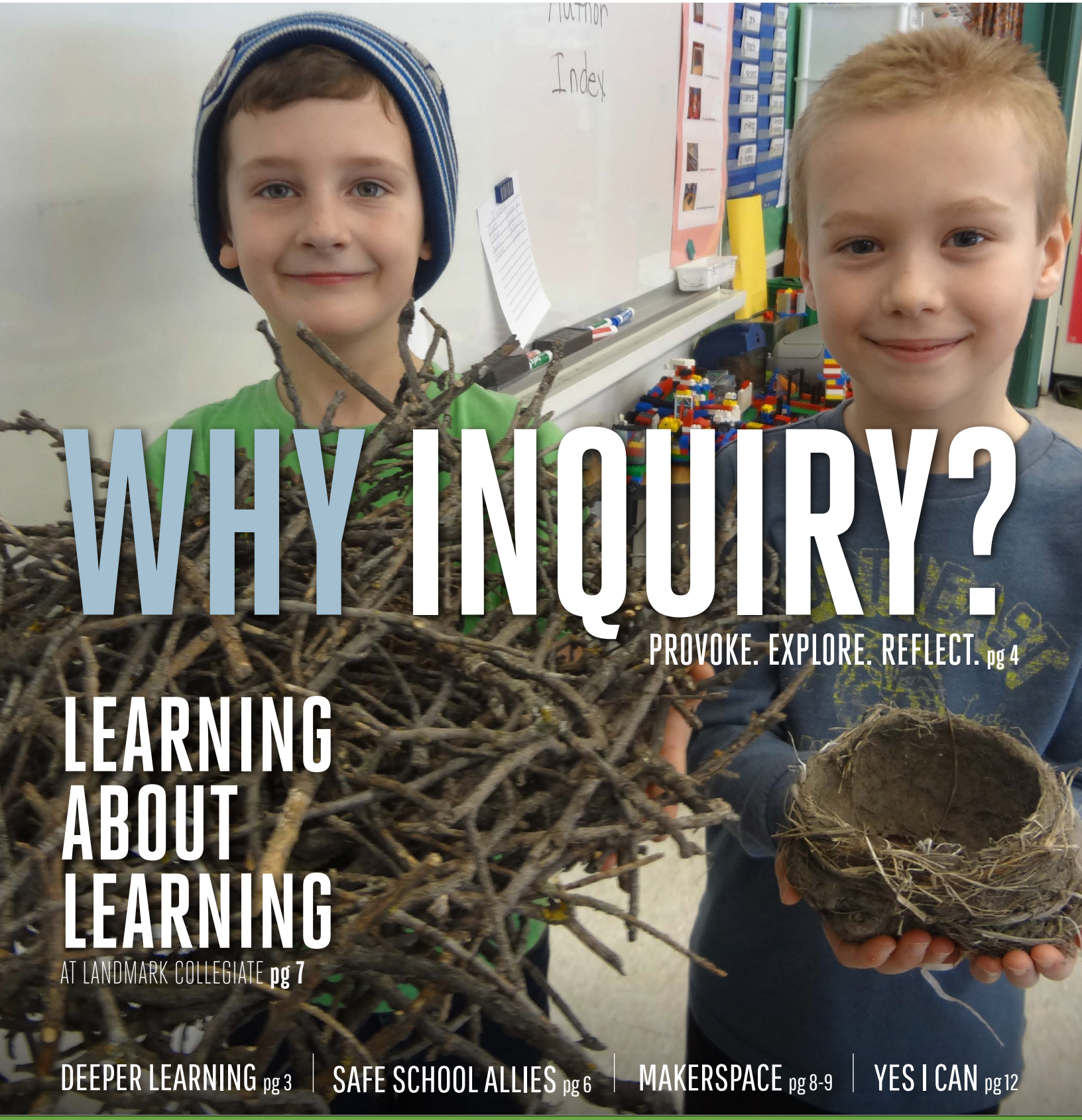
LEARNING MATTERS

2016 MARCH EDITION

Divisional Magazine of the HSD Superindendent's Office
Randy Dueck · Chris Gudziunas · Rick Ardies



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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

HOW DO I LEARN?

I wonder about how I learn things as a fifty-something year-old adult. Do I only choose to learn when presented with a problem? Do I choose to learn for fun? For curiosity? For my job? What provokes me to learn?

I've been thinking about this lately and I can come up with all kinds of provocations for my learning. I do my best to learn when presented with problems because in many cases it is my job to do so, I want to find a way to help solve them. I do my best to learn when I think I need to improve my skills or my knowledge in order to achieve a potential goal. Some of my learning does come just for fun; because I am interested or curious about something. In all cases, whether for good or for ill, my learning seems to be provoked by something. Provocation, in all of the constructive aspects of the word, seems to be a normal starting point for my own learning to occur.

Once I am sufficiently provoked, I start to check out the situation. I may Google it if seems to be something Google-able. I ask people a lot of questions, either by speaking with them directly or sending them an email. And when I get answers to those questions I often test them out by asking others what they think about the answers I have received. Alternatively, I test them out by trying to apply them to slightly altered situations to see if they will hold up. Sometimes, it does not take very long at all for me to think I have learned something, but at other times I will spend years testing and trying and seeing if the solution holds up or if I can actually develop some level of skill. I am an explorer and I have always known that exploration is a critical component of my learning experiences. Maybe it is for you too.

Sometimes the exploration piece is the end of my learning, maybe too often. But when I learn at my deepest I chew on my learning. I think about it, I question it, I test it out further, I try it out in different situations, and I apply new challenges against it. I learn deepest when I reflect on my learning. And this short introduction is a great example of that. As I sit here and type I am thinking; "Does this really hold true for me?" and, "Would this apply to others as well?", and, "Am I learning by inquiry?"

