



SGDSB  
**Director's Newsletter**  
 March 1st 2017  
*"Small Schools Make a Difference"*



## SGDSB Tackles Absenteeism with launch of "Here" Campaign

We need your pictures! We are putting together a video to promote regular attendance and we need still shots of staff and students holding the "I'm Here" placard. "I'm Here" campaign placards have been distributed to all of our schools. We would like you to submit photos of students, teachers, support staff, custodians and administration holding the placards. The photo's can be shots of individuals, or a group shot. Use your imagination in setting up the shot, have the placard prominently displayed and don't forget to say, "I'm **HERE**"! Send your pictures to [dtamblyn@sgdsb.on.ca](mailto:dtamblyn@sgdsb.on.ca) with **I'm HERE** in the subject line.

In 2013-14 Superior-Greenstone (26.7%) had the second highest rate of persistent absenteeism among elementary students in the province (12.8%). Based on 194 days of instruction, a student who misses 19 days of school is deemed persistently absent. With the number of student appointments, sporting events, family commitments, travel days, and illnesses, it doesn't take long to reach this number.

Studies and research support what teachers instinctively know: that student absence negatively affects academic performance and important emotional and social connections are compromised. That's why we've created the Here campaign, to give "every school day counts" champions a brand, a name, and a voice. School board staff can use the Here campaign tools as a springboard to form directed, focused plans to combat absenteeism and bring students back to school.

This campaign's aim is to build awareness around the attendance issues in our region and to provide communication tools to help improve attendance in our schools.

### Who is this for?

**For Students**, I'M HERE means they are present. They are on the role. In their seats. We can count on them in. They are "here" physically and mentally. **For parents**, I'M HERE means they are ready to assist. Ready to encourage their children, ready to reach out and ask for help if they need to, ready to team up with teachers and ready to make plans to ensure their children get to school.



**For teachers and staff**, “I’M HERE” tells us that there dependable, concerned, and caring adults waiting to offer children a safe, welcoming, student centred learning environment with an investment in their academic achievement.

**For community**, “I’M HERE” demonstrates that organizations care about the children in their cities, towns and villages. They want to provide supports – medical, financial, social – to ensure that families can get their children to school.

### **General Campaign Guidelines**

Persistent absenteeism is a serious problem in SGDSB but with implementation of best practices and a long-term plan, it is solvable. The “Here” campaign is part of the solution. “Here” provides a cohesive visual approach with consistent messaging that helps build awareness of the importance of going to school every day.



Dovetailed with individual school initiatives and strategies, the Here campaign can help highlight and improve attendance at the elementary and secondary school level throughout the district.

Below is a starting list of **do's and don'ts** to get you thinking as you work to increase attendance at your school.

- **Do** address absenteeism right away. Early identification of school attendance issues is just as crucial to a child's progress as identification of learning difficulties. Ensure that interventions are immediate, nonthreatening, and persistent. School administrators and supporting staff can work to deal with the underlying causes before absence becomes ingrained.
- **Do** celebrate good and improved attendance by providing regular recognition and rewards to students and families.
- **Don't** focus on perfect attendance since children who struggle the most will be left out of such awards. Incentives and contests take advantage of the fact that students often respond better to concrete rewards and peer pressure than they do to lectures from parents and teachers.
- **Do** ensure that your school community engages students and parents with a warm and welcoming environment that offers compelling learning opportunities and programs.
- **Do** help families understand the positive impact of good attendance and the negative effects of chronic absenteeism. Even excused absences can cause children to fall behind. By providing consistent and intentional messaging regarding attendance expectations from early years and on, families can build the habit of attendance in early grades and improve their children's chances of graduating.
- **Do** model and teach resiliency, self-management, organization, and staying out of trouble skills. Use September to teach children how to be students, how to cope when things are difficult, how to persevere, how to maintain a growth mindset. Schools need to ensure that children have basic life skills, develop emotional and social intelligence, and learn self-regulation.
- **Do** develop better processes for tracking absenteeism and responding to it. The problem seems overwhelming and has been ignored from a systemic perspective for too long. Implementing new processes is hard. Schools that track attendance more closely have better results. Dedicate staff time to attendance.
- **Do** employ top-down team building by creating principal-led attendance teams that meet regularly to analyze attendance data and coordinate efforts to reduce persistent absence. Early data can trigger a response that starts with personalized early outreach that helps identify barriers to attendance — hunger, health, shelter, transportation or other challenges — and the supports or resources that would help improve attendance.
- **Do** train staff, especially teachers, in how to deal with persistent absenteeism especially in the elementary grades. Use mental health professionals and behavioural modification specialists to work with staff to learn how to de-escalate situations and create calm, welcoming environments where all students can be successful.
- **Do** ensure that every child has a champion. Caring adults developing a one-to-one relationship with every student and/or parent is the best first step. Students should expect that teachers, administrators, and community agencies are caring and friendly. Kids don't learn from people they don't like. You must discover what reason children need to come to school.



