

October 1, 2021

To Parents/Caregivers of our Students,

What a great September! Throughout the month, the students have been excited, engaged, safe, and learning! Although there might be many challenges around Alberta, St. Mark students have continued to be the leaders we expect and have thrived in our September learning environment:

- Our singing club, the Soul Singers, has reached its highest numbers ever.
- Our Braided Journeys events are growing and attracting all our students.
- Thirty-two (almost 20%) of our students have joined our soccer team.
- As a school we totally surpassed our fundraising goal for the Terry Fox run.
- An incredible 47 students (25%) have been great ambassadors of our school as part of our recreation (REC) academy.

All of this has been happening as our students continue to be leaders and follow all Alberta Health Services (AHS) procedures to keep each other, our staff, and our community safe.

We are so proud of our students!

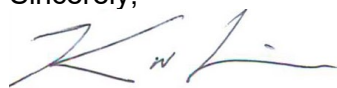
Our school has started an exciting and research-based shift in our assessment practices to further support your children's learning. We are pleased to say that our direction was supported by our School Advisory Council (SAC). For this school year, our grade seven and eight students will no longer be receiving percent grades in PowerSchool. Research has shown that percent grades hurt student self-esteem, motivation, and learning. We are going to shift our focus to creating an assessment relationship between our teachers and students. Our students will understand what they need to learn, how they need to demonstrate their knowledge, and how to learn from their mistakes to reach their highest potential.

The students will be directly assessed on the outcomes of the program of studies and encouraged throughout the year to grow their understanding until they reach their most accurate level of achievement at the end of the school year. They will be provided a summative percent grade in June, along with a final exam grade, to prepare them for the next year.

To support our grade nines and ensure they also benefit from our assessment shift, but not overwhelm them with what could feel like a significant change, we are moving towards delayed grading. The premise of this is to re-focus the students understanding of assessment towards a growth mindset not a fixed mindset. The students should be using the verbal and written feedback from their teachers to grow and learn. This will motivate and prepare them for their summative assessments, which will be reported as a percentage in PowerSchool. The students will appreciate that their will always be opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of the outcomes of the program of studies.

This is an exciting move for our school, but I am sure you might have questions. I will further present our plan and answer questions at our **next virtual SAC meeting on Tuesday, October 19th @ 6:30pm**. Also, feel free to contact your teachers or me at the school if you have any questions. Your child, like in previous years, will thrive at St. Mark school in this new direction. Always remember, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)

Sincerely,



Kevin N Myskiw
Principal