

Grand Forks Secondary School

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Principal: T. Eccleston | Vice Principal: J. Dowswell

November 2025

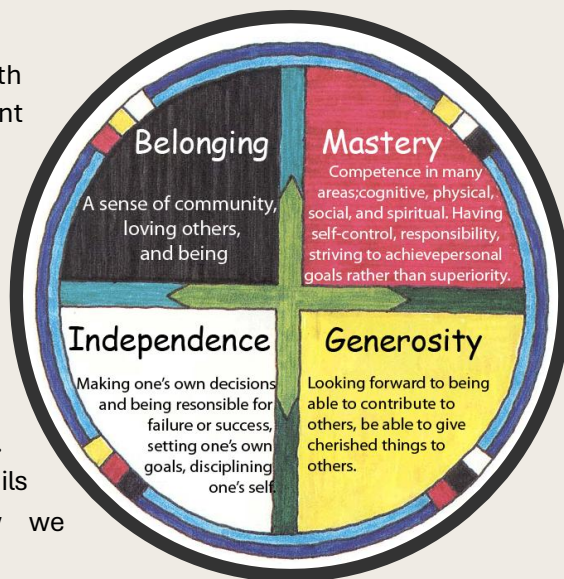
Principal's Message

As the last of the autumn leaves fall, we find ourselves grateful to have experienced such a beautiful season here in Grand Forks. The shift toward winter reminds us that this is an important time for students to stay focused on learning, well-being, and balance. Though the days grow shorter, I encourage our entire learning community to keep our intellectual lights shining bright and to support one another through this season of growth. November can be a remarkably strong month for learning and connection.

Our Remembrance Day Assembly will take place on November 10, as we honour the service and sacrifice of Canada's Armed Forces and reflect on the peace we enjoy today. We look forward to welcoming community guests and to hearing our students lead the ceremony through poetry and music.

Using the Circle of Courage as our holistic student growth model, this month students will start their self-assessment of the Core Competencies. The Core Competencies help students think, connect, and grow (intellectually, personally, and socially). Along with literacy and numeracy, they guide students in becoming capable, thoughtful, and engaged citizens.

Last month, teachers shared '**Informal Learning Updates**' with families and students. This month, we'll be providing a formal, '**Written Learning Updates**'. Please see the related article in this newsletter for details about our progressive reporting policy and how we communicate learning at GFSS.



For the **safety of our students**, please remember that drop-off and pick-up should occur only in the east or west parking areas. The central bus lane must always remain clear for buses.



At GFSS, we value proactive communication and strong relationships. If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to our teachers or administration team. You can also find helpful information on our website at gfss.sd51.bc.ca.

Let's continue working together to keep our school community learning and thriving.

~ Tom Eccleston, Principal

[link to previous weekly principal's reports and monthly newsletters](#)

Important Dates

- Nov 5 Take your kid to work day (grade 9s)
- Nov 10 Remembrance Assembly
- Nov 11 Remembrance Day (school closed)
- Nov 14 Louis Riel Day (school in session)
- Nov 15 Winter Gear Swap-Shop
- Nov 20 Written Learning Updates Available

Student Council + Youth Advocacy

Students are the centre of all that our school should be. Students' thoughts, opinions, and involvement matters. To raise the voice of students in school activities, we have a Student Council. The council's two aims are to: 1. engage our students in youth advocacy initiatives and



2. enhance a positive school culture.

We'd like to recognize student trustees: Ava, Emma, and Alex who will be representing GFSS students at the meeting of the Board of Education this year.

The Council meets each Tuesday at lunch and new members are always welcome. For more information, please contact our teacher sponsors, Ms. Doyle, Ms. Perkins, and Ms. Jeana or any student council member.

Emergency Guide for Parents

We encourage all parents and guardians to take a few minutes to read through our new [Emergency Guide for Parents](#). The guide provides important information about our safety procedures, things **to do** and **not do**, communication methods, and what to expect in the event of an emergency at GFSS.

Please share the guide with your child because staying informed helps ensure that, together, we can keep our students safe and supported.

