



ELKFORD SECONDARY SCHOOL

September 2019 NEWSLETTER

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Principal's Message

After a great start to the 2019/2020 School year, it is time to think about the process of schooling. Process by definition is "a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end". The actions or steps are learning, from grade 7 to 12 students need to take intentional steps forward in learning. Mistakes are okay, they are all part of the process, however learning must be the focus. The end is a young adult ready for the 21st century. For an undertaking as large as this it is important that parents and school work together. There is nothing more that I could say than what was said in this article from The New York Times, so I thought I would share the article in its entirety.

How to Help Your Child Succeed at School

By Jessica Lahey

In the high-pressure, high-stakes game of school, it can be difficult to know which parenting strategies really promote learning. A successful experience in school is not only about report cards. Ideally your child will learn how to learn, retain information, think independently, ask questions and develop an increasing sense of competence. Here are some guidelines for making sure you start on the right foot and keep enthusiasm and momentum high throughout the school year.

Key Values

There is so much to think about each school year, but above all else, these simple rules can help keep you focused on what's most important for school success.

Do

- Focus on the process, not the product
- Encourage kids to self-advocate
- Keep a long-term perspective
- Maintain a healthy sleep schedule

Don't

- Overschedule
- Workshop grades
- Encourage helplessness
- Compare kids to one another
- Love kids based on their performance
- Love the child you have, not the child you wish you had

Value the Process Over the Product

Very young children are naturally driven to learn and explore. They are at the very beginning of their lifelong quest to understand and gain mastery of the world around them. As they reach out, fall and get back up again, they gain a heightened sense of mastery, competence and self-efficacy. Somewhere around kindergarten, however, parents and teachers begin to undermine this process by devaluing the process of learning and replacing it with a mad dash for the end products. Suddenly, the intrinsic motivators of natural curiosity, competence and self-efficacy are less valuable than extrinsic motivators such as stickers, points and grades. Unfortunately, extrinsic motivators undermine kids' desire to learn over the long term. Want your kid to lose interest in school? Pay them for their A's and worship at the altar of grades. If you'd instead like your kids to remain curious and hungry for mastery, here are some tips for re-orienting kids' priorities.

- **Keep report cards off social media and the refrigerator.** We can tell our kids that we value learning all we want, but when we gush over grades and stick them to the refrigerator, we show them that what we value most are the grades. Of course, grades are what most parents are stuck with, even if they are [flawed and incomplete indicator of learning](#) as well as what's known as an "extrinsic motivator," which has been shown to [reduce motivation over the long term, undermine creativity](#), and [encourage cheating](#). Some schools have moved away from letter-based grades and are using reports focused on mastery- or standards-based evaluations, which can help parents and kids focus on what's being learned rather a grade. No matter what kind of report your child gets, humble-bragging about it on social media only feeds parental competition, raises the pressure for kids and teaches them that your love and approval is contingent on the content of their report card.
- **Focus on the process they used to get that grade.** When we invest less energy and emotion in the number or letter at the top of the page, we can begin to ask our children questions such as, What did you do to get this grade? Which study techniques worked for you and which ones did not? What are you going to do differently next time?
- **Look forward, not back.** The best question parents can ask when faced with a grade, whether high or low, is: How are you going to use this experience to be better next time? This technique works particularly well for anxious and overly perfectionist kids, because they can get stuck in a negative feedback loop, obsessing wholly on the numbers and grades. Helping them shift their focus back to the process can alleviate that anxiety, particularly when we help them prioritize the aspects of learning they can control.

Model: Talk about your own failures and successes with your kids, showing them that you, too, are invested in the process of learning. If you berate yourself over failures, so will they. If, however, they see you being brave and learning from your mistakes so you can be better next time, so will they.

Value Goals Over Grades

One easy way to invest in process is to set goals, both individually and as a family. Try to do this at the beginning of a new school year, the first of the month, or the beginning of a new season. Keep the discussion light and low-pressure. This process isn't about getting better grades, it's about supporting learning as a family.

Everyone (yes, that means parents, too) sets three short-term, achievable goals oriented around tasks and improvements under your control. For example, "I'm going to get all A's this semester" is too broad and too difficult to control. Instead, try "I'm going to ask for help in math more often," "I will plan one extra help session a week," or "I will practice my multiplication three extra times this month."