Nicole Morden-Cormier,  
Superintendent of Education

# Our Board Learning Plan: Promoting Success for ALL Learners

## Clarifying & Sharing Learning Intentions & Criteria

Criteria guides our lives. We use criteria daily in our work as educators for planning, assessment, feedback, and evaluation. Criteria is the foundation to our instructional work; when we plan for the learning that our students we must always know what the learning will look like and sound like – we always have a clear target for learning in our minds.

By using criteria, students and teachers know what the target of instruction looks like and students can increasingly make the connection between why they are learning what they are learning. As educators, when we take our clearly defined criteria into the classroom and relate it to learning goals in student friendly language, it becomes success criteria for the students. When we engage students in co-constructing or agreeing upon success criteria for a learning goal, and ask them to apply the criteria to their own work and the work of others, provide feedback using that criteria, and ask them to set individualized goals according to what still has to be practiced, the success criteria becomes internalized by the students. Students may then achieve independence with the learning goal(s).

According to Wiggins and McTighe (Understanding by Design), there are four types of criteria that we use as educators.

- Impact**—Refers to the success or effectiveness of performance, given the purpose and audience.
- Content**—Refers to the appropriateness and relative sophistication of the understanding, knowledge, and skill employed.
- Quality**—Refers to the overall quality, craftsmanship, and rigor of the work.
- Process**—Refers to the quality and appropriateness of the procedures, methods, and approaches used—before and during performance.

Here is an example in which all four types of criteria are used to evaluate a meal in nine different ways:

**Goal:** With a partner, cook a healthy and tasty meal for a specific group of people with varied dietary needs and interests.

- Impact**
  - Meal is nutritious.
  - Meal is pleasing to all guests.
- Content**
  - Meal reflects knowledge of food, cooking, and diners' needs and tastes.
  - Meal contains appropriate, fresh ingredients.
  - Meal reflects sophisticated flavors and pairings.
- Quality**
  - Meal is presented in an aesthetically appealing manner.
  - All dishes are cooked to taste.
- Process**
  - Meal is efficiently prepared, using appropriate techniques.
  - The two cooks collaborated effectively.

“Note that these four types are fairly independent of one another. The content may be excellent, but the process could be inefficient and ineffective; the content and process might have been appropriate, but the work quality could still be shoddy. Most important, the content, process, and work quality could be fine, but the desired impact might still not have been achieved—in that situation, with that audience, given that purpose. It is important to note that although these four categories (impact, content, quality, and process) reflect common types of criteria, we do not mean to suggest that you must use all four types for every performance task. Rather, you should select the criterion types that are most appropriate for the goals being assessed through the task and for which you want to provide feedback to learners.” (Wiggins and McTighe, Module J)

*“Note that these nine criteria are appropriate and independent: a meal could meet criteria 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9 but not meet criteria 2, 5, 7. However, in reality, nine criteria are too many to manage, so we could collapse the nine criteria to three without sacrificing too much in the way of feedback: Meal is nutritious, pleasing, and well prepared. Designers will always have to tinker with the right blend of criteria to balance the validity of the criteria, the helpfulness of the feedback, and the efficiency of the assessment.”*

Clarifying and sharing intentions and criteria for success.

Engineering effective discussions and other learning tasks that elicit evidence of learners’ understanding.

Providing feedback that moves learning forward.

Activating learners as instructional resources for one another.

Activating learners as the owners of their own learning.

**Assessment  
as/for Learning  
Culture**





Colleen Rose  
@ColleenKR

Following

What a great group of colleagues! #SGDSB  
@SGDSBoard @hepatter



RETWEET

1

LIKES

3



4:05 PM - 24 Feb 2017

***“Effective leadership has emerged as one of the critical foundations needed to sustain and enhance system-wide improvement.” (OLF)***

### **Developing Leaders Program Members:**

*Lindsay Costa (with principal Heidi Patterson)*

*Stephen Wilson (with principal Al Luomala)*

*Colleen Rose (missing principal Erica Cotton)*

*Charlie Bishop, Assistant to the Director  
Shelley Gladu, BLDS Lead  
Nicole Morden Cormier, SOE*

## **SGDSB Developing Leaders Program: *Learning to Lead, Leading to Learn***

**This group met on Friday, February 24, 2017 to engage in a full day of reflection, guided by the Ontario Leadership Framework, and to analyze our growth as leaders. The board Leadership Development is designed to give participants a head start on growing and refining their leadership skills. It is a multi-faceted approach that serves to unite many school and board based opportunities for developing leaders; opportunities that promote reflection, refinement, demonstration of leadership potential, and learner mindsets. The Developing Leaders Program provides the opportunity for participants to name their learning and share their growth. We look forward to continuing to meet as a group and to learn from and with each other.**



## **Lead Learner Forum**

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Learning Leads from all the secondary schools got together with their principals, OSSTF executive and senior administration staff, and met at George O'Neil Public School to gain a better understanding of the new role and its relationship in the school improvement process. It was a great opportunity to clarify the role and understand how learning leads work with the principals as part of a professional learning team in the school, which supports the professional learning communities that operate in each of the schools. While the session itself was mostly informational, looking at the professional learning cycle, and school, board, and ministry initiatives, future sessions will involve more participation and sharing among the learning leads themselves.