I believe that most of my true learning in my everyday life comes about as a result of inquiry. And I suppose that the most powerful learning that any of us will ever do comes as a result of inquiry. If that is the case, I think it is worth it for us to be provoked to explore inquiry learning further for Our Kids.

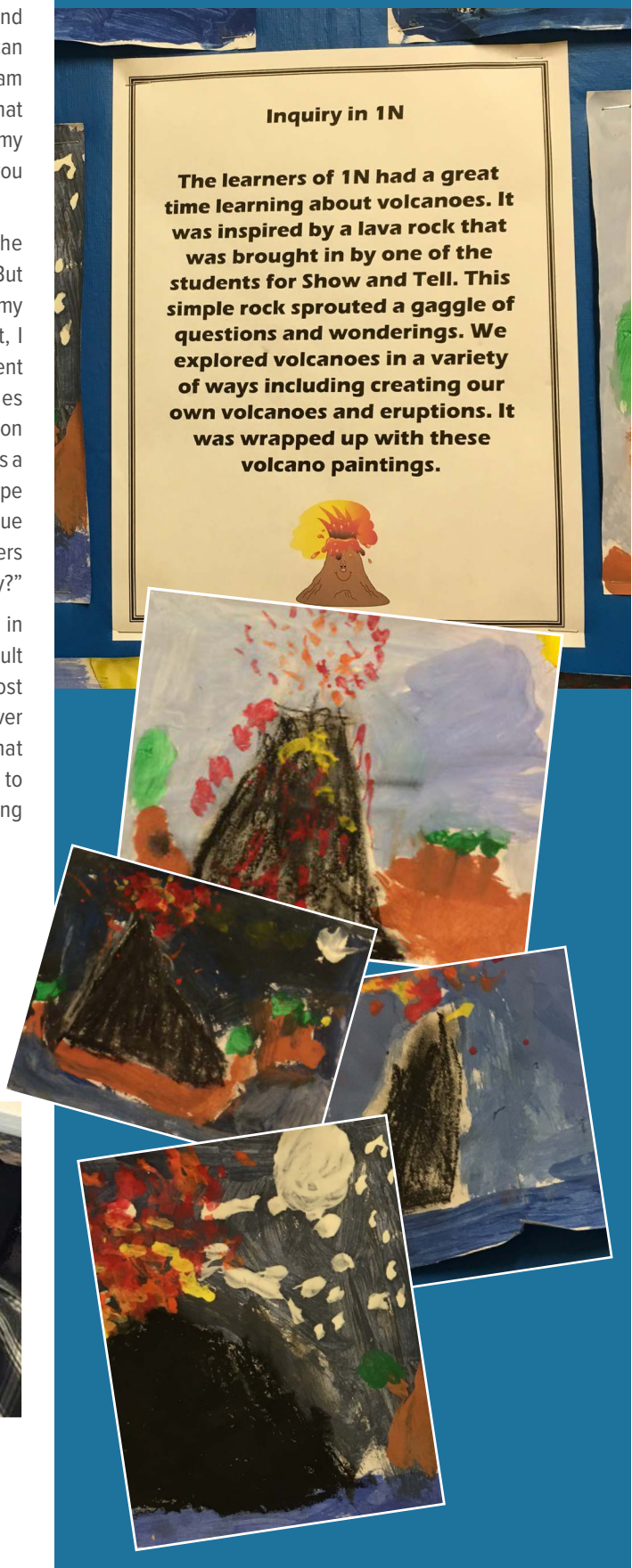
With gratitude,

Randy Dueck, Superintendent, CEO
Hanover School Division

Principals Experience Inquiry-Based Learning.

IN OUR SCHOOLS

VOLCANIC INQUIRY at MES



DEEPER LEARNING at Elmdale School

Elmdale students arrived at school one morning, to see Conservation workers removing a tree near our school playground. Students in grade 2 spent part of that morning observing and asking questions as Conservation workers removed a tree that was infected with Dutch Elm disease. The students noticed two bird nests in the tree and asked the workers if our school could have the nests. Michael and Jared, the Conservation workers, were very informative as they answered questions and showed us the equipment they needed to do their jobs. Michael had to maneuver the bucket so as to reach the crow's nest at the very top of the tree! Once back in the classroom, we had many questions about the nests.

We then asked Adam Collicutt, a Park Interpreter from Manitoba Conservation, to visit us so that we could learn more about the nests and the birds that built them. Along with answering our questions about the nests, Adam also taught us a lot about owls in Manitoba.

Students commented,

"There is a tiny owl that is really little. It is only 17cm tall!"

"Owls have one ear that is lower and one ear that is higher on their head to help them hear better."

"The robin uses mud to make their nests but the crow just uses a pile of sticks!"

The bird nests have inspired a lot of learning!

- Melissa Fry, Elmdale School

GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER at SMS

The Youth Bio Lab at the St. Boniface Research Centre, provided an opportunity for the 8M science class of Stonybrook Middle School to spend time in an authentic medical lab setting. Students were able to engage in activities from cell growth and division to heart dissections, to get their hands right in there and see how researchers worked.

The 8M class also had an opportunity to have a tour of the St. Boniface Research Centre and discuss some of the exciting career possibilities in the field of science and research. Here are some of the students' thoughts and feelings from this experience and what they enjoyed most:

"It was fun looking and seeing how my heart functions."

