

Report to Community
“Highlights From Our Teachers”
2019-2020

Our 2019-2020 school year was unique like no other and one for the history books. COVID-19 impacted all of our lives in ways we could not have predicted. The pandemic that swept the world, although destructive and life-changing for many, also saw opportunities for personal growth, perseverance, quality family time and a healthy test of patience! At West St. Paul School we made every effort to stay connected with our students and families through remote learning, emails, phone calls, video meetings, activity packages and home visits. We are proud of the commitment to learning by our staff and families during this unprecedented time and the work we did together to provide at-home learning experiences. This year for our Report to Community, we have requested a submission by each teacher that demonstrates engaged learning in their classroom community prior to in-school suspension. COVID-19 will be a historic moment in history for us all, but will not define who we are.



This year Ms Morwick’s Room 18 kindergarten class participated in “Story-Making” on a regular basis. This served as an opportunity for the students to view themselves as writers as they solved problems, represented their thoughts, grew their creativity, built oral language skills, engaged in purposeful play, and explored effective communication of ideas. The first step in Story-Making was that students were free to use any objects or items found around the classroom to create or act out a story. They could work independently, with a partner, in small groups, or a mix of all three as they moved throughout the room creating their story. When they were ready, they had the opportunity to transfer their story to paper, using illustrations, letter sounds, or words – or a mix of the three! When everyone was finished we held an “Author’s Chair”, where the writers had a chance to read their story to the rest of the class. The final step was placing the newly created stories in our classroom library for all to enjoy in the coming days! Some days had a topic for students to be inspired by, for example Superhero Day, and on other days the writers were free to imagine their own ideas or use our classroom’s “Idea Bin”. It was incredible to watch the stories of these young authors evolve and grow throughout the year!





In our Chinese New Year study, Campbell Kindergarten prepared and celebrated Chinese New Year 2020, the Year of the Rat. We explored Chinese/Mandarin “Hanzi” or characters for letters, words and numbers. We printed our names in Mandarin and read and watched videos about the story of Nian, the Chinese Zodiac, and the Lunar Spring Festival. We learned about pandas, how to draw one, made a lion, dragon and firecrackers. The children loved to sing Gong Xi Gong Xi, a New Year song. We had a wonderful Chinese New Year celebration and went on a parade making noise throughout the school with musical instruments to keep Nian away. We ate noodles, oranges, special candies and fortune cookies. We wore red and gold for good luck. Gong Hay Fat Choy!



In January, the grade 1/2 students in Mrs. Walker’s class had a field trip to the Manitoba Museum. They had a self-guided tour through all nine of the galleries and were amazed at all of the different areas to discover. They seemed to be most interested in the Nonsuch and were thrilled to be able to go onboard for a tour. The garter snake display was also quite interesting. The students learned about the basic needs of all people and the similarities and differences in people and their communities.

In the Science Gallery classroom, the students were given the opportunity to investigate their five senses through a selection of engaging games and activities. They observed experiments with one or more senses, and discovered how senses work together to help us learn and interpret the world around us. They were shown how to make ice cream and they even had a taste! Students explored the interactive exhibits in the Science Gallery at their own pace. There were many interesting and fun things to do, but the most popular were the pulley chairs, the mirrors in the Matrix and being able to design, test, and race their own cars on a track. Too much fun and discovering...too little time!



It has been really great seeing the students in Mrs. Rempel’s grade 1/2 class interact with baby Emma this year. Even some of the really rough and tumble boys have shown restraint and caring when the baby was around. They got so excited when the baby looked their way, gave them a smile or did something new. All the students liked to ask questions about the baby’s growth and milestones. Some of the questions were very thoughtful and mature for children who are only 5-8 years old. It was particularly endearing to see children who don’t like to participate in certain activities get involved. They all sang to Emma and her mom



during their arrival and departure. They also took part in pre and post visit activities with our incredible ROE facilitator, Mrs. Cheryl Rajfur.



On September 30, 2019, the students in Mrs. Moniz's class participated in Orange Shirt Day in recognition of the survivors of the residential schools. The students spent the day learning about and discussing past events in a way that was meaningful and appropriate for them. We read the book *When We Were Alone* by David A. Robertson and talked about what it would feel like to be separated from their parents and how they might feel. We learned about Phyllis Webstad, a little girl who wanted to wear her new orange shirt to school, but then it was taken away. The students discussed how it might feel not to be able to wear what they wanted. After our discussions, we all went outside together to tie orange ribbons to our fence to show our understanding and support.