One of those three goals should be a challenge. We can't hope to convince our children to be emotionally and intellectually brave unless they see us do the same, so set some goals that get you out of your comfort zone. Take guitar or dance or Spanish lessons, try an activity you have never tried before, or pick up a new hobby. This is, after all, how we expand our cognitive potential and make new connections in our brains that can help us become stronger, smarter and more efficient learners.

A few years ago, one of my sons' goals was to make a few new friends, a goal that was both challenging and important to him.

Before you set new goals, take the time to assess how everyone did on past goals. Review these goals once a month or once a semester. If you fail to achieve your goals talk about why, and what you plan to do differently next time. If you succeed, celebrate that achievement!

Model: Watching a parent set a scary, ambitious goal and talk about the process of achieving it is the most direct way to teach children that learning and striving to be better are human goals, not just school goals.

Maintain a Long-Term Perspective

Education and parenting are both long-haul endeavors, and improvements don't happen on a daily basis.

- **Don't live in the daily emergency of *this* homework or *this* test.** Instead, think about where you'd like your child to be in a year or five years in terms of competence and growth. Which is more important to you, that you deliver your child's forgotten math homework today or that she develops a strategy for not forgetting her math homework tomorrow?

Model: When things go wrong in your own life, talk about them. Keep your focus on doing better next time and your long-term perspective. For example if you mess up at work, frame your discussion around improvement and long-term progress: "Well, this work project did not work out the way I wanted, but I still love what I do and want to be doing something related in five years. Here's how I plan to learn from this so I can get there."

Help Them Find Balance

Kids are overscheduled, families are in a constant rush, but a few, strategic pauses in your family's day can make a huge difference.

Help Kids Create Effective Good Routines

Present mornings, [chores](#) and homework time to kids as a problem to be solved together. In a quiet, calm moment, say, "You know, [mornings are really hectic around here](#) and it's hard for everyone to remember to get out the door with everything they need. How do you think we can make mornings easier and happier?"

Kids are more likely to stick with a plan they created themselves. Buy-in happens most often when kids have a hand in creating strategies, and sometimes it's more important to be functional and efficient than to be right.

Try asking, "What would your ideal morning routine look like?" or "What would a perfect homework day look like for you?" then help them come up with ways to make those visions real.

Help kids operationalize the systems they create. If it's a planbook, talk about setting intermediary deadlines. If it's alarms on a virtual calendar, try different sequences of alerts ahead of a due date. Think of your role in this process like that of the training wheels on your kid's bike. As our children get more sure of their strategies and systems, we can raise the training wheels up until they are no longer needed at all.

Model: Talk about your own systems, when they fail, why they work for you. As I get older, I find I have to write more things down or I will forget them. When I do, I mention this to my kids, and they have even helped me brainstorm ways to get things down on paper before I lose them to the ether.

Encourage Good Study Habits

- **Ensure quiet time in your home.** Multi-tasking is a myth, especially for kids. Shut off the TV, and if they like to play music, [studies show](#) that music with lyrics undermines concentration and productivity.
- **Ask your kids what their perfect homework routine might look like.** Help them create that vision. Some kids might want a break after school to blow off pent-up energy, others may want to get the homework done first so they can get on to free play. Let them choose the space, too. Just because you envisioned a central study location in your home when you designed it does not mean it's going to be their preferred spot.
- **Limit phones during homework time.** Phones are a distraction when they are in the room, even when they are turned off, [one study shows](#). If they are a distraction for adults, with their fully mature executive function skills, they are even more distracting for kids, whose frontal lobes (and the executive function skills that originate there) won't be fully mature until their mid-20s.

Model: Let kids see you working distraction-free, in an environment that promotes focus. As ever, kids do what we do, not what we say. Work on your projects the way you'd like to see them doing their work.

Plan for Technology Use

Have a plan in place for family tech usage. This can be around minutes, data or context. If you want family dinners and homework to be tech-free zones, agree to that ahead of time. Then sign a tech contract. Some kids respond to the clarity of a signed contract you can point to for reference. Here are some contracts I love, from [Juliana Miner, author of "Raising a Screen Smart Kid"](#) and [Devorah Heitner, author of "Screenwise."](#)

Model: When I ask kids what they'd most like me to convey to their parents at my speaking events, one of comments I hear most often is something like: "If you want us to turn our phones off, or spend less time texting with our friends, then parents should do the same." When we ask kids to make sacrifices we are not willing to make ourselves, they see us.

Communication Between School and Home

When students, parents and teachers communicate openly and honestly with each other about what's happening at home and in the classroom, everyone can stay focused on the learning.