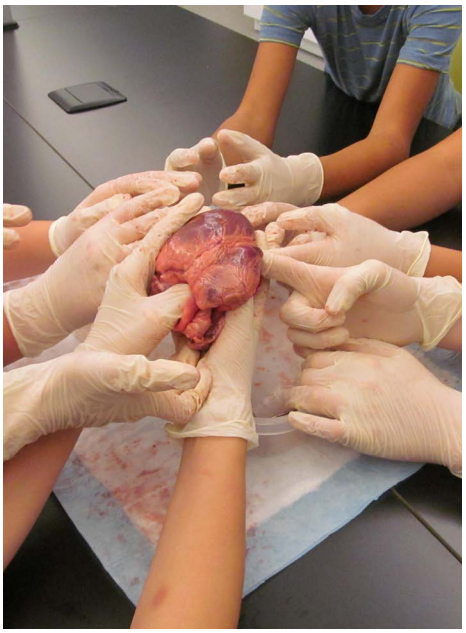
"Dissecting a pig's heart - I had a really fun time cutting, touching and discovering it!"

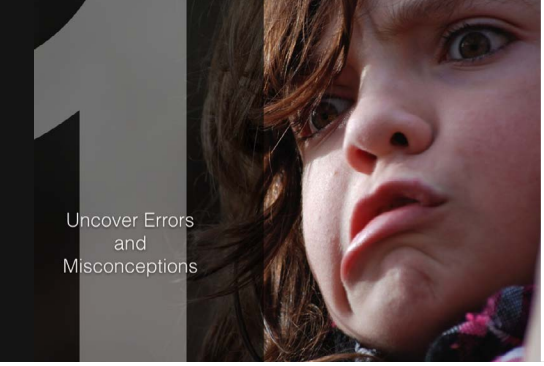
"This trip has made me more interested in a career in things to do with biology."

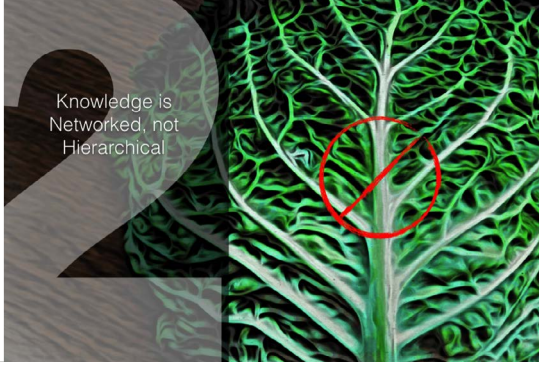
"I loved the trip to the Bio Lab. I learned a lot of interesting facts and things about cells and living things."

"It was a good opportunity for me, since I like to pursue a career as a surgeon or doctor."

- Al Harder, Stonybrook Middle School







FEATURE ARTICLE

WHY INQUIRY?

On the first day of school the students walked into class. The walls were bare. Each desk had only a paper and pencil. The teacher asked all the students to write down any questions they have about their world or about themselves. When one student sheepishly asked: "Can we write silly questions?" the teacher answered that any question about their world or about themselves was fair game. Then they organized all their questions into lists that touched on related themes or ideas. The teacher's command of the curriculum was such that, at the end of the exercise, the students had recreated the Math, Science, ELA, Social Studies, etc. curricula couched as personal questions. We'll come back to this.

By now everyone in Hanover School Division has heard of the Deeper Learning Plan and you've seen the corresponding visual circle. At the centre is Our Kid; the "Why" of the plan. The second ring focuses on the question of: "How do we achieve Deeper Learning?" That centre ring is composed of the four design elements of Deeper Learning and the one we're trying to focus on first is Pedagogical Practices; specifically, Inquiry/Enquiry. There's a subtle difference in the meaning of inquiry vs. enquiry; that's why I choose to spell it "enquiry". It's a subtle but important difference for me.

Inquiry connotes an investigation where we'll be officially questioned in a specific process; someone else asks the questions. ("There will be an inquiry into this matter.")

Enquiry connotes us being curious and asking questions ourselves. ("Let me enquire into that.") I'm going for that second set of connotations. Regardless of your preferred choice of terminology, in broad strokes, enquiry is comprised of the following three phases: Provoke :: Explore :: Reflect.

It turns out that Enquiry Learning is a powerful pedagogical practice because these three phases align with how people learn.

1. Provoke

A learning provocation helps to uncover what students already know; their preconceptions, which include both their understandings and their misunderstandings. New learning has to be connected to previous learning in some way and so this is where we start.

2. Explore

In the explore phase we help each other develop rich networked understandings of ideas. Knowledge more closely resembles networks than hierarchies. At a recent PD Day I talked about the idea of 3/4. If you list all the possible meanings of 3/4 it may include fractions, decimals, percents, coins, cakes or pies, ratios, etc.

> "In the explore phase we help each other develop rich networked understandings of ideas."

The way we make sense of these meanings is from the context in which they arise. (Are we sharing a pie? Is there a 75% off sale? Did I owe you a few coins?) Enquiry learning involves making these implied contexts explicit.

3. Reflect

Finally, we reflect on what we think we've learned. While experience is critical for learning, as John Dewey said, we do not learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience. i.e. metacognition.

Let's revisit that classroom I talked about above. Do you see ways in which the teacher might uncover the students preconceptions? How they might connect ideas together to develop a networked understanding of the curriculum?

We don't know yet whether or not the students will reflect on their learning. But if they don't reflect on their learning in some way, neither they nor their teacher will know whether or not they've learned it. Reflection helps make learning sticky.

- Darren Kuropatwa
Director of Learning

Find out more about how people learn.
j.mp/ppllearn

Watch New Pedagogies
j.mp/newpdg

IN OUR SCHOOLS

INNOVATION WEEK at the SRSS

For a five day period, SRSS teachers coordinated 580 full-day learning activities with their classes. One teacher, one class, working on one subject all day.

