

PIC Parent Conference 2018

Parent Engagement for Innovative Education and Student Success

Conference Notes

April 7, 2018

Keynote Speaker

Marsha Vanwynsberghe: Life Adversity Coach and Author

Letting Go of the Why...the What is Everything

<http://www.marshavanw.com>

1. Own your own choices – let go of choices other people make
2. Be vulnerable – its ok to ask for help, admit you do not have answers
3. Let go of judgement – let go of fear of judgement. It holds you back.
4. Create boundaries – it's not selfish but is the highest form of self-respect. Don't make your kids responsible for your happiness.

“Daring to set boundaries is about having the courage to love ourselves, even when we risk disappointing others.” Brene Brown

“Love yourself enough to set boundaries. Your time and energy are precious. You get to choose how you use it. You teach people how to treat you by deciding what you will and won't accept.” Ann Taylor

“If comparison is the thief of joy, then our culture is being robbed blind.” Jon Foreman

Life is not fair – results in blaming others, victim spiral questioning (e.g., asking why). “What you are choosing NOT to own is actually owning you.”

See your children as people; your plan is not their plan.

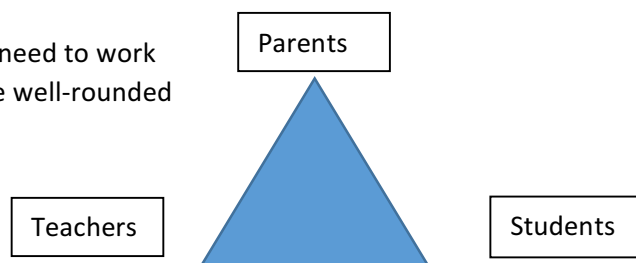
Can't ask children to do something we are not doing, e.g., set boundaries.

Be you because everyone else is taken.

Learn self-fulfillment and how one can find it

- **“Kids should not look elsewhere to find fulfillment. We should teach them to find fulfillment within themselves”.**
- **“By trying to help fix the kids, we are showing them that they cannot do it on their own, and that they need to look elsewhere for fulfillment”.**

All three angles need to work together to have well-rounded children.



Whenever there is an anxiety in your life; that's where you're missing boundaries.

Your story does not define you; your story can change at any time.

If kids are upset or show disrespect towards parents; leave the situation.

To reduce anxiety, exercise, sleep, read, playtime, etc. Create a list of what makes you happy.

To practice self-fulfillment, do the following:

- Grab a cup and name it a self-fulfilling cup
- Make cards and write on them what makes you happy

Place at least 3 cards in the self-fulfillment cup.

Breakout Sessions

Virginia Bateman: Mental Health and Addiction Team Nurse

Anxious Brains: What our Kids Need Us to Know

<http://www.waterloowellingtonlh.in.on.ca/>

71% of high school students are experiencing anxiety.

Do one thing different each night

TIP: Try this with your children: sit facing each other (e.g., chairs or sofa) and look at each other in the eyes for at least one minute... see how you both feel.

Practice sitting in discomfort.

TIP: Pick your least favourite type of music and crank it up (for at least an hour).

TIP: Do something uncomfortable in the middle of the week (e.g., Wednesdays).

- By doing something different and uncomfortable, it shows the kids that change is not impossible.

If kids are stressed, their cortisol level is too high and they don't hear anymore. Try co-breathing to help during a crisis.

Main parts of the brain:

- Reptilian Brain – automatic body functions (e.g., breathing)
- Limbic System - where cortisol/stress hormone is found
 - o Breathing is the best way to reduce stress
 - o Crying is second best way to reduce stress. This is because tears contain cortisol.
- Neocortex
- Girls' brains are developing until about age 21 and boys' until about 25. The neocortex is the last part of the brain to develop.

Symptoms of anxiety:

Symptoms	
Psychological	Physical
Stressed out	Shaky
Burned out	Disturbed sleep
Scared	Palpitations
Worried	Headaches
Frightened	Chest tightness
Panicky/Irritable	Stomach upset

Frequently Overlooked Symptoms:

- Angry outbursts

- Temper tantrums
- Aggression
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Oppositional/refusing behaviour
- Not completing school work on time/not at all

As parents we will sometimes need to “sit in discomfort” because we can’t force our children to make certain choices.