Keep School-Home Lines of Communication Open

The [research is clear](#): Family involvement and positive home-school communication have been associated with improved grades, positive behavior and attitudes about learning, increased participation and increased attendance. Start by finding out how your child's teacher would like to be contacted, and honor his or her preferences by sticking to that method.

When something comes up, go to the teacher first, and not to the principal. That is unfair to both the principal and the teacher. Besides, the principal most likely was not present in your child's classroom to witness the events in question, so it puts him or her in an awkward position.

Remember the good moments too. Thank teachers for their efforts on behalf of your child. Thanking teachers lets them know that you respect and appreciate what they do and how they do it. I have an envelope full of

these notes accumulated over 20 years of teaching Latin, English and writing, and I often refer back to them when I'm having a bad day or feeling unappreciated. Gratitude matters.

Model: Don't bash or undermine a teacher in front of the kids. Kids hear what you say about their teachers, and it's essential to preserve the student-teacher relationship at all costs. It can be confusing for kids when parents say negative things about their teachers, just as it's upsetting when one parent speaks ill of the other during a separation or divorce.

Promote Self-Advocacy

Starting as early as kindergarten, children need to be encouraged to speak up, tell adults what they need, and stand up to people who are not treating them the way they want to be treated. Self-advocacy is a key part of building a child's sense of self-efficacy, or the understanding that they have the power to control and change their behavior, motivation and environment.

When your children come to you to complain about how another child or a teacher treated them, ask what they said or did (or what they plan to say or do) to make sure they are heard and understood. Simply asking this question can help children reframe the situation and consider what they can do to effect change themselves.

Expect children to be a part of home-school communication from the first day of elementary school and increase your expectations for their involvement each year until your child is the main conduit of information between home and school. You can provide support, of course, but somewhere around the beginning of middle school, your child should take the lead.

Get support for your efforts to boost their self-advocacy. Let teachers know you are making this shift so they can support your child's efforts to be more effective in their communication.

Coach your children through talking with teachers about problems and talk through the approaches they can take. You can write scripts or role play if a child is anxious about the discussion. This can actually be a fun way to dispel anxiety and play-act the conversation until your child is comfortable.

If children are facing especially stressful challenges as a result of bullying, special education needs or mental health issues, school counselors can be parents' greatest ally. [Today's school counselors are mental health professionals](#) who are able to guide students in school and provide referrals as needed to other mental health and academic support professionals in the community. They can even direct parents to low-cost or sliding scale providers if needed, and ensure continuity between school-based services and outside providers.

Model: Talk about how you ask for help and assert yourself even when it makes you nervous. Explain how you make sure your needs are heard and addressed. If you need to talk to your boss about a misunderstanding at work, make your kid a part of a dinnertime discussion about ways you could approach the conversation. We are, after all, our children's first teachers when it comes to conflict resolution and self-advocacy.

Upcoming Important Dates at ESS

SEPTEMBER		
	26	Terry Fox Activities
	26	Vball - B B&G, Jr B - League Games - ESS to SSS
	27	Block Rotation - Mon #2
	27 & 28	Vball - Sr Girls - South Slokan
	27 & 28	Vball - Jr Boys - Fernie
	30	Wildsight 'Know Your Watershed' Field Trip - gr 9s
OCTOBER		
	1	Wildsight 'Know Your Watershed' Field Trip - gr 9s
	2	Vball - B B&G, Jr B - League Games - ESS to FSS
	3 & 4	Bio 11/12 Zoo & Science Center Field Trip, Calgary
	4	Block Rotation - Tue #2
	4 & 5	Vball - Bantam Boys & Girls - Fernie
	4 & 5	Vball - Jr Boys - Jaffray
	7	Vball - Sr Girls - League Games - ESS at SSS
	9	Vball - B B&G, Jr B - League Games - ESS host Jaffray
	9	PAC Meeting, 6 pm
	9	Grad Meeting, 7 pm (parents & students)
	11	NI Day - Yellow
	14	NI Day - Stat - Thanksgiving
	15	School Photos
	17	Vball - B B&G, Jr B - League Games - ESS host FSS
	18	Block Rotation - Mon #1
	21	Vball - B B&G, Jr B - League Games - ESS host SSS
	25	NI Day - Green
	27 & 28	Vball - Bantam Boys - Eks - Creston
	27 & 28	Vball - Bantam Girls - Eks - Kimberley



Photo Day

Mark Your Calendar.....
School Photos, Tuesday, Oct 15
Retake Day, Friday, Nov 15



Photo Day

Reminders from the Office....