Hot Lunch at GFSS

School District No. 51 is happy to announce a new catered hot lunch program! As part of the provincial government's Feeding Futures initiative, we have partnered with the Boundary Community Ventures Association to provide lunches for purchase.

Orders can be placed online using [MunchaLunch.com](#). You can pay for your orders online using credit card (Visa/Mastercard), debit-credit card, Google Pay, Apple Pay or pre-paid credit card. Paper order forms are also available for families wishing to pay with cash.



Communicating Student Learning

Written Learning Updates are coming this month. For each student and every course, the update will include:

- Written, descriptive feedback about your child's current strengths, current stretches (areas for growth), and next steps with suggestions,

and either:

- Gr 10-12: percent & letter grade, or
- Gr 8 & 9: proficiency scale assessment

We invite you review the [K-12 Student Reporting Information for Parents and Caregivers Package](#) to learn more about communicating learning at GFSS. It is important for us to work together as partners for your child's learning journey, so please contact us if you have any questions.

The Provincial Proficiency Scale

If your child is in Grades K-9, you won't see letter grades on their report card. Instead, you will see information on where your child is on the Provincial Proficiency Scale. The scale uses the terms "Emerging," "Developing," "Proficient," and "Extending" to describe student learning. The scale maintains high standards for student learning.

Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Emerging means your child is beginning to understand something in an area of learning. They are still learning but may need more support to move ahead. Emerging doesn't mean your child is unsuccessful in this area.	Developing means your child understands some things in an area of learning but still has other areas to work on. Like Emerging, it doesn't mean your child is unsuccessful in this area.	Proficient is the goal for your child. It's also the goal for all students. When your child is Proficient, it means they fully understand the required learning. But it doesn't mean their learning stops.	Extending is when students show a deeper understanding. It's when your child is able to apply their learning in new and different ways. Extending is not the goal for all students in every area of learning.

School Spirit Shines at GFSS!

On October 30, GFSS was bursting with energy, laughter, and a strong sense of community during our Student-Led Spirit Assembly. The gym was alive with music and excitement as students came together to celebrate all that makes our school a vibrant and welcoming place.

Organized entirely by our GFSS Student Council, the assembly featured a full lineup of activities including games, prizes, music, certificates, and a costume contest. With friendly competitions, the event showcased the talent, teamwork, and enthusiasm that define the heart of our school.

What made this assembly so special was not only the fun, but the leadership behind it. Every part of the event was driven by student initiative from planning and logistics to setup and hosting. The Student Council demonstrated outstanding organization, collaboration, and creativity. Their efforts reflect the kind of leadership and sense of purpose we strive to nurture at GFSS.

Events like this remind us that school is a place of joy, connection, and growth. When students take positive ownership of their school culture, they build confidence, empathy, and a deeper understanding of what it means to be part of something larger than themselves. It reminds us that learning together is always worth celebrating.



Running with Purpose: GFSS Raises Over \$350 for Terry Fox Foundation



Each fall, schools across Canada come together to continue the dream that Terry Fox began. This year, GFSS students and staff once again rose to the occasion, raising over \$350 in support of the Terry Fox Foundation.

The event was a celebration of GFSS spirit and compassion. Students jogged, walked, and ran alongside teachers and staff, reflecting on Terry's legacy of courage and determination. The generosity shown through donations, participation, and encouragement demonstrates how small individual efforts can combine into something truly meaningful.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to everyone who contributed, whether by organizing the events, participating in fundraisers, or simply showing up with enthusiasm and heart. Together, we've honoured Terry's dream of a world without cancer and reminded ourselves that perseverance and kindness remain at the heart of what makes GFSS strong.

Volleyball Update

Our volleyball teams have a few weeks left in their season - each group is growing and coming together as a team. The Senior Boys and girls have travelled all over the Okanagan and Kootenays competing and having a great time doing so. Our Junior boys and girls have competed at 2 tournaments this season both having great results in each showing and really gelling as a team. Our grade 8 girls are a small but mighty bunch! They just recently had a home playday where they showed us all what school spirit and sportsmanship look like! Thank you Coach Dunnet and Coach Friesen!

