



## What's the Scoop? March 2021 Newsletter

### **Administration Message:**

Thank you to all parents and guardians that participated in the Thought Exchange survey process. Our Central Office team is working closely with our School Board trustees, central office leadership and administrators to review the data and begin to shape our School Improvement Plans with your feedback at the forefront of our planning.

In addition to this process, Alberta Education has created an Assurance Survey to replace the Accountability Pillar Survey. All parents and guardians of our grade four and seven students will receive a letter in the mail with an access code for you to complete the survey. Please watch the mail for this important letter. We encourage you to participate so we know what we are doing well and where we need to continue to grow. It opens March 25, 2021.

Our grade four and seven students will also complete the survey when they return from Spring Break. Our teachers will also participate in the survey.

We are awaiting the government to release the funding handbook and division's budget allocation on March 31, 2021 so that we can begin the process for budgeting for next year. We will be discussing this at our next few School Council meetings, so I encourage you to join us to hear more. Please see our [school website](#) for the agenda and minutes of our meetings. Our next meeting is April 14th via [google meet](#)!

From your admin team,

Jody Beck & Stephanie Damery

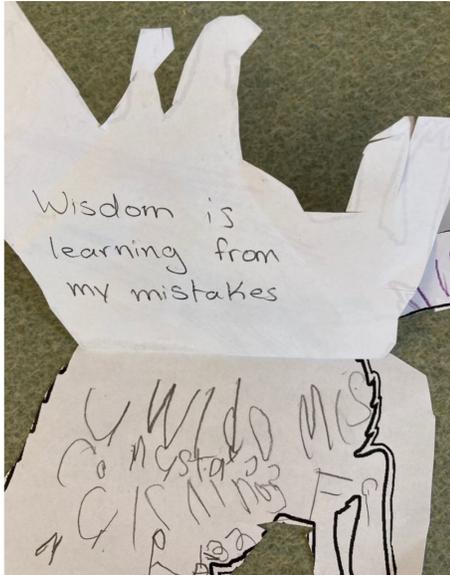
### **Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments**

In March, we focused on WISDOM. Next month, we will focus on TRUTH.

During March, our amazing Grade 7 leadership team had a 'riddle of the day' for St. Patrick's day and Spring break. They provided the riddles from March 15 to March 25 that were shared over morning announcements. Students had a chance to win a small prize. We awarded one prize for the correct answer and one prize for a creative answer. It has been so much fun!!

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## March Highlights



Happy St. Patrick's Day!!



Grade 3 Fun

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### A Season of Grief, Loss and Hope

This may appear to be a depressing start to an article that should be uplifting, but please be patient, and read on. Yes, it is the beautiful season of spring...however it is also a season of grieving. All of us caregivers, educators, coaches and helpers have tried so very hard this past year, to be positive and hopeful. We are now at the anniversary of a year defined by losses, some great, some some small. I believe it is the time to allow our children to GRIEVE. It is time to give our children the opportunity to talk, to cry, to mourn, and to be angry. It is frightening to hear such a suggestion. What if they start crying and not stop? What if they stay sad and depressed forever?

What I know of grief, on a personal level, is this: Like physical pain, grief is best faced head on. Not to stuff it, ignore it, numb it, or deny it. With deep loss, it may feel as if we will actually die ourselves should we let ourselves feel the full extent of that loss. Yet, when we put a name to grief, call it what it is, we allow the feelings to happen which will eventually evolve into empowerment.

David Kessler is the world's foremost expert on grief and the founder of [www.grief.com](http://www.grief.com). He co-wrote "On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss" with Psychiatrist Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. Kessler explains that when we are dealing with a loss, it is important to acknowledge it, learn to manage it and learn to find meaning from it.

For children, the five stages of grief they may have experienced this past year look like this: **DENIAL** (*this virus won't affect my friends and I*), **ANGER** (*COVID has taken away my sports and music and cancelling grad*), **BARGAINING** (*okay, if I wear a mask all day, it will get better*), **DEPRESSION/SADNESS** (*this is how everything is going to be forever*) **ACCEPTANCE** (*I guess this is really happening, I better figure out how to move on, within provincial regulations*).

## What's the Scoop? March 2021 Newsletter

Kessler tells us that it is *in acceptance where the power lies*. He reminds us that the stages are not linear or even happen in order, oftentimes we circle back and repeat a stage.

Once we have allowed our children to process their grief, there will come a time of acceptance. When our children are able to accept this past year of losses for what it is, then, my dear friends, they will have hope. Brene Brown's words of wisdom seems fitting: "*When we deny the story, it defines us. When we own the story, we can write a brave new ending*".

I am finding that spring 2021 seems to be bringing more hope than most years. Perhaps it is just me, but doesn't it seem as though the sun is brighter, the birds more cheerful, the sky more blue? With anticipation of normalcy on the horizon, it feels as though the weight of the past year and the dreariness of the long winter months are being lifted from our weary shoulders.

Our children need us to be the safe sanctuary as they grieve the many losses of this last year and they also need us to point their sweet faces to the warmth of the rising sun and share with them the message that all hard times come to an end, giving way to the promise of better days ahead. While they need us to help them name, navigate and process their grief, they also need us to embrace this season of hope. As a Buddhist Monk, Thich Nhat Hanh once said "*if we believe tomorrow will be better, we can bear the hardships of today*".

**Wishing all Northern Gateway Public School Division students, families  
and staff a wonderful Easter break.**



This article was submitted by Tammy Charko BA, BSW, RSW. Tammy is Northern Gateway Public School's Student Support Facilitator. She advocates for students and parents, providing a link to other supports within the community.

Tammy has been a social worker for over 20 years and is a mother to 4 teenagers.



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There have been a few updates made to ensure we are following the updated directions regarding COVID guidelines please check out the information in our [NGPS COVID 19 Handbook](#).