## **Mental Health and Addictions Nurse (MHAN)**

SGDSB, SNCDSB and Community Care Access Center (CCAC) have reached an agreement to share and expand the services of the two Mental Health and Addictions Nurses (MHAN) currently stationed in Red Rock and Nipigon. Currently under the terms of this agreement mental health services are offered to students at Nipigon Red Rock District High School, Dorion, Red Rock and George O'Neill Public Schools and in the east Marathon High School and Margaret Twomey Public School. In Phase 1 the service of the MHAN will be expanded to include Terrace Bay Public School. Phase 2, to be implemented later in the spring will include Schreiber Public School and Lake Superior High School. Under the terms of this agreement the MHANs will also be offering their services to SNCDSB students in the communities listed above.

Both Directors of Education continue to advocate for an additional MHAN to service the Geraldton area where the needs of our students is highest. Short of that CCAC has agreed to offer consultation to schools where MHAN services are currently not available. This service is designed to support schools in all communities across the district. With this agreement any school administrator (Principal or Vice Principal) will be able to contact their designated MHAN to consult about a mental health/illness or substance use/abuse issue. This will assist CCAC in gathering the appropriate data required to help them build their case for additional resources for Boards and communities.

## **PRO Grant Speaker – Chris Vollum**

*“While Social Media can bring joy, celebration and connectedness to our lives, it often represents a primary source of stress, anxiety and other mental health-related issues”* says Chris Vollum, President of CMV Social Media. On May 16<sup>th</sup>, SGDSB in partnership with SNCDSB is pleased to bring Chris Vollum to our region. Vollum's social media fitness experience educates and inspire participants to think differently about the role that social media plays in their lives. Vollum states *“you will walk away with strategies to build meaningful online content with confidence, purpose and joy in our 24/7 socially connected world”*.

Vollum will be speaking with parents and families on the evening of May 16th and with our students in grades 6, 7 & 8 the afternoon of the 16th as well. In both instances, we will be using technology to connect all of our school communities together to hear and learn from Chris.

For further information about Chris please go to: <https://cmvsocialmedia.com/about/>

## **Students Present We Day Video to Board of Trustees**

Following their trip to “We Day” last fall LSHS students Alex Halonen, Diana Figliomeni and Calum Blackwood presented the following video to the board of trustees

<https://drive.google.com/a/lakeheadu.ca/file/d/0BxcFiGTA-1o-YjA3WGh0dDNzckk/view?usp=sharing>

## **GCHS ranked in the Top Ten of the fastest improving secondary schools in all Ontario**

Last week the Fraser Institute released its controversial [Report Card on Ontario's Secondary Schools](#) which ranks 740 anglophone and francophone public and Catholic schools (as well as a small number of independent and First Nations schools) based on seven academic indicators from results of annual province wide math and literacy tests. GCHS was ranked in the top ten of the fastest improving secondary schools in all Ontario.



In 2012 GCHS had a ranking of 1.9 out of 10 placing it in the red category on the Fraser Institute's four point colour scale. By 2015 results had improved to the point where the school was scoring in the next colour category and by 2016 achieved further improvement with a score of 4.8. The results place GCHS in the top ten of the fastest improving schools in all of Ontario.

Whether it is EQAO or the results from the Fraser Institute Report, because of the small sample size in our schools, we are always cautious on how much weight to assign to local trends on standardized assessments. With a small student population results can fluctuate dramatically from one year to the next. Nevertheless, GCHS has shown steady improvement over the last five years on the Fraser Institute academic assessment. How have they consistently attained improvement over the course of the last five years?

Director of Education, David Tamblyn attributes the achievement to the hard work of the students and the commitment of the staff. "The staff took the earlier results to heart and were determined to work with students to improve their test scores. We have seen remarkable improvement, particularly in the subject area of mathematics where there has been a concerted effort to provide individualized support where students have gaps in their understanding of numerical concepts." As a result provincial testing has shown a dramatic improvement in both the applied and academic EQAO math scores. There was also a significant improvement in the 2014-2015 OSSLT results.

The staff as a whole have adopted the instructional practices of the Ministry of Education's Growing Success document which has resulted in a higher level of engagement among our students in the programs they are offered. Special initiatives have been introduced to support Geraldton Composite High School including a new Specialist High Skills Major program in the Environment which has expanded the experiential learning opportunities for our students. The staff have also received specialize professional learning to support the positive behaviour of their students (BMST, Trauma, etc.).

Geraldton has an above average number of students who receive Special Education services in comparison to the provincial average, and the school offers numerous supports and assistance for these students.

We also have built our community relationships with First Nation Partners with an ongoing FNMI inquiry. In the near future we plan to introduce a "Grad Coach" to work with the FMNI students to help keep them on the right track leading eventually to graduation.

There is still more work to be done says Tamblyn but we are headed in the right direction.