Several sources were influential in creating this initiative. One factor was teacher concern that our students missed a lot of classes for learning trips. Several teachers had seen schools that dedicated a longer block of time to a specific period, reducing time lost to other teachers' trips. A second stream of information came from the outstanding success of the 2015 Artsapalooza event that the Fine and Performing Arts teachers organized to showcase student learning—we wanted to find a way other teachers could be equally innovative in showcasing learning. A third influence was our School Plan; I recall sitting around a table last year connecting our School Plan to the development of HSD's Deeper Learning Plan and recognizing a confluence of ideas that a full day dedicated to exploring a subject with one group of students could create. We began to see Innovation Week as a way to set conditions for teachers and students to collaborate and solve difficult problems.

Highlights

Teachers planned a range of activities that reflected as much about their personalities as it did about their subject area. The English teachers mixed classes together and ran a series of topic-focused workshops. Other teachers kept their class together for the entire day and used the lunch meal to develop community and meet a curricular outcome. Robert Warkentin and Pearl Knutson arranged 65 buses for transportation; no small accomplishment. We expect the diversity of trips to increase as we learn what others have been doing –to that end Werner Pries set up a Google Community page where teachers posted pictures and descriptions of what they were doing.

Benefits

Many of the initiatives we are implementing as educators focus on developing broad skills we believe students will need in a changing world, and trying to engage a population judged to be uninterested in school. We are attempting to find ways to tap into an intrinsic interest in learning. Innovation Week was a way to shake up the routine of school, to set the conditions for creative and collaborative education, and to make it easier for students to engage in their education.

- Thor Barkman
Steinbach Regional Secondary School

BOOK REVIEW

BOOKSHELF SUPER's PICK

The Innovator's Mindset: Empower Learning, Unleash Talent, and Lead a Culture of Creativity

By George Couros - 2015

Over the past year, many of us have had the opportunity to hear George Couros present at the HSD Superintendents' PD Day. Just recently, George published his first book, titled, The Innovator's Mindset: Empower Learning, Unleash Talent, and Lead a Culture of Creativity. In this book, Couros takes a much more in-depth look at many of the topics on which we have previously heard him speak. The Innovator's Mindset is a book about recognizing change as an opportunity to do something amazing. It is about how we can make the most of learning to create meaningful change and provide better opportunities in our schools. Couros defines innovation as "a way of thinking that creates something new and better". I love the way George focuses on how we can make sure that we are doing the very best we can for all of our kids. He begins his inquiry with the simple question: "What is best for this learner?" (p. 21). His focus consistently ensures that innovation is all about our kids. An innovator's mindset, Couros writes, encompasses the idea of a growth mindset, and takes it one step further. He includes the ideas that not only can abilities, intelligences and talents all be developed, but they can be developed so that they lead to the creation of new and better ideas. Couros identifies and describes eight characteristics of an innovator's mindset. Innovators are: empathetic, problem finders/solvers, risk-takers, networked, observant, creators, resilient and reflective. He recognizes that these qualities should describe all learners in our schools, regardless of age of role. In order to teach students to be innovative, we must have innovative teachers. He then goes on to list eight practices that characterize innovative classrooms: students should have voice, choice and time for reflection; we should see connected learning, opportunities for innovation, and self-assessment; our students should be learning to be problem solvers and critical thinkers. The Innovator's Mindset is a helpful book. The layout first defines innovation, then describes how to begin working towards it, and finally goes over the type of leadership required to carry out a transition to innovative classrooms. There are many ideas that will resonate well with teachers and school-based leaders alike. Of particular note, the Innovator's Mindset is a great resource for our Deeper Learning plan, as Couros explores teaching and learning focused on the same 6C's that we identify in "Our Kid" . If you have appreciated hearing George Couros speak in the past, you will certainly enjoy The Innovator's Mindset.

- Rick Ardies
Assistant Superintendent

IN OUR SCHOOLS

SAFE SCHOOL ALLIES

Harnessing Student Power at CMS

Over the years of talking with students and reviewing their surveys, I hear over and over again that students are most likely to go to peers before coming to adults with concerns. In an effort to support our students, we often establish programs that are geared at having them come to adults. This year at CMS, we decided to try something different. We have started what we call Safe School Allies. Rather than trying to reprogram students to come to adults first, we are embracing the power that students already have to support each other. Since we opened three years ago, it has been a top priority for us that students feel safe here. We're not always sure how we're doing with that.

Enter, the Safe School Allies. To form the ally team, students in each classroom used a private nomination form to identify three people whom they see as trustworthy – peers that would "have their back". From this group, students were selected so that the various demographics of our school population would be well-represented; we want everyone's voice to be heard. The purpose of the allies is two-fold: to train and support students to support each other when feeling mistreated, and to use student voice to affect change.

In our conversations with allies, students identified that safety is not simply about not feeling bullied, it's about feeling like you belong. When we truly feel that we belong, we fit, and we matter, then we begin to truly feel safe. We are regularly meeting with the allies to hear from them regarding what the ideal school would be, how we are doing, and what we can do together to get closer to that ideal. Yes, having the confidence and skills to stand up to

mistreatment is important, but we believe it's not enough. We look forward to spending the year working with the Safe School Allies, and hearing more from them about how we can grow a school where everyone feels safe to learn, and safe to thrive!

- Cyndy Ganz
Clearspring Middle School

DISCOVERY LEARNING at MES

Just outside our Kindergarten window is the tree our class has been observing throughout the year. We've seen the leaves change colour and drop in the fall. We observed that the berries remained as winter began. In January, the students noticed a flock of birds visiting the tree and eating the berries.