Jodi Albrecht & Maria Lotimer: Elementary Principal Instructional Leadership Coaches, WRDSB

Family Math Nights: A Look at Comprehensive Mathematics

Resources handed out at the session include:

[Fun Board Games to Support Elementary Math Learning](#)

A focus on math learning through problem solving now.

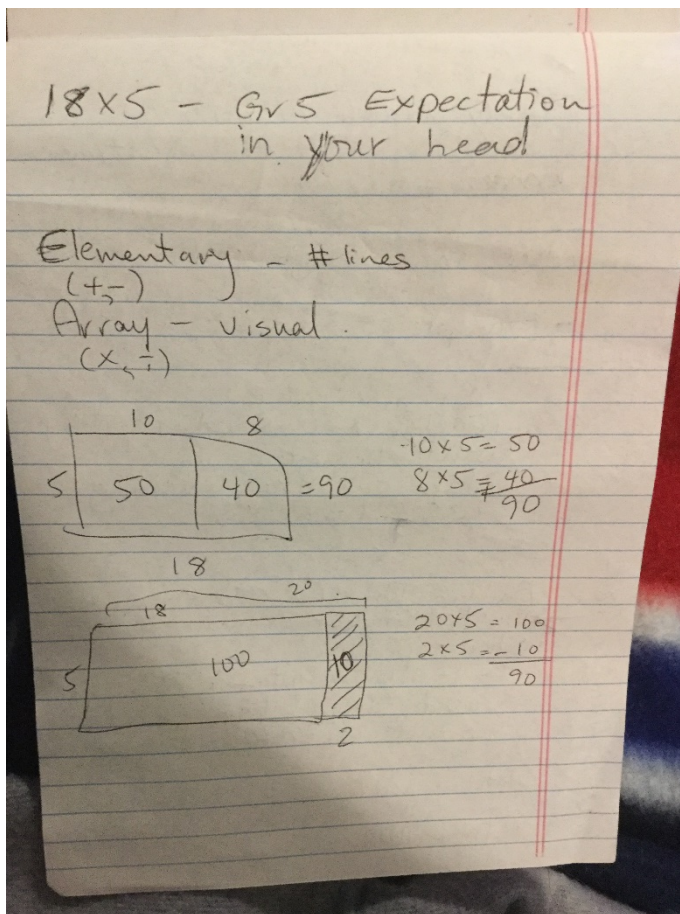
Some things you could do during a math night:

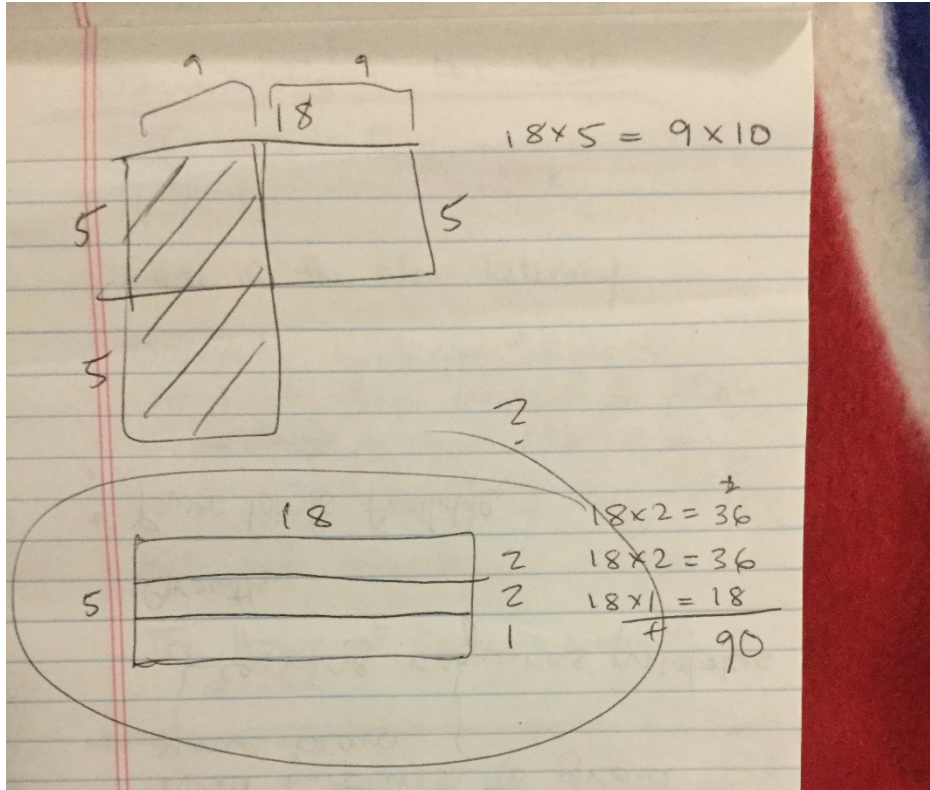
Teacher know where they want to go. Map out the learning using language.