For attendance purposes, please notify the office at 250-865-4674 or email at ess.mailing@sd5.bc.ca if your child will be away from school for any reason. It is also important to contact teachers for homework. To contact a staff member in our school please email by using: firstname.lastname@sd5.bc.ca.

If there are any changes to your personal contact information (phone numbers, addresses, email, etc.) please let the office know by emailing: ess.mailing@sd5.bc.ca.

Welcome Back Pancake Breakfast

What a great way to start our school year! On September 9th, students were treated to a delicious pancake and sausage link breakfast. A big thank you to PAC for donating supplies, to staff for cooking and to special pancake flippers Mayor McKerracher and Councillor MacDonald!



Aboriginal Education

Welcome back to another exciting year at Elkford Secondary School. The Aboriginal program at ESS is for all students who identify themselves as being of Aboriginal Ancestry. All students with Aboriginal Ancestors are eligible for Support Services through the Aboriginal Program. Examples of support: advocacy, communicating between home and school, classroom presentations, educational trips and student support. Every year students with Aboriginal Ancestry have not identified themselves as Aboriginal because they mistakenly believe they need Status or Metis card. This is not the case. If you know that you or your children have Aboriginal Ancestry (First Nations, Metis, Inuit) your word is all that is required. Please share this information with others to help ensure all Aboriginal students receive support.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any question regarding the program or my role as an Aboriginal Education Support Worker. I can be reached at 250-425-9153 or by email at brenda.newlove@sd5.bc.ca.

Elkford Secondary PAC

Every parent and guardian that has a student at ESS is automatically a member of our Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). Each year the ESS PAC distributes funds for extracurricular materials and activities for our students. This ranges from presentations at our school and help with field trips to maintaining equipment that has previously been purchased by PAC. We also provide new equipment to our sports teams and support for any other club in the school as well as any extracurricular supplies needed. Without volunteers this support would not be possible.

Please consider attending monthly PAC meetings which are always held at the ESS Library at 6pm. The next meeting is Wed, Oct 9th.

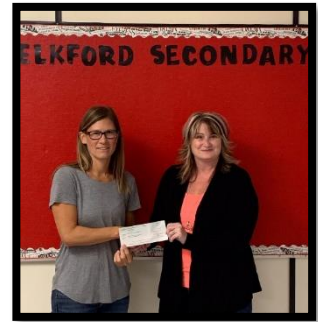
Breakfast Program

Our Youth Worker Amanda Culver is once again running the Breakfast Program. A variety of fresh and healthy foods are available to all students every day from 7:45-8:30am in the Foods room. Come and be a part of the warm and welcoming environment!

New this year Amanda has started a lunch time Baking Club on Mondays with students. Together they bake healthy and tasty treats that are served during the Breakfast Program. So far the banana bread has been a hit!

All students are encouraged to try their hand at baking and share their favorite recipes. Students can sign up with Amanda.

The Breakfast Program and Baking Club require lots of groceries and fresh ingredients. We have a very generous community that helps us make this all happen. A huge thank to goes out to Teck Coal, Western Financial (Elkford branch), EKCCU (Elkford branch) and Sparwood Food Share for their donations of time and money, both of which contribute to the success of ESS students.



ESS Chess Club

Mr. Percy and Mr. Inskip have started a chess club every Thursday from 12:05 – 12:40 in the metal shop. All are welcome to stop in and participate in a friendly game.

Benefits of learning to play chess

- raises IQ
- increases problem-solving skills
- improves spatial skills
- improves the memory
- exercises both sides of the brain
- increases creativity



Rock Solid

ESS and the grade 7s would like to say a big Thank You! To the Wapiti Ski Hill and the Hooper's for taking the time to coordinate the use of the ski hill for our Grade 7 Rock Solid leadership and team building day. We appreciated having an indoor and outdoor space to work as a team and have fun. Thank you!



**Join us at the
Elk Valley Job Fair**



We are looking for
**Bus Drivers,
Clerical,
Custodians and
Educational
Assistants in Elkford,
Sparwood & Fernie**

An SD5 HR Advisor will be at the
Fernie Community Centre
902 Highway 3, Fernie, BC
Oct 23, 2019 from 12:00-3:00pm

 **SCHOOL DISTRICT 5**
SOUTHEAST KOOTENAY
www.sd5.bc.ca