We wondered what type of birds we were seeing and discussed how we could find out. Our impromptu discussion led to the discovery that these were Waxwings. After a few days of observing the birds we realized that the berries would soon be gone! With the concern that the birds would also leave, a student suggested we make bird feeders to continue attracting the birds. This led us to exploring features of bird feeders and, as a class, we developed some simple criteria for designing and building our own birdhouses. The students drew plans and brought recyclable materials from home to create their own birdhouses. We filled them with food and hung them on the tree. Then we waited... After a few anxious days of waiting and observing the tree, we were ECSTATIC to see new birds at our feeders! This led to further discussions about types of birds, what they eat and the effectiveness of our initial designs. Some students even chose to adapt their feeders to make them better.

This student-driven project took several weeks to unfold and was not initially part of my original theme planning for January. However, it was evident through the student's enthusiasm, wonderings, observations and problem solving that deeper learning was occurring. It continues to occur every day as the students eagerly gather around the window to make new observations.

- Audrey Kampen
Mitchell Elementary School

LEARNING ABOUT LEARNING

at Landmark Collegiate

Several years ago my teaching partner and I began to talk about inquiry-based learning, although at the time we were unaware of that term. Our classes were filled with inquisitive students. Student's interests were sparked by what was being taught in the classroom; they wanted to learn more and we wanted to give them more. Unfortunately, for many reasons, it never got beyond the 'talk'. But it was the beginning of a new way of thinking for me. How do I engage students further in their learning, while still trying to cover what was professionally expected me as a subject teacher?

"Fast forward to 2016 and it is happening at Landmark Collegiate."

With full support of our school administration, Jennifer Hashemian and myself began to embrace the idea of wanting to bring our students into 'deeper learning'. For this to happen, it meant a self-reflection of what we individually valued in learning and to come to a consensus of what that would mean for our grade 8 students. This provided us with a starting point for many things: a rearrangement of our grade 8 schedules, a regrouping of our students to ensure that students were placed in groups where they could collaborate more effectively with each other and learn in ways that the previous groupings were not providing, and more opportunities to be involved with the students in learning environments that are both engaging and personalized for students. Both Jennifer and I have had the opportunity to visit other schools in British Columbia and in Minneapolis to see what inquiry learning looks like for them.

"We have introduced advisory groups where students plan their day..."

We have been able to bring many of these ideas back into our classroom, tweaking things to make them fit a bit better for us. We have introduced advisory groups where students plan their day, 'flex' time that builds in time management skills allowing them to choose what they want to work on in their subject assignments and projects, 'seminar' time that involves direct teaching of specific learning objectives, and scheduled conversations between us and students about their learning.

For this to be successful, it has required many hours of collaboration with Jennifer and other colleagues, a lot of reading about inquiry-based learning, and a change of mindset for me as a veteran teacher. Some ideas have worked, others have flopped, and some need to be further refined. While my personal learning curve has been steep, the rewards have been worth it. I am seeing the value of inquiry-based learning as it supports the development of students as citizens to become critical thinkers, effective communicators, and prepares them to be personally and socially competent learners in this 21st century.

- Linda Suderman
Landmark Collegiate

Join on Twitter @HanoverSD

IN OUR SCHOOLS

MAKING AT WOODLAWN

The Beginning of a Makerspace

"Every child has the right to invent, tinker, create, innovate, make, and do." *Laura Fleming*

In school I was always an average student. I was a good student. I didn't find school particularly exciting. It wasn't until I was in my final practicum year of Education when I had an emotional realization about my school years. I met a kindergarten teacher and I went to visit her classroom. She was telling me about the students in her class. As she was going through her list she told me which students were 'beige' students. I thought to myself, 'beige students?' I had no idea what a beige student was. She told me that 'beige students were the kids who just blended in. There was nothing substantial about them. They were good kids. They were average. They were just there.' I remember feeling utter shock. I felt sad and angry that anyone could refer to children in this way. But then it hit me. 'I' was a beige student growing up. I was the kid that was just there. The good kid. The kid who never complained. The kid who never got to explore her true passions and share her creativity. I was beige...