Building Thinking Classrooms – You can watch Grade 3 Number Talks on Youtube to see examples of student methods of solving problems.

Show a problem – think about the strategy used, show how even adults use different ones.

Various examples of different ways of solving a problem are shown.





Building a risk free learning environment. See experts such as Jo Boler from Stanford, Carol Dweck.

Growth mindset – the power of YET. I can't do this...yet.

Fixed mindset – the tyranny of NOW.

Focus on building the bridge to get kids to YET. Praise process, effort, strategy instead of outcome.

We want to live in environments that foster growth, that teach and practice YET. We need mistakes to grow our brains and to learn. Learning requires mistakes.

Jessica Bodnar: Consultant K-8, Learning Services, WRDSB

What Parents Need to Know About EQAO

<http://www.eqao.com/en>

Purpose and structure of the tests.

- EQAO stands for the Education Quality and Accountability Office.
- EQAO is responsible for Ontario's provincial assessment program. EQAO's provincial tests assess student literacy (reading and writing) in grades 3, 6 and 10 and math skills in grades 3, 6 and 9.
- EQAO also coordinates student participation in national and international assessments on behalf of the Government of Ontario.

Try to help your child have the right mindset to be successful on testing. Talk to them about the test and remind them that this is not going to affect their report card grades.

Different levels (grades) and types of tests. There are examples of past tests at all grade levels on the EQAO website including sample answers. Your school can also provide you with sample tests and your child will likely see and participate in sample tests at school.

Who is tested and exemptions. For the grade 10 literacy test (OSSLT) everyone must write it successfully or complete a literacy course in order to graduate. For the grade 9 math EQAO test, everyone enrolled in an academic or applied math course must write it. In grades 3 and 6 some exemptions are possible. Any student with an IEP can get some accommodations when writing.

Future changes expected for EQAO. New [study](#) on assessment in Ontario just released suggests no standardized testing in Grade 3, no math assessment in Grade 9 and a different kind of assessment of literacy skills in Grade 10.

Emphasize EQAO is not an individual achievement, but this is a good opportunity for your child to learn how to take a test and to see how your child is doing compared to the school/province standards. Schools, boards and the Ministry of Education use EQAO not to rate schools or students but to determine where teaching practice needs change, what parts of curriculum are not being understood by students, where success is happening and trying to replicate that success elsewhere (what are the successfully schools/boards doing).

Benjamin Mikols: Officer with Waterloo Regional Police Services

Fentanyl Drug Use in Waterloo Region

www.publichealthontario.ca

History of opioids (oxy, fentanyl, morphine, heroin, methodone, other drugs in this family, etc)

Main source of fentanyl is super labs in China – packages of Fentanyl being shipped in plain packages across Canada.

0.1 grams of Fentanyl sells for \$40!

Overdose can occur quite innocently and easily (i.e. patch residue).

