

ABC PEEL NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: GINA HEISZ

The most important person in your child's school life is the teacher. Whether that educator is a daycare instructor, an elementary school teacher or a high school teacher - or even a coach or tutor, you need to develop a relationship with that educator. Developing a positive relationship with your child's teacher can lead to a positive educational experience for your child, no matter what the educational setting.

Our Parents' Night meeting for November will help focus on how to develop a positive and productive relationship with your child's teacher. If you have a great relationship with any of your child's teachers you can share how you do it! On another note: Don't forget-You can now renew your membership online!! Go to www.abcontario.ca to find out more!

BOARD UPDATES:

The Gifted Education Program Review committee has now met 4 times since being formed in September 2006. The terms of reference were completed at the October 18, 2006 meeting, and it was approved by the Administrative Leadership Team. The next meeting for the team will be in February 2007 when they will meet to discuss surveys and focus groups. The committee hopes to have a final report printed and available by December 2007.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS:

On Saturday November 25, 2006 from 10 am until noon we will be having a Family Games Day at Holy Spirit Church at 1170 Tynegrove Road. Please bring a few games and a snack to share, or a toonie. Please RSVP Karen at 647-220-0071 or activities@abcpeel.org

PARENTS' NIGHT THIS MONTH: (Please note date change)

This month, parent night will be held on November 23, 2006 and our speakers will be Vera C. Teschow, M.Ed., along with Joan Dinnin who is a Co-ordinator of Special Education Support Services at the Board offices. The topic will be "**Building and Maintaining Positive Parent-Teacher Relationships**".

Vera was a teacher of enhanced classes in Peel for a number of years and will discuss the importance of maintaining positive relationships with your child's teacher and will give valuable tips on how to get the best for your child. Joan will give us valuable information regarding contacts at the school board level.

Vera C. Teschow is a certified Ontario Teacher and mother of two-year-old twins. Her experience and skill set are diverse: She has taught in the Ontario public education system for nine years. She has also developed and instructed courses with the *Peel Summer Academy (PSA)*, *Soul Drums* and the *Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) Summer Club for Kids*, and is the director of *Discover Toronto: A Multiple Intelligences Approach to the City*, a summer program for Gifted learners. Vera holds a B.Ed. from the University of Toronto and a Masters Degree in Education from Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). In addition, she is certified in Music, Primary Instruction, Special Education and ESL. In her spare time, Vera volunteers with new Canadians, and teaches prenatal classes for families expecting multiples.

Visit Vera online at www.verateschow.com

The meeting will be held in the Mississauga Room at the Peel District School Board offices. The address is 5650 Hurontario St. in Mississauga. The Mississauga Room is on the lower level to the right of the main entrance.

Please also remember that there will not be a Parents' Night for December. We'll see you in the new year.



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ATTENTION ALL PARENTS OF GRADE 5 STUDENTS:

If your son or daughter was in a grade 4 class last year in Peel, your child was administered the CCAT test. The CCAT is the Canadian Cognitive Ability Test. It is a group screening test that is done in Peel for *all* grade 4 students. This test is one of the tools used to identify gifted students. If your child scores at, or above the 97th percentile in any 1 of the 3 subtests, you may request an I.P.R.C. to have them identified as gifted.

There are 3 areas assessed with the CCAT test. They are: Verbal, Non-Verbal and Quantitative. If you have not yet received the results, you may receive them at your child's December teacher interview along with the 1st term report card. Please remember to ask your child's teacher for the results.

If you do not remember ever receiving the results of your child's CCAT test, you can request the results from the principal, or you can ask to see your child's OSR (Ontario School Record). The results should be recorded in this file. Please let ABC know if you have any questions about your child's scores. You can contact the support telephone line at 905-230-8281.

“WHAT KINDNESS MEANS TO ME” An essay and poster contest for Grade 7 and 8 students

Are you creative, do you enjoy writing or drawing? If so this contest is for you!

ESSAY: Students may submit an original essay in English or French with the title: What Kindness Means to Me.

POSTER: Students May Submit a Poster, using any medium, with a theme of kindness and compassion for living creatures.

PRIZES: For each category.