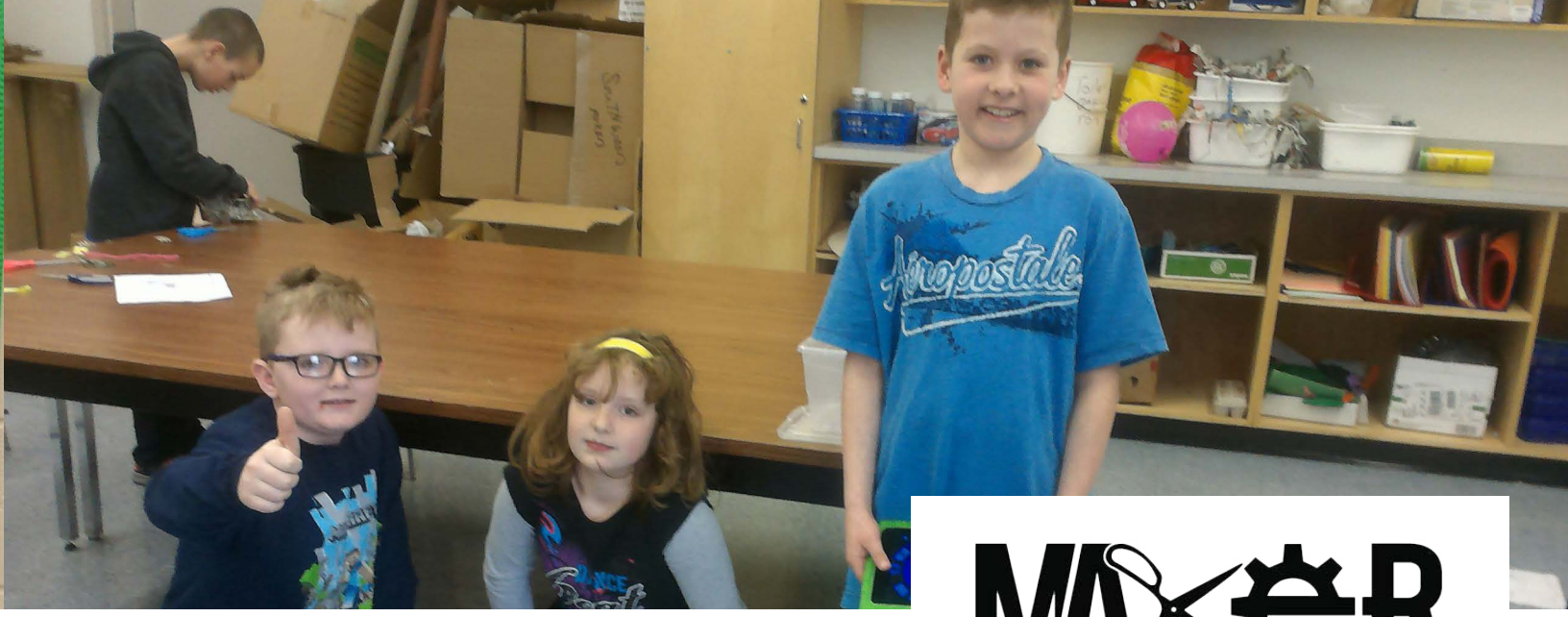
This term has really stuck with me over the last few years. Not because I think it is a term that deserves any attention, but because I told myself that I would never let any of my students feel like they are 'beige'.

The reason I feel that this is an important part of my life to share is because the Maker movement is all about engaging students and helping to foster their creativity. I never had the opportunity to share my true colours with my teachers and classmates. I have always thought that I was a creative person. Unfortunately I wasn't given the opportunities in school to showcase my creativity.

Let's move on to the Maker movement and why Makerspaces are spaces where kids can shine and share their colours with the world! A Makerspace can be a place for students to share their creativity and explore their passions. It allows children to use collaboration and imaginative play to explore Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM skills). Simply put, it is a learning environment rich with possibilities. Over the last few months I have read many articles about Makerspaces. Something that has really stuck with me is that, a collection of tools does not define a Makerspace. It is defined by what it enables: making. This is so important to remember, especially during the initial planning and setup of a makerspace. Our Makerspace at Woodlawn will be a place where students and adults can come together to use different materials to develop creative projects. It will be a space where children can learn through play and can explore their passions. Children will also have access to a wide range of technology and will learn skills such as coding, video production and programming. As a school we have some goals for starting out our Makerspace. But we must remember to be flexible and able to adapt to the needs and wants of our learners. This space will reflect the different ways in which our students learn.

Every classroom has the possibility to be a Makerspace, where students have the materials, support and time to learn by doing (makerspaceaustralia.com). When given tools, materials and guidance, children become risk takers and creative problem solvers. Collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving are vital in a child's growth and development. A Makerspace allows children the freedom to explore, invent, create, and make. It allows them to be anything but beige. It allows them to be colourful.

- Amanda Cipriano
Woodlawn School



IN OUR SCHOOLS

DEEPER LEARNING
in the Southwood Makerspace

Over the course of the school year, the Southwood Deeper Learning team has launched a Makerspace for the school. Fundamentally, this place is an opportunity for deeper learning for our students.

The students come to the Makerspace ready to rise to a challenge. Their responses to the challenge cross the curriculum. A makerspace challenge involves a process that includes questioning, designing, perfecting, sharing, and reflecting. During this process, you would expect to see the students displaying the important characteristics of Our Kid.

Consider one example. At the beginning of February, the grade 4 students were asked to design a carriage to be pulled behind a Sphero to transport a small stuffed toy approximately 3 meters in a straight line. The students demonstrated collaboration, communication, character, and most of all, creativity as they worked with their partners to draft the design that they thought would best answer the challenge.

As the students constructed, tested, and perfected their designs, the learning and critical thinking was clearly demonstrated in the modifications they made as their ideas proved partially successful or completely unsuccessful.

Makerspace projects provide a tremendous opportunity to teach about character. This is as much a part of the challenge as the actual project. The students have a chance to show their determination. What can they do when a design glitch is causing frustration? What can you do so that all the good ideas from your team are included? What if you are having a difficult time working with members of your team? The responses to these real challenges connect to lessons in patience, perseverance, and empathy.

As the grade 4's concluded their project, the real deeper learning took place. The students had an opportunity to explain their projects to visiting trustees and to answer their questions. This provoked thinking about their designs as they respond to questions asked from an outsider's perspective. As well, the concluding reflection after they have demonstrated their creations got them thinking about successes they accomplished and why they worked so well, and glitches that they would have changed or would do differently next time.

The Southwood Makerspace is a novel learning environment. It compels engagement because the students have a chance to work with materials that may not typically be found in the classroom. They are anxious to get hands-on with materials like cardboard, Lego, wood, craft supplies, plastics, basic tools, and more. The students are also able to demonstrate their learning with engaging technology. From a green screen studio, to dedicated iPads, to the plug and play MakeyMakey, to building circuits with LittleBits, the students have a number of captivating technologies to explore and discover with.

The Southwood Makerspace started within teachers' comfort zones as a sort of "craft project" room where students would come and simply follow the steps of a procedure towards a common final product. Engaging, yes, but it would not facilitate true deeper learning. Now, the makerspace is starting to live up to its potential as a place of inquiry learning.