Fentanyl is a “master of disguise” – tasteless, odourless, and comes in many forms (pills, powder, patch, and can be tinted). The only smell that Fentanyl emits is when it is smoked – it will smell like burnt popcorn in this state.

Fentanyl is 1000X more powerful than Heroin.

Naloxone kits sell for \$150 each – misconception that they will “save you”, but rather the kit will simply buy time.

Communicate to youth that they need to call the police in the case of emergency – they are there to save and protect, their priority in these emergency cases is not to charge and penalize.

Stephanie Rozek: Executive Director, Hive Waterloo Region and Co-Founder of Marit Collective

Demystify the Web: Engaging Youth to Become Tomorrow's Digital Creators

hivewr.ca

www.marit.ca

Coding is the new literacy.

Diversity, inclusion and equity is important. We need these voices in the groups that are building/creating.

MIT – app inventor

The Hour of Code – hourofcode.com

Respect/Model the behaviour re technology for your kids. Teach them to not just be users, but creators. Keep lines of communication open with your kids and set clear boundaries.

Teach children to think critically and recognize fake news. Not everything they see online is true.

Communication: talk, talk, talk to your kids. Set boundaries together, empower them to make good choices.

Just because our kids are tech savvy doesn't mean that they are mentally ready and discern good info from bad.

Be involved in your child's online world.

Demonstrate conscious digital citizenship yourself.

When screen time is limited, be active in giving them other things to do to fill their time.

Dale Bernt: Program Consultant, WRDSB

Empowering Students and Engaging Parents Through HERO and GEM

plasticitylabs.com

Program started by Plasticity Labs as a workplace culture program. Adapted for schools.

What is HERO and GEM?

- HERO stands for
 - Hope – A feeling of wanting something to happen and believing that it could. Hope is active. Hope is wanting to achieve something and setting out to achieve that goal.
 - Efficacy – If you believe it, you can achieve it! Efficacy is successfully completing a task with hard work.
 - Resilience – The ability to become strong, healthy and successful again after a setback.
 - Optimism – A feeling or belief that what you hope for will happen. Having a positive outlook.
- GEM stands for
 - Gratitude – A feeling of appreciation or thanks.
 - Empathy – The feeling that you understand and share another person’s experiences and emotions.
 - Mindfulness – Awareness of your thoughts, emotions or experiences in each moment.

The program focuses on personal growth rather than connection with others – growth mindset. It supports the Ministry and Board goals around student and staff well-being.

Using the same terminology at home as used at school in the program helps solidify the message. We can see at home how it benefits our children.

Schools who want the program apply through Learning Services. Need a 90% staff commitment.

Students are surveyed three times a year and parents are surveyed at the beginning of the year.

We use the traits taught in this program in everyday life without realizing it.

We can use these traits at home. For example: mindfulness helps with self-regulation and empathy helps with sibling rivalry.

Brian Smith: Teacher, WRDSB

Google Classroom: How It Is Used by Teachers and Students

[Google Classroom info](#)

Expectations;

What to expect from Google classroom

-“Kids like that it doesn’t use paper”

-“You don’t need to search every link”

-“It’s easier to learn”

-“my favourite part is that you learn something new everyday”!

Three Types of content:

1. Announcements- This is information item, or launching off point, but requires no specific response from your student within the framework of Google classroom.
2. Question- This is a query posed by the teacher, with an expected response from the students within Google group. The teacher can make the responses visible to other students or can keep them private. Due dates can be included here as well.
3. Assignment- These are bigger projects that require the students to submit work to indicate that they have finished. There can be due dates as well as specific documents/files to be submitted by one teacher. Teachers can also make these assignments online.

Attachment types:

1. File - you can attach virtually any file type, as long as the students can read it
2. YouTube - The students can watch YouTube videos without leaving the classroom environment
3. Drive (view) - you can insert any file that exists in your Google drive for students to view and use as resource.
4. Drive (mass edit) - you can insert an editable and have students work on it.
5. Drive (individual copy) - insert file where each student gets their own copy.
6. Link - you can link to any space on the web and use this as a resource or a place to start.

