

February 14, 2012

## Inside this Issue

- 1 Valentine Fun
- 1 School Fees, PE News
- 2 4H Speech Competition
- 2 Ski Hill, Upcoming Events
- 2 Reminders

### Attachments:

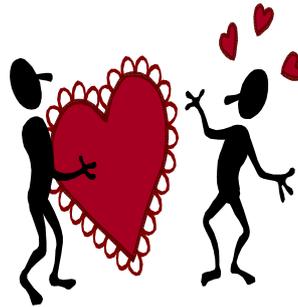
*The Effectiveness of DI*  
*La Glace Fire Department*

# Valhalla Community School

## Valentine Fun!

Who will be Ms or Mr Irresistible?

On Tuesday, Feb 14, each student will be challenged to remain silent towards their male or female counterparts. From 10:00am to 12:15pm, the boys shall attempt to refrain from talking to the girls; then from 12:15pm to 2:30pm the girls must refrain from speaking to the boys. Everyone will start the contest with a heart; each student will be vying for the most hearts. When a boy speaks to a girl, he must give up his heart,



Then the contest is reversed for the next part of the day. Ms and Mr Irresistible will be identified in the last hour of the day.

Also to celebrate Valentine's Day, we ask each class to challenge each other for the most participation by dressing in red or pink. The class with the highest participation will receive their sweet reward at 2:30pm. The costumes will be given double points for challenging outfits or 1 point for dressing easily. Dress for the day and have fun supporting your class and challenging others.

Keep it sweet and try to defeat!

(The day's activities will also include an afternoon soc hop.)

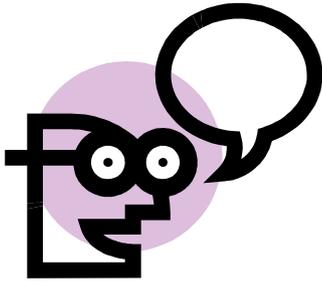


## School Fees Reminder

Just a quick reminder: VCS is now into the second half of the school year. To date we have a number of families who have not paid school fees. Please make a point of paying fees as soon as possible. These fees help offset the cost of school supplies that the school purchases for our students. If your fees are unpaid, please contact the office to make arrangements concerning this important issue. Thanks.

## PE News!

Skating will begin in all our classes (K-9) the week of February 27th. This is a mandatory unit for all students to participate in. Students will need to bring skates and a helmet (any kind of helmet will do) for all sessions. The school has some extra hockey helmets but no skates. If your son/daughter does not have skates, please try to beg, borrow or buy some. We will also need parent helpers to volunteer to help tie skates. A schedule and more detailed information will be out in the next newsletter!



## 4H Speech Competitions Coming!

Students in 4H (grades 7-9) are preparing for the 4H club's annual speech competition. The competition will be held on February 16, 2012.

Because of the large number of 4H members in our multi-club, preliminary competition will be held during school hours. Winners in each competition level will advance to a finals speak-off which will be held on the evening of February 16.

We will be looking for volunteers to help with organizing and judging the speech competition.

Together with this event, all non-4H

students will also do an age appropriate public speaking activity in class. The best of these will also present their efforts at the Feb.16 evening event.

While students will be given some time in school to work on their written and impromptu speeches, they will need to spend some time at home working on them as well to achieve their best effort.

## Spring Lake Ski Hill

The Spring Lake Ski Hill will be open Saturday Feb 18, Sunday February 19th and Family Day Monday February 20th from 10-4. We are still looking for volunteers for all three days. For more information or to volunteer contact Anna @ 780.356.2370 or 780.897.2055

### Travel Club

A reminder to all families participating in the VCS Quebec field trip this May: EF Tours has informed us that all accounts should now be paid in full. We cannot book flights or proceed with the trip in any way until all accounts are settled. Thanks.

## Upcoming Events

**February 14, 2012**  
**Valentine's Day Spirit Activities**

**February 16, 2012**  
**7pm, VCS**  
**VCS 4H Multi-Club Speech Competition**

4H Speech Finals and Non- 4H public speaking displays. Come support our students as they seek public speaking distinction!