Top Prize \$300

Five Runner-Up prizes of \$100

Five Honourable mentions of \$50

CONTEST RULES:

1. Students must be in Grade 7 or 8.
2. All entries must be original.
3. Student's name, age and grade, teacher's name and the name and address of school must be on each entry.
4. All entries become the property of the sponsor and may be reproduced.
5. The decisions of the judges are final.
6. Essays must be no more than 350 words, types and double spaced.
7. Posters must be no more than 12 x 18 inches or 30 by 45 cm. Please roll posters for mailing.
8. First round judging will be done by the visiting teachers of the Kindness Program.
9. Final Judging will be done by the Directors of the Beatrice Watson-Acheson Foundation

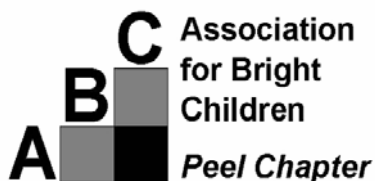
TO ENTER CONTEST:

Send essays and posters to:

The Beatrice Watson-Acheson Foundation
Attn: Mrs. Jennifer Snell
4740 Dunning Road
Navan, Ontario K4B 1J1

The purpose of the “Values Through Humane Education” is to encourage and develop a respect and responsibility for all creatures and the environment in children. The program began in 1974 under the direction of J. Cameron Watson. It is now presented to schools in Peel, Toronto, Durham and Ottawa, with nine teachers covering grades J.K to grade 8.

The foundation continues to offer this program free of charge. To have this program free of charge in your school visit the website: www.kindnessprogram.org



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Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for Gifted Students

The October Parent's night meeting was a joint venture between ABC Toronto and ABC Peel. The topic was: How to Develop Good IEPs for Gifted Students.

Our presenters were Becky Hurwitz (Legislation Liaison for ABC Ontario) and Rosann Lacalamita (President of ABC Waterloo, and Development Liaison of ABC Ontario).

Developing an IEP for students with advanced cognitive ability is a challenge for everyone. "Challenging Work for a Greedy Mind" a quote from one of the presenters could easily be the 'mission statement' for an IEP for a gifted child.

How do you know what level your child is at? Are they happy? Students' whose needs are not being met are often disengaged, bored, and can end up dropping out of school, and often suffer from depression.

ABC Ontario Becky and Rosann developed a document called *Developing Individual Education Plans for Gifted Students: Information for Parents*. This was developed in consultation with the Ministry of Education, Special Education Policy and Programs Branch.

As this article will only briefly touch on some of the points, it would be worthwhile to download the complete document from www.abcontario.ca/gifted/iep.html. It is an excellent resource for teachers, parents and students.

Topics:

Part 1: About IEPs and their development

Part 2: Connections: The Relationship of Curriculum Modifications and Administrative Supports to the Needs of Gifted Students

Part 3: IEP Templates with Explanatory Notes and Sample IEPs for Gifted Students

*Asynchrony means uneven development.

** Quoted from Developing IEPs by Hurwitz and Lacalamita.

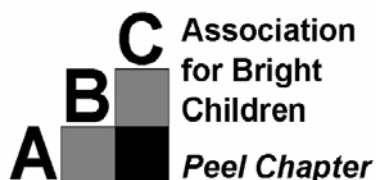
How are acceleration, differentiation and additional curriculum shown in the IEP?

Part One states "the IEP should spell out the modifications, subject by subject". There should be a separate page for each subject that falls under this category. The suggestion of modifying subjects that are of particular interest to the student would be more useful than subjects that aren't of interest. While this may seem obvious to most, it is important to reiterate this. In most probability, it wouldn't be practical to modify all subjects. Subjects may be changed throughout the year, especially if the student is on a semester system.

Some boards are apparently encouraging teachers to write their plans around "*accommodations*", instead of around "*modifications*". For gifted students that need academic changes the proper plan would include modifications. (Accommodations can for example be used with those students whom have learning disabilities (LDs) and for example, would allow them more time on a test). NOTE: Some students whom are gifted/LD would need accommodations to be included.