Google classroom is not Google drive. Google classroom is a frame work for delivering content and Google drive is where content is created, collaborated, and shared.

Stephanie Ringwood: Consultant, WRDSB

What's Going On in the Classroom?

What questions do parents have about your child's classroom? The discussion was effectively facilitated using a structured set of topics and encouraging parent participation.

Topics that we covered in this facilitated discussion included well-being and classroom environment, resilience and mindset, mathematics strategy and developing conceptual understanding, prompts to elicit information from students about their school day, supporting students in French Immersion, homework, and spelling tests.

Many really good questions and related discussion:

- Why is mathematics taught in French in French Immersion programs, but EQAO conducts the testing in math in English for all students?
- How, as parents, we should not treat homework as a mechanism for observing what our child is doing in class. Homework is essentially extra practice, or emphasis for students, so if your child is not receiving homework as often as you would like, that is often a good sign. If a parent would like to learn more in that regard, they can connect with their child's teacher.
- A really intensive discussion on math strategies and how these differ from our generation.

Deepa Ahluwalia, Leanne Hughes & Denise O'Toole: members of the Equity Working Team, WRDSB
Equity Session with LGBTQ Focus

Summary Deepa, Leanne and Denise work closely together as member of the Equity Working Team at the WRDSB. They are very happy to have been invited to share their expertise today.

Details

Deepa started the session with the required Acknowledgment of the Indigenous Land statement

The presentation started with few questions that deal with the issue of this particular group of students. Some of these questions were:

What hurt you?

Tell a story about a present you have received or given.

What is Equality? Fair, good for everyone.

What is Equity? Better resource distribution.

The following questions were raised - How do we or teachers know when to apply either concept? The answer was: Know your students.

Where is the systemic inequity for this particular group of student? A: Acknowledging that there is a space for everyone, which is the core of "Inclusion".

The Equity Consciousness refers to "How aware or mindful we are".

A short video was also presented with the topic of Power and Privilege. The title of the video was The Race.

LGBT Terms The list of acronyms is long and continues to grow as more people come up with their unique set of identity issues that seem unfit for their unique circumstance. There seems to be a huge confusion about to call a certain person/student as there are no specific guidelines to do so and the Board just accepts them as they are.

Nicole Robinson: Indigenous Learning Team, WRDSB

Indigenous Focus in the Classroom

The importance of building relationships and engaging students. Circles are really helpful to engage students and to learn from each other in the circle. The students can see each other and are accountable to each other. Circles are an important part of Indigenous teachings and ceremonies. There is a breadth and richness to understanding Indigenous teachings and we need to integrate this into the learning through stories.

Nicole shared in a story format her family and learning journey and Indigenous teachings. This story telling approach really engages the audience, has a powerful impact and enhances the learning opportunity.

Nicole brought several different Indigenous teachings including a Wampum belt and provided rich history and information about Indigenous communities pre- and post-contact with the European settlers. This history was very informative and we discussed treaties, land acknowledgements, use of language, Haudensaunee Nations, Anishinaabeg people, Metis and Inuk and the medicine wheel. She provided an overview of the foundational belief systems of Indigenous communities and offered insight into the stigma and stereotypes that contribute to the marginalization of Indigenous people.

Every Nation of the world has gifts and we need to listen to these wisdoms.

Everything on this land is interconnected and we need to acknowledge and show gratitude to all aspects from what's under the ground to what is in the sky.

We need to have brave spaces to have these courageous conversations.

David Pope: Learning Services Department, WRDSB

OYAP: Experiential Learning Opportunities

Presenters PPT available [here](#).

Some programs that offer experiential learning opportunities in our board include:

- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)
- Specialist High Skills Major
- Dual Credit
- Tech Studies

In the next 20 years, 30% of new jobs will be in skilled trades. It's a great career path.

Specialist High Skills Major has 37 programs that offer certificates to prepare for future careers. Advantageous for admission into community college and apprenticeships.

New is the IBEW program free to Grade 12 students. It's an electrical apprenticeship program for students interested in being an electrician.