- Bret Johnson
Southwood School

INQUIRY; A Learning Space for All

- Val Schellenberg
Learning Coach

In our diverse classrooms, we are always looking for ways to enhance learning for all. Differentiating our instruction and learning tasks is effective and expected practice in our classrooms. But, is there a way to make learning truly student centered and accessible to all?

When unit/lesson planning, we are all familiar with a framework similar to the 4As: Activate, Acquire, Apply, Assess. However, within all the diligent teacher planning, is there a way to plan for less 'teacher talk' and more 'student directed' learning? The Inquiry approach provides a framework to encourage more student thinking and less 'teacher as expert' talk.

'Provoke, Explore, Reflect' are three phases of one type of Inquiry framework. Creating an intriguing Provocation is similar to the Activating phase that we are familiar with. A Provocation that is highly visual will be the most accessible and comprehensible starting point for all learners. After the teacher's Provocation, the Explore phase turns the learning over to the students by asking them to:

1. Think and talk about their observations and wonderings arising from the Provocation, in pairs or small groups
2. Make their thinking visible by recording their wonderings and questions
3. Explore the questions they are most interested in.

This phase of the learning sequence is inherently inclusive and student centered; creating a space for all students to begin their new learning from where they are at in their background knowledge, within their current skills and abilities, in whatever language they use to do their best thinking. How the new learning will unfold will depend on the depth of the questions and the strategies used by individuals, pairs or small groups to Explore the questions and insights generated.

Diverse thinking, *skills*, abilities, talents and languages can thrive here. The resulting Reflection and sharing of learning will be enriching for all. Watt & Colyer, IQ A Practical Guide to Inquiry-based Learning, (2014), suggest the following: "Thinking begins with respect to some content only when questions are generated by both teachers and students. No questions equals no understanding. Superficial questions equals superficial understanding." Paul and Elder, Critical Thinking (2000)

Developing effective inquiry questions. A good question…

- Is an invitation to think (not recall, summarize, or detail).
- Comes from genuine curiosity and confusion about the world.
- Makes you think about something in a way you never considered before.
- Invites both deep thinking and deep feelings.
- Leads to more good questions.
- Asks you to think critically, creatively, ethically, productively, and reflectively about essential ideas in a discipline.
- Is open-ended; typically there is no final, correct answer.
- Points towards important, transferable ideas within (and sometimes across) disciplines.
- Requires support and justification; not just an answer.
- Recurs over time; the question should be revisited.

McTighe and Wiggins, Essential Questions (2013)
John Barell, Developing More Curious Minds (2003)

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

edpuzzle.com zaption.com

Interactive Video Learning Platforms

- Anne Reimer, Learning Coach

Students are consumers (and creators) of visual text. Teachers have long leveraged that to engage students as a class, but haven't always been able to gauge the impact of a specific video or to follow up effectively to see if the intended learning had occurred for all students. The two apps featured this month are tools that allow teachers to make any video clip interactive, thereby increasing the levels of an individual student's engagement and accountability. EDpuzzle and Zaption allow teachers to select or upload a video, add interactive components such as questions for students to answer as they are watching, then track individual progress, responses and reflections after the fact. Both can be used online or on Android and iOS devices.

EDpuzzle is a free app that works seamlessly with google accounts. Teachers can import a video, trim it to show only what they want students to focus on, record an intro or audio comments at specific parts of the video, embed questions to check for understanding at certain parts of the video, or provide additional images or links.

Zaption's free version is similar to EDpuzzle, but has a few more useful features in its paid version. Most notable is the Presenter mode, which allows a teacher to show the video to the entire class all at once, yet have students interact with the video individually on their devices.

Whether you are looking to encourage more reflective thinking among students as they watch a video at their own pace, wanting to do some differentiated and formative assessment with individual students, or are experimenting with flipping your classroom, check out either of these apps. Both have excellent tutorials that will have you creating your first interactive lesson within minutes.

