

December 22, 2006

I wanted to take a minute to pause and wish you all a happy and safe holiday and the best of the season. Regular editions of my Education Report will resume on January 12, 2007.

Congratulations are in order. Vancouver Island North Superintendent Dan Boudreault informed us that teacher Christina MacDonald has been selected to receive a Certificate of Achievement under the Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence. This is a very prestigious award. Congratulations, Christina. We are very proud of you, as is your school and district; I am sure.



The holiday season provides a time to take a deep breath and enjoy friends and family. It is a great opportunity to reflect on how fortunate we are to live in a province like British Columbia. Each of you can be very proud of your contribution to the education of our youth.

I know that we will return to our work in the New Year with the dedication and determination necessary to support student learning. Think about this – it will be 2007 – it seems such a short time ago we were crossing the Y2K threshold.



I leave you with my personal wishes for a happy holiday season and a prosperous and successful New Year.



Think about using this in your next newsletter to parents

Our province is truly multicultural and becoming more so every year. In many communities in the province a variety of languages are spoken in addition to English. And many customs, religions, ways of dressing and varieties of food can be seen. The holiday season provides a great opportunity to celebrate our rich ethnic diversity and promote tolerance and understanding for differences among our children. You may wish to try some of these activities over the holiday:

- Take your children to a library and ask the librarian to provide picture books for younger children or reference materials for older children that describe celebrations of those from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.
- Go on the Web with your children. Research a question. Is Christmas celebrated in Pakistan? Is there another major holiday like it? Does Santa Claus visit children in China? Is there someone like Santa in India?
- View ethnic television with your children and watch holiday season specials featuring music and dance.
- Include ethnic foods in your holiday menus – Sushi on Boxing Day, Christmas Eve Dim Sum, Holiday Curry – Include your children in planning and preparing food from other countries.
- Practice simple phrases like *Happy Holidays* in different languages.

This is the time of year when we can really focus on harmony among everyone. Enjoy your holidays with your neighbours from all origins.

Happy Holidays.