Dual credit is good for students who know what trade they are interested in as they can work on school and learning their trade at the same time.

Tech studies includes everything from green industries to computer engineering.

Cat Coode: Founder of Binary Tattoo

Safeguarding Your Online Identity

For information on some of the material discussed at the session and for links to resources for parents, follow <http://www.binarytattoo.com/internet-safety-for-kids/>

Summary Cat Coode is the founder of Binary Tattoo. She spent over a decade working as an engineer at Blackberry in the roles from software developer to senior management. In 2013, Cat recognized the need for people to better understand what their online identities looked like and how to manage them. Her motivation to help others was born out of her concern for her kids and the new generations growing up in an ever-changing digital landscape. Combining her love for teaching and her background in tech, Cat launched Binary Tattoo to help empower people with this knowledge so they can have a safe and positive online experience.

Cat used a PowerPoint presentation to deliver the content of her message. It was really well done and an extensive set of information was shared with the audience. As expected, the content of her presentation was very interesting and informative. Many aspects of the information share can be implemented at home by any parent interested in the safety of their children while using online assets.

Here is a summary of what she presented: - Definition of what a Binary Tattoo is: A digital (binary) signature or fingerprint (tattoo).

- Data about us: A permanent (forever) collection of information about us available online. This includes pictures, messages, status, Tweets, blogs, comments, etc. - What do we do online? There are two types of data: Curated data and non-curated data. The former means "I'm home and I don't care what you think" - Social Networks: strong appeal for kids - Driving and Internet: Analogy The Internet is not regulated at all - The COPPA law (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) kind of regulates this activity * Under 13: adds cannot be sold * [13 - 17]: Some data may be sold and must stay anonymous * Adults (18+): All data is a fair game

- Terms and Conditions on most websites: * Nobody reads them * Are designed to be confusing * Basically they mean "This is how we will make money off of you." * Free sites? Hardly! Information is worth everything * Most sites can track even the hardware that is being used to connect when online! - The good: * Instant connection and information * Global reach - The bad: * Information oversharing * Lack of privacy * Easy access to inappropriate content * Loss of empathy * No devices should be allowed in bedrooms and bathrooms because that's where problems happens - The ugly: * Looking for "Likes", source of "self-esteem" * FOMO syndrome (Fear Of Missing Out!) * Cyberbullying * Online predators * Addiction, a huge issue in Canada, it affects the physical and emotional aspects of a child - What do we do? * Learn about the digital world * Become good digital citizens * Reflect, Respect and Project -> Project: online presence not necessarily posted by oneself, but by others

There was a lengthy description of most of the online platforms used by children today. It included YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Kik, and online live streaming apps like Younow, Periscope, Facebook Live, Live.ly and video chats like Houseparty, Oovoo, Line, Monkey and many others.

Some of these tools have good reputation while others like Yellow, Ask.fun and others are questionable as they do not have any regulation about their users.

Children should be asked the following questions:

- What apps do you use? - Can you show me how do you use them? - Set expectations as well: make a contract with your users (children) and enforce it: "If you breach our contract you will lose your night of use of your device". There are templates that parents can use to draft a contract with the children.

Closing Keynote Speaker

Hon. Bardish Chagger, MP, Minister of Small Business and Tourism

Communities raise children and people are our best natural resources. Children want to belong and have connections with others. The school system needs to stay with the times to teach the skills and provide the opportunities to be good global citizens.

Bardish spoke of how teachers, Principals and the parent volunteers were positive connections for her when she was in school and offered a support system to help her be successful.

She emphasized the diversity in Waterloo Region and the importance of learning more about the uniqueness each person brings to the table. Schools are the places where this can happen. She learned about Canadian values, getting involved in school activities and developed her interest in science while at school. This was important for her own growth and to create new opportunities for her.

Children need support and guidance to achieve their goals and to strive for better. Parents are instrumental in getting children ready to contribute to society. Every role in society is important and necessary. We all need to be good listeners, share feelings and embrace feelings.

People need to be treated like people because they are people.

Allow young people to define themselves and embrace “help me help you”.

Be the best you that you can be.