Zaption EDpuzzle

SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

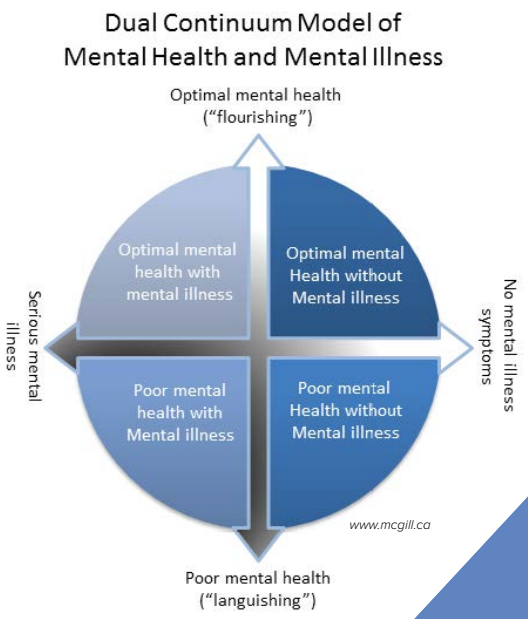
- Corinne Thiessen
Learning Coach

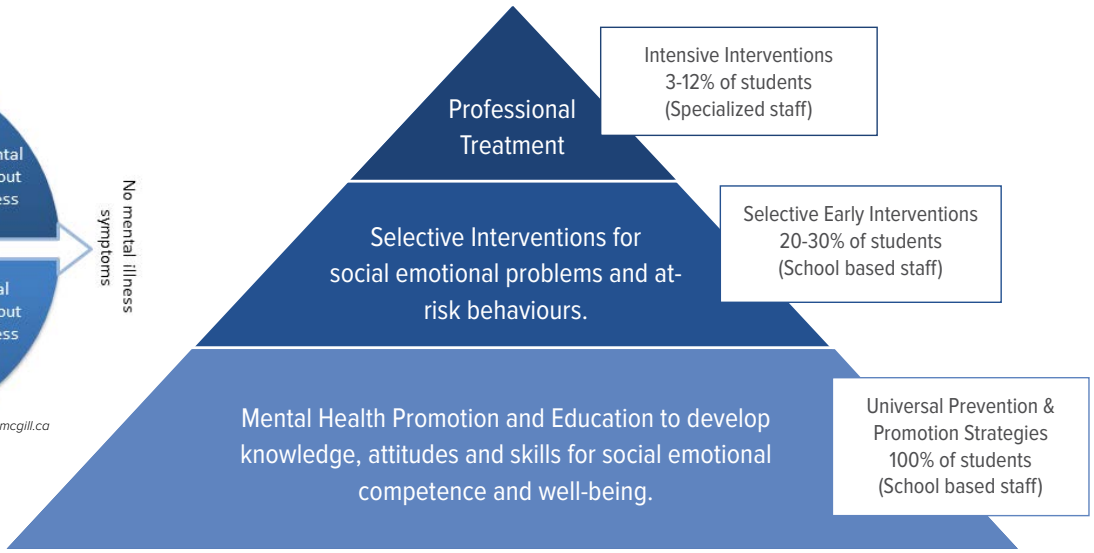
How do we know when a student needs help? How do we know when a student needs care beyond that which we can give or offer at school? How do we respond to our students in need? According to HSD's Youth Health Survey results in 2012, only 57 % of students reported flourishing mental health. Did they understand the question? Are they really not "okay"? And, are WE okay with only slightly more than half of our Grade 7-12 students not flourishing in their mental health? We shouldn't be! Teaching today goes way beyond delivering the provincial curriculum and requires us to meet the needs of the whole child.

Sarah is crying. She is fourteen years old and has just lost her father to a heart attack. She is extremely sad and does not want to go to school, does not want to be with her friends, and spends most of the time in her bedroom. Her mother is trying to reach out to her, but cannot seem to console her. Her teacher is also concerned, but is unsure of his role in helping Sarah. Is Sarah clinically depressed or is she simply trying to navigate her way through mental distress? How does her teacher go about helping her?

Since students spend a huge portion of their time in school, our school communities are a natural and integral venue for mental health education and promotion. Recently, HSD established a Mental Health Steering Committee which created a document entitled, "A Framework for Mental Health Education and Promotion in the Hanover School Division". The purpose of this document is to have schools be a part of fostering flourishing mental health for all students. The Dual Continuum Model explains that one can experience flourishing mental health even with a mental illness, and one without a mental illness can also experience languishing mental health.

A three-tiered approach of services and interventions can be used when addressing mental health education and promotion.





A Framework for Mental Health Education and Promotion in the Hanover School Division, 2015

So how do we help Sarah? We use our critical thinking skills, we work collaboratively with our colleagues and Sarah's mother, and we take the time to do some the necessary detective work to help Sarah's mental health flourish. Good health (in all capacities) is an essential foundation to learning, student achievement and overall success and well-being. It is our job to support mental health education and promotion so our students can have flourishing mental health.

STUDENT SERVICES

YES I CAN

Tracy, a brilliant grade 7 student from Kleefeld School, was the recipient of a Yes I Can! Award from the Manitoba Council of Exceptional Children. The formal awards ceremony took place Feb. 17, at the Victoria Inn in Winnipeg.

The Yes I Can! Awards were created to recognize the achievements of students who have exceptional needs, and of the adults who support them. Students from around the province are nominated for exceptional achievement in the areas of academics, arts, athletics, self-advocacy, and technology. Tracy received her award for outstanding achievement in academics.

Tracy is exceptionally hard working, and has overcome many obstacles since she immigrated to Canada to start grade 4 in Kleefeld. Tracy has a profound bilateral (both ears) sensorineural hearing loss and was implanted with one cochlear implant at the age of 5 in Paraguay.

Tracy started grade 4 with minimal language and no formal communication system. Her parents spoke Lo German and her education in Paraguay was in High German. She learned to lip read and used some basic gestures to communicate with her family. Along with a significant hearing impairment, Tracy had the additional challenge of learning English as a second language.

Her educational program started with a focus on communication and intensive language development using visuals, symbols and pictures. An iPod with a communication app, Proloquo-2go, was introduced to assist with communication. Because there was no hearing intervention when she received her implant, Tracy struggled with understanding the many sounds she was hearing. It took Tracy most of grade 4 to make sense of environmental sounds common to the school environment, such as knocking on the door and school bells. It soon became apparent that learning English was not enough, and ASL interpretation was needed to augment her comprehension of complex language constructs and curricular concepts.

With the introduction of ASL, Tracy flourished. Her ASL interpreter assists with the understanding of new concepts, vocabulary comprehension, and helps her achieve grade level curricular outcomes. Tracy has worked very hard in the last three years, and made incredible progress with the support of her parents and her educational team.

> "The Yes I Can! Awards were created to recognize the achievements of students who have exceptional needs, and of the adults who support them."

In addition to winning the Manitoba award, Tracy is also selected as Manitoba's nominee for the International Yes I Can! Awards to be held later this year.

- Geri Harder-Robson
Assistant Superintendent, Student Services

CALENDAR

Good Friday No Classes
Mar. 25, 2016

Spring Break No Classes
Mar. 28, 2016

Board of Trustees Public Meeting
Apr. 5, 2016

EY/MY/SY School-Based PD Sessions and Admin Day
Apr. 8, 2016

Board & PAC Liaison Meeting
Apr. 12, 2016

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