On February 9-10th, SGDSB attended the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation conference held in Sudbury Ontario. Nicole Richmond (Aboriginal Liaison) attended with Kim Crawford (NRDHS) and Chris Keetch (MRHS). We heard from elders (Gord Waindubence), scholars (Niigaan Sinclair), and community leaders (Christi Belcourt) about Anishinabek culture, history and values. Nicole, Kim and Chris accepted "Water is Life" banners and committed to learning traditional knowledge by spending time in the bush. Chris and Kim are currently teaching Native Studies courses and will share their learning with students and colleagues.



## Call for Presenters: Best Practices Indigenous Education in SGDSB *Lake Superior High School, March 23, 2016*

This collaborative professional development opportunity will provide grade 7-12 teachers with a forum to share with and hear from their peers across the Superior Greenstone district about best practices in Indigenous Education.

### **We are looking for presenters!**

Share your innovative projects, teaching methods, curriculum tie-ins and Indigenous pedagogy. What are your best practices?

- How have you engaged students in learning about residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada?
- How are you utilizing Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms?
- All subject areas are welcome – History, Geography, English, Science, Art, Native Studies, Math, Anishnabemowin, Physical Education.

**Submit your presentation proposal here, before March 6, 2017:**

<https://goo.gl/forms/Dzky37JXYRCgdbyr2>

Presenters will be notified on March 7, 2017 if they are selected and an agenda will follow.

**Interested in attending?** Let us know -- <https://goo.gl/forms/H6rsUZEjjWarQbpv1>

For more information, contact Superior Greenstone District School Board Aboriginal Liaison

Nicole Richmond e: [nrichmond@sgdsb.on.ca](mailto:nrichmond@sgdsb.on.ca) c: 807-228-1849

**Follow SGDSB Indigenous Education Initiatives! <https://www.facebook.com/sgdsb/>**

Do you know there are 163,000 Indigenous children who are affected by the foster care system in Canada? What can you do to help? Across the province, teachers are participating in the Moccasin Project to make moccasins for babies as they leave the hospital to head into foster care. SGDSB educators are invited to participate in this project. Please email [nrichmond@sgdsb.on.ca](mailto:nrichmond@sgdsb.on.ca) if you and your students would like to take part. For more information: <http://www.sotheycangohome.com/>

## The Moccasin Project

Creating Awareness  
Inspiring Citizen Action



For more information please visit:  
**[www.sotheycangohome.com](http://www.sotheycangohome.com)**  
or email: [dagiwewa@gmail.com](mailto:dagiwewa@gmail.com)



On February 1st and 3rd, SGDSB was invited to Pic Mobert and Bijiitiwaabik Zaaging First Nations to attend forums organized by Nokiiwin Tribal Council. Community partners talked about their programs, supports and hopes for Indigenous learners. In attendance at Rocky Bay were Jennifer Scott Marciski, Carole Laroux, Kim Crawford, Erica Cotton, Ron Kanutski and Chief Bart Hardy. NRDHS will be welcoming 9 Rocky Bay students next year! Miigwetch to Lisa Primavesi and Nokiiwin Tribal Council for the excellent event. We look forward to on-going collaboration.

**Anishinabek Education System** On February 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, Nicole Richmond represented Superior-Greenstone District School Board at the “Niigaan gdizhaami – We are moving Forward Together” Forum. The purpose of this meeting was to share information on the structure and operations of the Anishinabek Education System, the proposed Master Education Agreement between the Anishinabek First Nations and the Province of Ontario and the draft Education Service Agreement Transition guidelines. The honourable Minister of Education Mitzie Hunter presented at the AES meetings and acknowledged the “nation-to-nation” relationship between Ontario and the Anishnabek Nation.

The Anishinabek Education System has been approved and adopted by 22 communities, including 5 First Nation communities within our district: Pic Mobert First Nation, Biigtigong Nishnabeg, Red Rock Indian Band, Bijiitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek and Long Lake #58. First Nations will assume jurisdiction over education and will establish institutions to support Indigenous learning. Provincially, the Kinoomaadiziwin Education Body will act like a school board.

SGDSB will take an important role in developing a relationship with the local Regional Education Council, in addition to the local Education Authorities. We are looking forward to supporting and collaborating with these communities. The AES will also be developing culturally relevant curriculum and education programs, which we hope can complement the work being done by our board.



## **SGDSB Receives \$1.6 Million in Funding for Early Years Program in Geraldton**

Child care is about to undergo a significant facelift in the Municipality of Greenstone. Superior-Greenstone District School Board, in partnership with the Municipality of Greenstone and supported by the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board, has received confirmation that their application to relocate the Geraldton Day Care and Best Start Center to the B.A. Parker and Geraldton Composite High School complex has been approved. The school board will receive \$1.6 million from the Ministry of Education to retrofit and expand the current B.A. Parker School for the Day Care and Best Start programs.

Director of Education, David Tamblyn stated that, “this project has been the vision of our School Board and the Municipality for a number of years, and after several attempts to secure funding, we have been successful.” This capital project funding supports the government’s recent announcement to create an additional 100,000 new, licensed child care spaces for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers over the next five years.