Show and Share happens in Mr. Mantaring's grade 1/2 class every Friday. In this activity, students bring anything that they want to show and share with the group. In a circle, students share their item/s one after the other. Students get to use their oral-communication skills. They develop their literacy and numeracy skills. In sharing they use numbers and words. They also recall memories, like when or how did they get/acquire such item/s, or who gave it to them. They also have the opportunity to ask questions, suggestions, or comments on others Show and Share item/s which develop respect for others' opinions.

Two heads are better than one. We learn so much from each other. During the study of light in Mrs. Yeo's grade 3/4 class, they got a chance to participate in many group experiments. As students worked together you could overhear, "Look at this!" "Did you see that?" "Why don't we try it this way." "Wow! What a great job!"

As every one trouble shot problems together and celebrated successes, the classroom community grew even stronger. Teaching is most rewarding when the students see themselves as inquisitive learners and are excited to teach one another!





This year in Mr. Neufeld's grade 3/4 class they spent a lot of time exploring in nature and going on adventures in our community. Whether it was walking down to Hiawatha Park to look at the leaves turning in the fall, searching for coyote tracks in the neighbourhood, hunting for rocks in the school yard, or spending a day exploring at the Aki centre, they always had a great time being out in nature. Having the opportunity to learn from each other and people such as Alexis and Alex at the Aki Centre has helped them to grow in their understanding of nature and has connected them with the community as well.

Building community and developing/discovering themselves as learners are the highlights in Mrs. Cervantes' grade 3/4 classroom. Like many educators, she recognizes that building community in the classroom has a ripple effect. Belonging leads to feeling safe, feeling safe leads to students asking questions, sharing their written work and helping classmates in need. One example that highlights this is when the class studied Fairytales through Fractured Fairytales. Students felt safe enough to read aloud their written work to the class. Students would read or respectfully listen to each others' written work and then make constructive suggestions about the elements of a fairytale, and "wow" word choice. Reader's theatre was another exciting part of their study of Fairytales. Small groups of students worked together to develop speaking loudly with personality/and expressively, acting out scenes and creating sets - all of which culminated in an assembly performance they were proud of.



This year Ms. Greening's grade 3/4 class has been learning all about Canada's provinces and territories. As a way to explore different areas of Canada, they took some inspiration from Jeff Brown's book, Flat Stanley. In the story, Stanley is flattened when a bulletin board falls on him. He has many adventures while he is flat, including being able to travel all over because he can be mailed in an envelope like a letter! The class made their own Flat Stanley's and sent them, along with a journal, to friends or relatives around Canada. Once they arrived at each destination, the hosts took them on a tour of the area, snapped many pictures, updated their journal, and

emailed updates back to the class so they could track all the adventures and learn more about Canada!



As Ms. Gill reflects upon the year there were many exciting moments in her grade 3/4 journey as learners. One particular activity was to see how they could represent numbers in a different way other than in grouping of 1's, 10's and 100's. They extended learning to the outdoors by assigning different numeric values to objects in the playground. For example, stones had a value of one, twigs were worth 3 and leaves had a value of 9. It was very interesting watching all the students skip counting by 3's and making exchanges of items to get to 9 and higher numbers. The activity really encouraged them to count and regroup numbers and then relate it to counting numbers in groups of 10's once they returned to the classroom.



Mr Luna's grade 5's had the opportunity to create art with Mr. Curtis from WAG. Students would go to Leila North to learn about and create art using different mediums. Students enjoyed using tools such as clay, oil paints, and screen printing to create art. They were then able to apply the skills they learned from the WAG program as an additional way to show their learning in the classroom.



Ms. Barkman's grade 5's participated in an exciting inquiry into the most significant people who shaped Canada as a nation pre-Confederation. They began learning about Turtle Island, and the many Indigenous groups who lived, and continue to live, here. They then learned about the impacts of European expansion, and how that changed Turtle Island. This included a walking tour of The Forks, St Boniface, and visiting Louis Riel's place of burial. Finally, students selected someone to research who they thought made a positive impact on society today. In this, they realized how many voices have been hidden in telling the story of Canada. Through creative projects, oral presentations, and several debates, children eventually (democratically!) agreed upon the top 5 most significant people. While their debates were very lively, they also agreed that the idea of 'significance' and 'impact' changes depending on different perspectives!





Ms. Stockton's grade 6/7 class was exploring literary elements including sound devices and figurative language in early March. They noticed that examples of these elements, such as rhyme, alliteration and metaphor, were plentiful in children's stories in particular. They set out to write their own children's stories using the word play they had been learning. Students worked hard to incorporate the thoughtful use of literary elements into exceptional stories for children.

