and the *grey zone* is where this permission lives. It's almost impossible to live an authentic life if you can't take ownership for your mistakes; however, ownership can be difficult for children. In fact, many of the adults I know struggle with this skill too.



Kindergarten Registration for the 2024-2025 School Year

Kindergarten Registration for the 2024-2025 school year is now open. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to register their children in January for September entry, as this will assist schools in planning and scheduling. Early registration also provides the opportunity to participate in upcoming orientation events in spring. To be eligible for September registration (2024-25 school year), children must be five years of age on or before December 31, 2024. Students are required to attend the school within the catchment area where they reside, which ensures balanced enrollment across the division. For more information on school catchment areas and how to begin the online registration, please check out...

<https://hsd.ca/schools/student-registration/>

World's Finest Chocolate Almond & Assorted Chocolates Fundraiser

Our annual, school-wide World's Finest Chocolate Fundraiser is set to begin on February 5th and will run until March 4th. This year, we will only be selling our ever popular almonds. A letter asking if your family is interested in selling will be sent home. Thank you for your support!

Scholastic Book Fair

We would like to let our families know that we have had to cancel our Scholastic Book Fair for this year, but it will make a return next year. Thank you for your understanding.

I Love to Read Month

February is also I Love to Read Month at Blumenort School. It is our intention to connect our I Love to Read plans with Black History Month. We will share how that looks next week!

Blumenort School Indigenous Merchandise Orders

A few months back, we shared with everyone our plan for offering Blumenort School Indigenous Merchandise and today we want you to know that we will be taking orders until January 31st. Our options are for T-Shirts, Hoodies and Toques in black, grey and orange. The logo will be as shown below. If you didn't receive a paper copy of the order form, please let us know.



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