“We are excited with the announcement of funding for this project,” said Mayor Renald Beaulieu “It will improve access and the quality of daycare services within Greenstone.”

Early Years Lead and Superintendent, Nicole Morden Cormier believes that “the key to our success in this round of funding was the partnerships that existed and the letters of support from the community of Geraldton. Not only did we receive letters from the School Board and Municipality, but from the Thunderbird Friendship Centre, Confederation College, and from the staff of B.A. Parker Public School and Geraldton Composite High School. I believe that this meant a great deal in this process as it signifies that this community believes in the positive impact on children and families that this integrated program can have.” Further to this, Morden Cormier stated that, “the collaborative planning work that occurred with Nancy Proteau, Director of Community Services from the Municipality of Greenstone, demonstrates the true partnership that is just beginning.”

The School Board indicated that there are many advantages to this relocation, including the expansion of the current Geraldton Child Care to include an infant program, which they currently do not have. For families, it also means access to services all under one roof. The current school complex is already a “partial” hub as it houses Contact North Distance Education, a Confederation College Regional Campus, and a community swimming pool run by the municipality. Greenstone Day Care Center currently runs a before and after school program which would also be relocated; with licensing, children will have an opportunity to utilize the facilities currently located in the school including the library, classrooms, and the gymnasium.

“This expansion,” explained Tamblyn, “supports the School Board’s vision of redefining the term “school” to reflect the notion of hubs that increasingly support families through high quality, accessible programs and services, from birth to adulthood. In small, northern communities, it is imperative that programs and services be thought of in this integrated manner, in order to reduce costs while still meeting the needs of children and families.”

“This project has been funded to include a Best Start and child care; and we are going to work with all of the stakeholders to ensure that we maximize this opportunity. We are truly excited about the possibilities for children, families and for the new partnerships that will grow as we expand this complex.”

**Our Collective Work for 2016-2017:**  
**Together, We Are Making a Difference...in Our**  
**Schools, in Our Communities and in the World!**



**Making a Difference at MMPS**  
*Submitted by: Kristan McMahon*

Marjorie Mills Public School participated in the Push for Change campaign throughout the month of January. Students from the 6/7/8 class started a Student Senate and became engaged in the campaign for youth homelessness through We Schools. This has evolved to include students from other grades as well. As the students were learning about youth homelessness, Officer Corbin came to the school to discuss Joe Roberts and the Push for Change. Students instantly became engaged and wanted to do more to help the campaign. Student Senate along with some extra helpers hosted a Hot Dog lunch and raised \$173 for the campaign. As a reward, students from Grades 4-8 were provided with an entire day of curling. A huge thank you goes out to the volunteers for organizing such a wonderful event. The efforts of the Greenstone region were also noticed by Joe Roberts who has decided to come and walk in our area. In order for all of our students to receive a pin from the campaign, Student Senate hosted an in-school bake sale during our Global Play Day and raised an additional \$151.35. Students will be heading out on March 6th, 2017 to walk with Joe and learn more about his initiative to end youth homelessness.



**Students Learn to be Good Citizens at Margaret Twomey Public School!**

Students in Mrs. Anthony and Mrs. Edwards Kindergarten/Grade One class at Margaret Twomey Public School have been learning to be good citizens in the classroom, school and community. Students wanted to help others in our community by collecting donations for the Marathon Food Bank. They wrote letters asking students and friends of Margaret Twomey Public School to send in at least one non-perishable food item to school. Their goal was to fill the back of Mrs. Anthony's van. Students measured the back of the van using links. A template of the back of the van was then put in the school lobby. Through the generosity of all students, the class surpassed their goal! Once the food was in, the students had collected **322** food items. The students then did some estimating, counting, sorting, grouping and shape exploration before packing and donating items to the Marathon Food Bank. Students were all proud of their accomplishment and happy to make a difference in their community!



# Did You Know?

Approximately 1 trillion plastic bags are produced world wide each year. It is estimated that people only use these bags for less than 8 minutes...

Beardmore Public School put out a challenge to Red Rock Public School to start collecting and recycling plastic grocery bags. To date RRPS has far surpassed there original goal of 100 and have prevented 230 from ending up in landfills. We would like to challenge other schools to take part because we all know **SMALL SCHOOLS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**



## Red Rock Public School

As part of our Science unit, learning about living things and animals we were lucky enough to have Ray's Reptiles come to our school and we were able to see and touch a lot of different animals, reptiles and even a tarantula! Students had the opportunity to ask questions regarding what the animals eat, their habitats and how long they live. This was a great opportunities for both staff and students and one we won't soon forget!