When their books were ready, they hosted a book launch party and invited an early years class to join them. They served snacks and beverages and shared their stories with the grade 1 and 2 visitors. Following that, they took their stories on the road (or through the hallways) for a book tour! They visited several early years classes to share their stories and make connections with younger students in the school.



Mr. Robertson's favourite success story occurred with his grade 6/7 class when the school was in the midst of celebrating 100 Day. His classroom was paired with a primary-aged group to assist in making 100 Day bracelets. They invited the younger students to their room and sat down to begin beading. Each bracelet package came with a string and 100 tiny beads of multiple colours. The task: help the primary students string all 100 beads onto the string while creating a simple pattern and of course, secure the bracelets onto each child's wrist.

At first, this sounded like an enjoyable way to spend a period or two with their younger buddies. They were so naïve. Within the first five minutes you could hear the sound of tiny, translucent beads, no larger than the head of a pin, rolling across tables, bouncing off chairs onto the floor followed by panicking students crawling around, chasing them down before they fell through the floor's air vents. The grade 6/7's were being pulled in every direction with cries of, "I lost count of my beads, which number am I on," or, "I just lost a few beads under the bookcase," and "Is this a pattern?"

What had begun as a peaceful arts and crafts activity had devolved into a struggle to complete 25 bracelets before they ran out of time. With so many people together, the room was getting warmer and frustrations ran higher. Beads barely perceivable to the human eye flew across tables and rolled into the hallway. The grade 6/7's were losing patience, began to seize the bracelets from the younger ones, desperate to complete the project before their lunch break began. The environment was a chaotic mix of frantic children and adults chasing beads, some quietly sobbing at their desks out of disappointment, while others simply screamed out at the futility of it all.

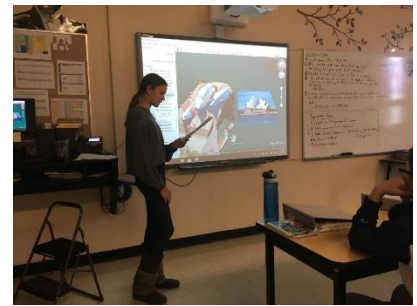
Finally, with a lot of difficulty they managed to tie a bracelet onto every child's wrist and eagerly returned them to their teacher's classroom.

However, just as they were about to turn and leave, the primary teacher stopped us and asked, “Now, are you absolutely sure each one of these bracelets has exactly 100 beads on it? This is really important because we will be using these for counting activities.” She stared at the older students unflinchingly, waiting for their response.

Nervously, the entire class swung around and stared back at their own teacher. Then as he slowly began nodding, they all looked at her and replied, “Um... yyyeah, there’s um, definitely 100 beads there,” and sheepishly exited the room.

Sure, they had spent 100 days together, but on this day, they knew; their class had truly become a team.

This year Mr. Zylstra’s grade 6/7 class enhanced their study of world geography through technology and art. The class quickly showed a keen interest in both physical and human geography and expanded their knowledge through a variety of integrated activities. Using their knowledge of mapping, students created and presented world tours using Google Earth Pro. They were challenged to start their tour at their own home in West St. Paul and then find an exciting location on every continent to travel to during their tour. The class created comprehensive tours by pinning each location on the virtual globe and embedding pictures at each stop. Students also researched and gathered information about each stop on their tour to create an interactive presentation for their classmates to take part in. The students really enjoyed taking the class on their world tour when they each had an opportunity to present on the Smartboard.



The class also worked together to create a giant world map display on the main wall of their classroom. This map stayed up for the entire year and continued to change and evolve along with the classes’ understanding of their world. Students took part in an artist study of the illustrator Marz Jr to learn about his nostalgic style. Next, they picked buildings from around the world to represent in their artwork. Each piece of art was added to the world map display along with important facts about each building’s location, history and more! The display had everything from Cinderella’s Castle to the Burj Khalifa.

Later, each student also created a skyline of a major city using a visual art style of their own choosing. This resulted in a diverse art display where students used a wide variety of art supplies to represent the city that they chose. They gathered facts to share about each city, such as population density and geographic coordinates. The class took a great deal of ownership over the changing display, working as a team to set it up as it changed throughout the year.



This school year, one of the main focuses in Mr. Walker's grade 6/7 class has been engagement through challenging and open-ended material. Students frequently rose to the occasion taking on these tasks which allowed for learners to collaborate, display their creativity, and to use a wide variety of skills to display their learning. One of these activities was to translate a children's book from French to English. The students learned skills using both French/English dictionaries and online translation tools, and eventually created a series of advertisement posters for their translated books. There was an immense amount of problem solving and critical thinking that occurred in their work groups, and the students were excited by the activity.