What about independent study and alternate programming some might ask? While gifted students can learn independently, and without much teacher involvement, they still need teachers who will be able to guide them, and work with them to help set their goals and objectives. A part of being gifted can mean there is often asynchrony* and therefore the student may need guidance with the skills required to develop their concepts. These skills are useful for all students, however, the gifted student might need to learn more advanced skills at an earlier stage. Doing so will enable the student to match their higher level thinking with their conceptual abilities. For example, being able to narrow down a complex topic, and to research and analyze their topic.

Alternate programming (or additional curriculum) may be used to provide the students with instruction in these skills. It is important to understand that "alternate programming supports, but DOES NOT substitute for modified Ontario curriculum." **



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Gifted students will most likely be ready to learn about various things that are advanced and therefore out of sync and step with their age peers. Therefore acceleration and differentiated curriculum will be required.

These students need to be placed in a situation where they are learning something new in subject areas that interest them. (Keep in mind the earlier quote:

“Challenging Work for a Greedy Mind”).

Part Two of this document discusses the Relationship of Curriculum Modifications and Administrative Needs of Gifted Students. There are excellent charts in this section. The headings include:

- Strength/need of the intellectually gifted student
- Suggests these learning requirements
- Associated with these curriculum modifications
- Requiring some or all of these administrative Supports

Under Strength and Needs and Other Common Characteristics of intellectually gifted comes the following:

- *Advanced cognitive abilities*
 - Interest in creative and critical thinking
 - Conceptualize and generalize easily
 - Love of learning with a thirst for new and different content
- *Advanced intellectual Curiosity*
 - Interest in creative and critical thinking
 - Curious, questioning, intuitive
 - Wide range of interests
 - Keen powers of observations
 - Self-critical
- *Heightened Sensitivity and Creativity*
 - Creative, strong sense of imagination
 - Good sense of humour—often advanced for age
 - Able to see diverse and unusual relationships
 - Impatience with or strong dislike of repetition

Part Three of this document contains the IEP Templates and includes explanations. As well, this section also includes sample IEPs. The original templates can be found through the following link:

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/index.html

In the News: Canada's WWI Veterans: “Lest We Forget”

Only three men remain.

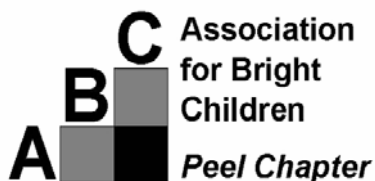
Three men of the more than half a million Canadians who served in the First World War (The Great War) between 1914 and 1918. These three men who are our surviving Veterans of the First World War deserve our attention. They are; Percy Wilson 105, Lloyd Clemett 106, and John Babcock, also 106 years of age.

According to the Dominion Institute www.dominion.ca “barely a third of our fellow citizens can name The Battle of Vimy Ridge as an important and key victory in the First World War”. More importantly the sons and daughters who served in the Second World War (The War to end all Wars) are on average 86 years of age.

In these three Veteran's honour, the Dominion Institute is calling on the Prime Minister to offer the family of the last Veteran resident in Canada a full State Funeral. State Funerals have been held only for Prime Ministers and Governor Generals. A State funeral would allow Canadians to come together to honour those who died and to honour and take the responsibility to keep their memories alive.

If you are interested in supporting a national gesture please go online and sign the petition requesting a State Funeral at: <http://www.dominion.ca/petition/index.php>

Also noteworthy on this site is the Memory Project www.thememoryproject.com an education program designed to connect Veterans and Students' online and in classrooms across the country. Honour them.



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AN EDITORIAL OPINION:

Please note that this is *my* opinion only, and may not necessarily reflect the opinions of others within ABC Peel.

Hello, my name is Lori D'Aquila and I am part of the team that helps to write this newsletter each month. I am also the telephone and email support person for ABC Peel.

As a member of ABC Peel for almost 11 years now, I have seen many people come and go over the years. There have been volunteers that help with many things within this organization, and many of them have done an amazing job. Some people come to a few meetings, get what they want from ABC and then leave when they no longer have a need for our services.

I really wish that would change. ABC's membership should continue to grow each and every year. I would love to see everyone stick around and help us get the best possible program for gifted kids in all of Ontario.

While I realize that people are very busy with their jobs, children and other commitments, there must be a way to get all of you focused enough to help us fight for what our children need!