## BA Parker is Making a Difference

It has been a busy last couple of weeks at **B.A. Parker Public School**. On Thursday, January 26, students in grades 6-8 (who signed up) were given the chance to participate in the Push for Change Curling Day at the Geraldton Curling Club. Push for Change is a not-for-profit organization that aims to end youth homelessness in Canada. It also strives to help young people reach their full potential. Students raised money by selling popcorn for \$1 a bag, and raised \$225.00. January 27 was Family Literacy Day and B.A. Parker students celebrated by listening to Mrs. Kennedy read aloud the book One by Kathryn Otoshi via Google Hangouts. Each class then completed a follow-up activity and contributed to a school wide bulletin board celebrating our own individual uniqueness. Global Play Day was February 01 and students spent the last 100 minutes of the school day visiting various places in the school to play. Global Play Day aims at encouraging children to engage in unstructured play with no technology for a period of no shorter than 100 minutes. Students chose to paint, dance, build with Lego, read books, play basketball and, play cards and board games. Much fun was had by all!





## **Capturing Student Voice**

*By George Drazenovich, Mental Health Lead*

This month we have had the opportunity to obtain student voice through a variety of venues regarding a range of issues important for students. From the perspective of the mental health strategy, important insights from students surrounding the theme of well-being was solicited and our goal is to build on those insights and support the many constructive ideas that have emerged. System leads including the aboriginal liaise, positive behaviour support lead, guidance counsellors, teachers, elders, and the director have all been involved supporting or leading events such as the board-wide student senate that includes students representing every school in our district, and student engagement sessions in Nip-Rock High School and GCHS.

Key feedback and themes that have emerged from these events include: bringing back successful alumni who achieved accomplishment in their respective careers and roles to speak to the students of their former school and provide tips and hints on how they may similarly grow and flourish; students appreciate when teachers push and support them in both formulating and achieving their goals; career cruising events are particularly helpful and they would like to see this continue; athletics provide an effective means of supporting belonging and well-being; some expressed a need for feeling a greater sense of belonging for all students and a feeling that community needs to be continued to be built in even greater ways within schools; building and enhancing supportive relationships with teachers; more differentiated type of instructions to support differing styles of learning; cultural support and need for increasing community involvement; more kindness and sensitivity between and among peers.

Our next steps include facilitating even more student voice, engaging them in solutions and activities intended to address some of the identified issues, sharing this information with school staff and administrators so that they can build and enhance the positive work already underway and strategize and plans tangible and concrete strategies to engage staff and students within the school.

Students identified, in each of the schools and at the board senate. already existing promising practices that their schools are currently doing. We need to find ways to share this information with the school more widely so that we can continue to support those activities that students identify as facilitating well-being, engagement, and support for themselves and their peers within the schools.

It is essential that as we move forward that we explicitly demonstrate that we are addressing the areas identified to build confidence in the process and maintain integrity as a school and board. Every system leads involved is committed to working in schools to support the work moving ahead. We always share with students that we keep what they say confidential and only report key themes. Feedback from students is that they enjoy the opportunity to share. For those of us who have been part of it, comments are that it is empowering to be a part of the process.

We are happy to visit more schools and work with principals and other school staff in engaging in these engagement sessions which have involved the use of circles, ice-breaking activities, lunches. Some principals have already contacted us and plans are underway for more student engagement sessions in March.



# Positive Behaviour Support

By Melissa Bianco, Positive Behaviour Support Lead

Superior-Greenstone District School Board has partnered with Autism Ontario to bring the Picture Exchange Communication System Level One workshop to Thunder Bay on March 6th and 7th. We are very excited that some of our SGDSB parents will be joining our educators in this learning to further support our children who are non-vocal or experience communication challenges. For further information on PECS visit the following link from Pyramid Educational Consultants: [www.pecs-canada.com/pecs.php](http://www.pecs-canada.com/pecs.php)

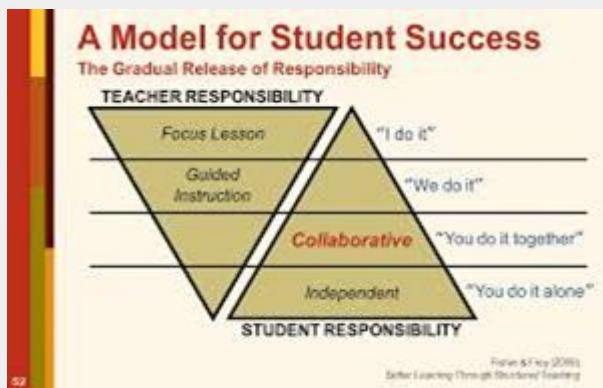


## Assessment Of Basic Language and Learning Skills

The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS) is an educational tool used frequently with applied behaviour analysis to identify student strengths and needs and guide instruction in the areas of language and critical learner skills for children with autism or other developmental disabilities.

In addition to elementary SETs having this training last school year, Lori Perozak-Broennle returned on January 10th to provide training to our primary teachers and system leads. We are excited to continue in this work that will help us to enhance focused, student-centred programming for our young learners with special education needs.

## The Gradual Acceptance of Student Responsibility



Educational Assistants throughout our board joined together through Skype on February 3rd to engage in learning on fostering student independence. Rich discussions were had as EAs from both the elementary and secondary panels shared best practices occurring in our schools and classrooms.