One major success that Mr. Bencharski's grade 6/7 class engaged with this year was in regards to biology. The grade 7 curriculum has a unit in Interactions within Ecosystems that gives students the opportunity to explore how living things interact with non-living things. This unit can sometimes be a bit theory heavy but with a few modifications they made it more hands on. The first thing they did was dissect owl pellets. Owl pellets allow students to see the diet of owls and reconstruct the creatures they consumed. The students loved seeing tiny bones and skulls of the rodents eaten by the owls and trying to piece them back together.

They then went a step further and dissected squids. Students figured out how to anatomically differentiate between male and females by examining the eggs. Students also opened the ink sac and drew their names with the cartilage of the squid. Students also dissected the eyes to find the lens, which they were allowed to keep.

To wrap up their unit they had presenters from Wildlife Haven come to the class to show the students a number of animals they rescued and how those organisms continue to interact with their ecosystems even in captivity. Students learned and observed an owl and a hawk as well as turtles and snakes. Students were allowed to handle the turtles and snakes and ask as many questions as they wished.

This was a fun experience and it turned a sometimes boring, theory heavy unit into a hands on interactive one.



Building a sense of belonging and community in Ms. Jopka's grade 8 classroom is really important. They do a sharing circle on Mondays and participate in Spirit Buddies each morning for the remainder of the week. For Spirit Buddies, students are placed in groups of three, with the intention of spending time learning about each other. Groups are made intentionally, deliberately with people who are not good friends inside or out of school. Spirit Buddies only lasts a few minutes, but there are many great things happening during that time. Everybody speaks every day-- there isn't any pressure to feel put on the spot because they only have to

share the one thing they learned. Working together in a group is important--you have to decide who is sharing what about each person. You cannot work in pairs and leave the third person out. You have to pay attention and remember what is being shared--you tell the class what you learned; you don't just talk about yourself.

This is a great program--it is amazing how much it breaks down barriers, allows for new friendships that may not have happened and lets the students share about their lives with each other.



Having both a provincial and federal election scheduled within the first two months of school provided the perfect connection to learning about ancient Greece and democracy for Ms. Mitchell's grade 8 class. They dove right in to a mock West St. Paul School election. Students immediately started brainstorming ways they could improve the school, while also beginning to realize the cost and complexity of some their ideas. As they researched the

main issues at the federal level, students split themselves along party lines and prepared for debate. It was thrilling to observe this group of informed citizens think critically about the issues at hand, while also displaying empathy and cooperation toward their opposition. The future is bright!



In early 2020, the grade 8's of Mrs. Moura's class reinstated West St. Paul School's partnership with Middlechurch Home. All grade 4 to 8 classes were encouraged to sign up for any number of available bi-weekly dates that would see them playing games, baking, doing arts & crafts, etc. with the residents of the home. Students enjoyed a 15 minute walk each way, but the most enriching time was the hour spent working with and learning about their "senior buddies".

Fostering relationships between our class and the residents of Middlechurch Home proved to be so positive, that a few of the students independently looked into the possibility of volunteering on a more regular basis. In late spring, our class completed a science design challenge that had them designing and creating bird feeders based on self-selected criteria. We encourage the community to look for these feeders to be displayed all over the grounds of Middlechurch Home!



This year our 'WSP Athletic Council' hosted our first annual boys' volleyball tournament in November. The tournament was a great success both on and off the court. Our boys' divisional team finished as finalists in that tournament as well as in our divisional 7 Oaks league.

A particular success that Mr. Kammerlock was quite happy about this year was the introduction to tennis unit in early years phys. ed. This is something that many students have not been exposed to in the past. It started with basic tennis skills in the gym, both individually and with partners. As it progressed past skills and drills they began to get into singles and doubles matches. Getting creative with their badminton nets, they were able to have up to 6 doubles games going at once. The unit culminated with the grade 5's attending a day long tennis jamboree at the Canada Games Sport for Life Centre. This was certainly one of the more popular units of the year; there was no trouble engaging students in lessons and activities. It was easily adapted when necessary and skill to build upon in future years!



This past school year marked the launch of the WSP fiddle program with the grade 5's. They learned how to hold the bow, which in itself is an art, as well as how to hold and play the fiddle properly. The instrument is not an easy one to learn and can be physically daunting. But many of them persevered and got the hang of it. They learned how to play 'Boil 'em Cabbage' and were just learning how to play "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star".