Upcoming this season - November 3rd our Junior Boys host a home playday! Come on our and cheer them on.

Our
Seniors
travel to



Invermere and Sparwood for Kootenay Zones on November 14th - good luck! And Our Juniors and Grade 8s will participate in the West Kootenay Championships the 3rd week in November! Keep updated on all things sports on our GFSS Athletics Facebook Page!

A Soccer Season with Heart

Written by Coach Jason

The boys' soccer team showed me what sportsmanship and love of the game were all about. Many of them came together as a team last season, and a few played together in the Castlegar House League last spring. During the summer a group of them would get together regularly at the school field to practice.

A core group of them were tired of the stale old jerseys, so they fundraised over the summer. They did this on their own initiative and organized it themselves. One team member spent hours designing the jerseys, then they used the proceeds of the fundraiser to order them. They proudly wore those jerseys, and future GFSS soccer teams will be proud to wear them. They were bound and determined to have a team this year, and talked me into coaching for them, even though I had little knowledge of soccer.

They went into the season basically as a junior team, with one player putting them into the senior bracket. They didn't care. They wanted to play soccer, and if that meant playing against older and more experienced teams, great. It meant more game experience. They knew that this season would be challenging, but they all played hard. Every. Single. Game. They never gave up. They never backed down. And they never stopped supporting each other.

The older boys took the younger ones under their wing and mentored them, while treating them as equals. They sang on the bus rides. They came together to get hyped before each game, and they truly were hyped. They were recognized by other coaches and by refs for their spirit and energy. I heard it many times after games.

I could not be more proud to have had the opportunity to coach them, and I can't wait to see what next season brings. This was a season of building, and these boys laid a foundation stronger than I could have imagined. GO WOLVES SOCCER!!!

Student and Family Affordability Fund

GFSS has again this year received funding from BC Government and The Ministry of Education and Child Care to directly support parents and guardians of students with costs associated with going to school that they may be struggling to pay.

Please contact our office anytime if you are in need.

GFSS Swim Team

The GFSS Swim team will be heading to the BC School Sports Provincial Championships in Richmond on November 14th and 15th. Our athletes won the B division at the Kootney Zone Championships last weekend. We would like to wish our athletes, Lexi-Jo, Peyton, Violet, Georgia, Natalie, and Kaydon - along with their Coaches, Laura and Amanda the best of luck as they represent our school at the highest level of high school sport in the province!





Students and families, welcome to November at GFSS.

Throughout the school year students and staff tackle challenging topics around student health and well-being in Physical & Health Education and other classes. One issue that the school and families take on as a shared responsibility is around the topic of vaping.

As educators we get to know our students closely and we want to see them healthy and successful. Vaping poses significant health risks, such as nicotine addiction that can impact adolescent brain development. Vaporizers can lead to increased risk of lung damage and cardiovascular issues. Perhaps most concerning is long-term effects of vaping are largely unknown due to the relatively new nature of these products.

The purpose of vapes are very clear: they are a means for companies to get young people addicted to their products for life. Vaporizers come in a variety of styles and sizes that are all designed to be eye-catching for teens. Leather, anodized aluminum, bright colours, and fruity flavours are all specifically designed to cater to the tastes and trends of teens.

To help our students make good decisions in support of their health and the safety of all students, vaping is strictly prohibited on school grounds or at any school related activities, such as athletics, field trips, or dances. Students who are found in violation of the code of conduct are subject to progressive discipline, which can include restorative tasks and education, in-school or out-of-school suspension, or possibly RCMP involvement if distribution of vaping products are suspected. All of these policies are grounded in a concern for student safety and well-being.

Families are our partners in this challenge. We encourage you to have open conversations at home about vaping and peer pressure. Families are also encouraged to reach out to GFSS's counsellors or administrators for support or guidance about this topic. A great starting place in [Tobacco & Vaping Information for Teens, from Interior Health](#).

Together, we can help students know that their safety, well-being, and healthy decision making are our priorities. I invite you to reach out anytime if you have any questions about vaping or our [school code of conduct](#).

Thank you,

Jon Dowswell, Vice Principal

Grand Forks Secondary School & Walker Development Centre

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