## Transition to the Ontario Autism Program - Focus Group

### Looking for Interested Participants

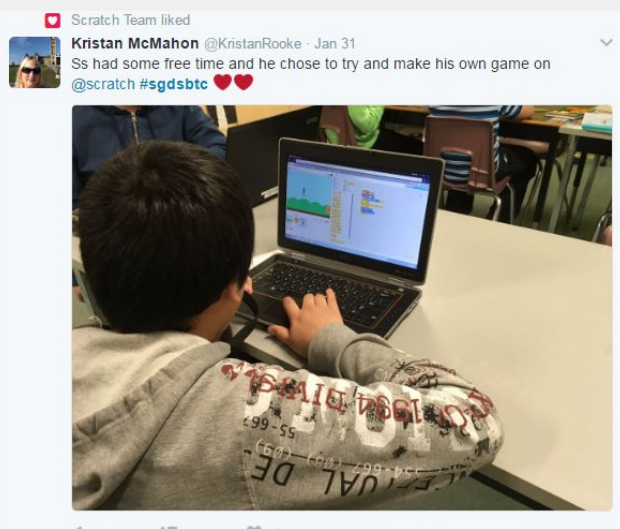
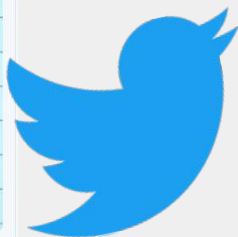
In order to plan our funding targets for the 2017/18 school year I am looking for interested staff as well as parents of children with ASD who would like to engage in discussions to identify our most urgent needs moving forward. Using our board's PPM 140 survey results, we will focus on supporting key transitions from elementary to secondary and secondary to post-secondary.

If you're interested, or know a parent who would be interested, please email me at [mebianco@sgdsb.on.ca](mailto:mebianco@sgdsb.on.ca) or call me at 807-889-1327.



Our Technology Champions using Twitter to share the learning going on in their schools. Connecting and communicating are essential 21st Century competencies and we all get to learn from one another!

Stacey Wallwin  
Technology Enabled Learning and  
Teaching Contact (TELTC)  
[@WallwinS](https://twitter.com/WallwinS)



## Curious About Coding?

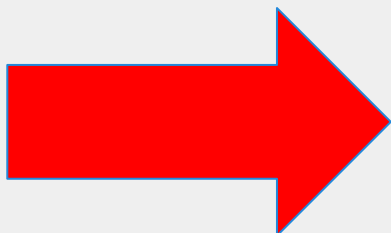
Interested in learning more about coding?  
Curious to see how it supports the curriculum and  
21st century competencies?  
Not sure where to begin? We are having a virtual  
PD session on March 28th at 12:00-3:30 with Lisa  
FLoyd. Ask your admin/Tech Champ to join in!

The **Be a Game Changer Speaker Series 2.0** is underway! These free bi-weekly sessions highlight a different “game changer” in education. Put your feet up, get comfy and listen in! To register, click [here](#). Follow #BEaGC for more learning!

Thank-you to everyone  
who challenged their  
learning and  
participated in the  
**#SGDSBCODES  
Challenge**

27 Teachers  
474 Students

“Preparing students for  
THEIR world”



[https://youtu.be/JG\\_V74ZWDSk](https://youtu.be/JG_V74ZWDSk)





Nicole MordenCormier @NickiMC40 · Feb 4

Proud to work with this group of @SGDSBoard educators as they lead our Small Schools and Make a Big Difference every day! Get To Know Us! [pic.twitter.com/QMmiwuXyR](https://pic.twitter.com/QMmiwuXyR)

## Reporting PD Days: Elementary Principals Professional Development Opportunity

While elementary educators are focused on evaluating and reporting student achievement to families, elementary principals capitalize on the PD Days dedicated to this reporting and engage in principal professional development as a collective. On the February 3 Reporting Day, we launched the day with the opportunity to reflect on the ways in which we support our personal well-being (led by Will Goodman), which activated our thinking around how we can increasingly support both staff and student well-being. The Efficacy Review Framework focused our next work, as small groups generated the look-fors for the areas of focus identified by this process. It was interesting to note that while we have made gains, we are now thinking that we have additional work to accomplish in some of the other areas that had originally been rated as strengths. This is a good sign that our district continues to focus on growth! This conversation led into a presentation by Chris Martin and discussion regarding how we are modelling the Assessment for/as Learning culture as leaders in the School Learning Plan processes. Teams of critical friends then spent time analyzing the evidence that supports their work in leading the instructional program; as we engage in the same learning as that of our educators. These PD Days are extremely valuable for elementary principals as it provides time for us to collaborate, share best practices, and thus more closely align the work that is occurring between our schools to gain greater consistency.