**February 17, 2012**  
**VCS**  
**Extra Kindergarten Day**

**February 17, 2012**  
**12:10pm, VCS Gym**  
**Boys Basketball Pie Throw**  
Come out, have fun, support our teams!

**March 26, 2012**  
**7pm, VCS Viking Room**  
**VSF Annual General Meeting**

## A Few Reminders....

### Student Spectators at Basketball Practice

Just a reminder: students who are not members of school basketball teams should not plan on remaining at school to watch practice or "hang out" with friends. Team members do not need distractions and coaches cannot supervise students who are not part of practice.

### Absences

If your child(ren) are going to be away from school, please inform the office and the bus driver.

### Destination

If your child is going home with a friend or to a neighbor, please send a note to the bus driver and to the school.

### Arrival/Departure

If your child is arriving late, or being picked up early, please sign them in or out at the office.

## Family Day!

"Being Active" Photo Challenge!

Over the Family Day long weekend, either draw a picture or bring in a photo of your family being active and having fun together. Bring them in for Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup> and we will display them along the halls. Staff, students and visitors can vote on which picture/photo looks like the family that had the most fun!!

The Effectiveness of Direct Instruction (this is excerpted from Clear Teaching by Shepard Barbash)

## Why isn't Direct Instruction more popular?

So why isn't DI more popular? Critics—most of them outside the classroom— have a litany of complaints, all duly noted and refuted in this report. Their overriding reservation, however, is that DI contradicts much of what educators are taught to believe about "good" teaching.

DI is old-school. It uses teaching practices that were scorned by Progressive Era reformers but widely used until education was swept up in the cultural revolution of the sixties and seventies. These include teacher-led exercises, skill grouping, choral responding, and repetition. DI also provides a carefully designed and tested script, not just a content outline or lesson plan from which the teacher endeavors to create an effective lesson.

Essentially, DI teaches academic lessons the same way great trainers and coaches teach the fundamentals in sports. It identifies key skills, teaches them first, and then adds to that foundation. It builds mastery through practice and intervenes early to prevent bad habits. Unlike virtually any other approach to instruction, it is built on the premise that the program is responsible for the results. If the student has not learned, the program has not taught. While these features are what make DI so extraordinarily effective, they are profoundly at odds with the beliefs about good teaching that have come to dominate education . DI is rejected not because it doesn't work—it does—but because it challenges the validity of those beliefs.

For decades and especially since the sixties, teachers have been taught to be "a guide on the side, not a sage on the stage." This ideal regards Direct Instruction and similar approaches as the antithesis of good teaching. Thus, education professors and theorists denigrate DI's teacher-led practice as "drill and kill," its high expectations as "developmentally inappropriate," and its emphasis on building a solid foundation of skills as "rote-learning." They complain that DI interferes with teacher autonomy and student creativity, and is otherwise at odds with "best practices."

DI does in fact confine students and teachers to a specific sequence of learning interactions, but by doing so it produces superior results. As studies have repeatedly shown, DI's step-by-step approach is more effective than either the individualized interventions created by teachers or the improvised programs and practices favored by DI's critics. Indeed DI programs are so carefully constructed that some subjects can be taught by a computer. For example in Georgia, high school students using a computer-based version of DI called Fun-nix were more successful in teaching reading to Head Start children than were the regular teaching staff who used conventional methods.

The ideal of the teacher as a facilitator of student-led learning activity has hindered the adoption not just of DI but of virtually all teaching practices that are designed to attain specific curricular objectives. In this regard, the training typically received by teachers is not merely flawed, it is detrimental to the aims of standards-based educational reform. Rather than preparing teachers to be confident directors and managers of classroom learning, most teacher preparation programs instill a reluctance to use DI and similar results-oriented methodologies.

Clearly, there are occasions when teachers can be effective as guides and facilitators, but these tend to be in the latter, not the beginning, stages of learning. Beginners progress most quickly and easily when they have clear direction, close monitoring, and encouragement.

## **La Glace Fire Department**

**The La Glace Fire Department would like to invite you to join us on February 18th for a BBQ and Door Prizes!**

**We are also looking for people to come and join our fire hall family, firefighters and medical personnel. Training will be provided.**

**For more information call**

**Fire Captain Cheryl Van Eerden 780 568-4152**

**Or Training Officer Toni McDougald 780 568-4887**