We all saw how 5 enhanced classes were closed in Peel last year and realize how difficult it can be to deal with schools and administrators. I have seen and heard individuals complain about not getting proper IEP's, their child not being identified or tested, not receiving proper modifications or the school board not willing to discuss acceleration. All of us have probably complained about these things.

But how mad or upset are you when you tell us that things are "not the way they should be?" How upset do you get when you are told that since your child is gifted they will be just fine? Do you get upset when your child comes home crying because they feel like they don't fit in? Are you angry when the school doesn't listen to what you are saying?

Do you get upset enough to write a letter? Does it make you want to become a volunteer? Without your help ABC Peel would probably disappear, along with all enhanced classes. If we could come together as ONE VOICE with a purpose, maybe we could change things in Peel.

You may think that you are too busy to help. Maybe you can't volunteer a lot of time, but could you send us an email with an idea or two? Every single one of us needs to help. So I am issuing a challenge to all of you to send at least one idea or piece of information to support@abcpeel.org. Please also remember to send in your \$40 membership fee as soon as possible. **There is strength in numbers-Please speak up!**

Thanks,
Lori D'Aquila
ABC Parent Volunteer,
Support and Newsletter

FUTURE PARENTS' NIGHTS:

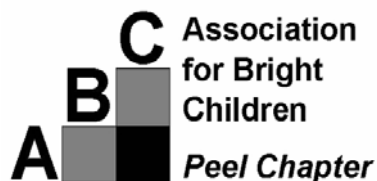
November 23, 2006 - Vera C. Teschow and Joan Dinnin—"Building and Maintaining Positive Parent-Teacher Relationships".

December 2006 - No parents' night or newsletter

January 25, 2007 - TBA

February 22, 2007 - Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence Program at U of T. Prof. John Vervaeke and 2 senior students from the program and CASA association will be speaking about this amazing program at U of T. Children in grades 7 and up are welcome.

March 29, 2007 - Catharsis Night—panel of speakers



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IMPORTANT REMINDER:

ABC PEEL HAS A NEW PHONE NUMBER

Effective Monday October 16th, ABC Peel has a new telephone number with voicemail capabilities. The new phone number is **905-230-8281**, and will be replacing the old number of 905-782-0055.

There are two separate voicemail boxes associated with this new number. Sub-voicemail box #1, is the "ABC Peel Support" line. If you have questions about ABC Peel, need support about your child's testing results, IEP's or IPRC's, or any other questions, this is where you should leave your name and phone number. Your calls will be returned as soon as possible and your questions will be answered.

We also have a sub-voicemail box #2, which is the "ABC Peel Information" line. If you listen to the greeting, you will hear information about our Parent's Night, speakers and topics that will be updated each month. Any other relevant information will be listed in this voicemail box. You can also leave a message in this box if you wish.

Please tell your friends about our new phone number.

MEMBERSHIP ISSUES:

In case you were not aware, ABC Peel memberships can now be paid online. Please visit https://www.beanstream.com/scripts/cart/view_products.asp?merchant_id=117484753

Payment can be made with credit cards such as VISA, MASTERCARD and AMERICAN EXPRESS.

WEBSITES OF INTEREST:

<http://www.ecf.utoronto.ca/apsc/html/SSA/>

This is a science program from the University of Toronto for kids in grades 3 through 12. It runs on 7 consecutive Saturdays from October to December. There is also a Spring program available.

<http://marsville.enoreo.on.ca/>

This site is the Canadian National Marsville Program in Canada. It is for grades 5 through 8 and is run in many cities throughout Canada. Ask your school if they can become involved in this amazing program.

<http://www.bookweek.ca/writingcontest.html>

This is a Canada-wide writing contest for grades 2 to 6. There are prizes and the deadline for submissions is December 1, 2006.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Telephone support: * 905-230-8281 (new number)

E-mail support: support@abcpeel.org

Website address: <http://www.abcpeel.org>

Membership Information: membership@abcpeel.org

Parent's Night Information: activities@abcpeel.org

Children's Programs: activities@abcpeel.org

Webmaster: webadmin@abcpeel.org

Communication Team (Newsletter):
abcpeelnews@hotmail.com