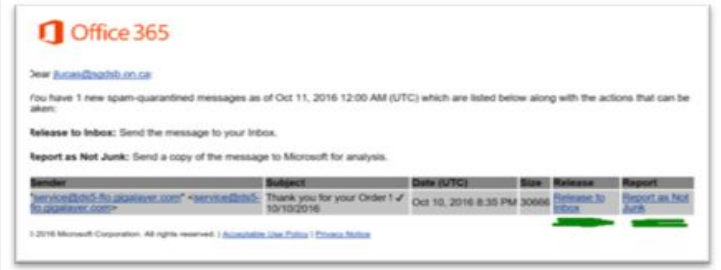
Nicole MordenCormier @NickiMC40 · Feb 8

A huge shout out to our @SGDSBoard Schools as they welcome our new JK registrants! Such an exciting time in our schools! Welcome to all! [pic.twitter.com/ryhIQzBVz](https://pic.twitter.com/ryhIQzBVz)



## Information Technology Update

Submitted by  
Jay Lucas, I.S.P.  
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(807) 229-0436



### Quarantine Spam messages

You have no doubt seen messages in your inbox from quarantine@messaging.microsoft.com. I wanted to alert you that these messages are part of our email system and may require action on your part. These messages may come every few days. They are notifying you of any messages that were thought to be spam and filtered out, but where the system wasn't absolutely confident about it. This message is your opportunity to identify a message or messages that were actually good and that you want to receive. To release a message to your inbox, simply click the "Release to inbox" link after the appropriate message. If you want to make sure that a similar message doesn't get filtered out next time, then you should **also** click the "Report as Not Junk" link for the appropriate message. If the identified messages are all truly junk, then do nothing and they will remain out of your email.



### Texthelp Read & Write is now Available

TextHelp Read & Write has been fully deployed as a desktop application to all teacher and student computers. It is also available as a Chrome browser plug-in. If you find a machine where it is not installed or working, please submit a Helpdesk ticket and include the computer device name, so it can be addressed.

### Smart Learning Suite Licensed Board-Wide

We have a board-wide license for the Smart Learning Suite. Details on the parts of this product as well as teacher resources can be found at

<https://education.smarttech.com/en/products/smart-learning-suite> We have fully deployed SmartNotebook to all teacher computers. If your computer does not have it for some reason, or if you are experiencing any errors, please submit a helpdesk ticket so it can be addressed. For guidance on effectively using a SmartBoard or the SmartNotebook and the rest of the suite, please see your school's Tech Champion.



### SharePoint Setup for Schools

I'd like to invite Principals to contact me about setting up your school's SharePoint space. In short, SharePoint is the future equivalent of your "I:" drive or "Shares". The space offers a wide variety of tools taking it far beyond just a file storage space, but it's best to start with the basics. Items such as Staff Notebook, Announcements, Document Repository, Project collaboration spaces are typical interests.



### iPad App Purchasing Process

The iPad App purchasing process has been posted for reference in the new IT Services SharePoint document space.

<https://sgdsb.sharepoint.com/sites/central/its/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx> Once there, click on the "Purchasing Reference" folder and the draft document is inside. This will be updated as refinements come in from staff. This IT Services library will be continually updated as a replacement for the IT Services folder in the current "Public Folders" section of our email system. Other parts of "Public Folders" are currently being reviewed and structured for a similar move. More details about that will follow when it's ready. If there is an IT Department document or information you'd like to see shared, please let me know.

### Technology in the Classroom

Please be certain that your Principals are aware of your technology needs so that proper planning can be done for the upcoming years. The IT Services coordinator will be meeting with each Principal shortly to establish plans. It's important that we know well in advance of any hardware, software or other technology needs so that spending is allocated as effectively as possible and that we're ready for any opportunities that may arise. Now here's a special bonus I've snuck into this paragraph for those of you who are reading the IT Update section of the newsletter: you may now legally stream the latest movies at your school using a staff computer. We have acquired the extra license to allow movies to be used outside of strictly academic classroom use. So, fundraisers, family movie nights, lunchtime entertainment, and so on are permitted uses. Simply use your Chrome browser to go to <http://streaming.acf-film.com/audiocine> and Enjoy.





“Walking the Line” 2016 by Myshalla Grant. Her other acrylic paintings are pictured below



### **Geraldton Composite High School Students - Recipients of OSSTF Achievement Awards**

Two students, Karli Wight and Myshalla Grant of Geraldton Composite High School are successful receipts of an OSSTF Student Achievement Award. Karli Wright won the District and Regional portion of the Digital Arts category for her video presentation sponsored by Communications Teacher, Rob Haslam. Myshalla Grant won the Regional portion of the Senior Visual Arts category for her mixed media piece sponsored by Art Teacher, Krista Martin. Not only did her piece win at the District and Regional levels, but it won the overall provincial award! Myshalla’s award winning piece, “Walking the Line,” depicts her personal journey of reconciliation with her Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures and beliefs.

Myshalla, along with two family members and teacher, Mrs. Martin will be traveling to Toronto to attend the OSSTF/FEESO’s annual general meeting on Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup>. Here, Myshalla will be joined by seven other provincial award winners to collect their \$1,000 prizes!

Former Geraldton Composite High School students have had great success in the OSSTF Student Achievement Awards. In fact, this is the 18th year in a row that GCHS students have placed first either regionally or provincially in this prestigious contest.

### **Upcoming Events**

- March Break 13-17