

Superintendent **NEWSLETTER**

November 19



Dear Gull Lake Families and Staff,

In my recent travels, I was reading an introduction by L. Frank Baum to his children's classic Fairy Tale, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. My reason for reading this work is because I am doing a collaborative project with my daughter Anna, a K-12 Art major at Western Michigan University. She is working on illustrations for a children's story and has asked me to recount some specific stories I used to tell my kids during their bedtime routine.

L. Frank Baum raised a very important topic in his introduction about the Fairy Tales of old, such as those published by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. To those of you who are familiar with these older works, the Brothers Grimm Fairy Tales were often astonishingly graphic in their description of consequences for poor decisions made by certain characters in their teaching stories. These stories were used by parents to reinforce important values and ethics their children would need to internalize in order to be successful adults. L. Frank Baum was seeking a way to reinforce positive values in a way that blended mystery and fantasy with teachings that did not involve some of the harsh consequences detailed by older classic children's literature.

In previous messages, I have talked about some of the ways social media is having a negative impact on our children. They are constantly bombarded with negative images and content that is designed not to teach important lifelong values, but rather to hook them as consumers of products that serve the bottom line of the media influencers that target our kids. In many ways, these influencers are using the harsh tactics of the old-school Fairy-Tale authors to get their message across. Stoking fear is an effective way to influence opinion.

One-way parents can address this trend is to dialogue with their kids about what they are seeing and hearing on social media. Our kids want and need the hope that we as caring adults can provide in their lives by example. When we discuss the world and try to make sense of it with our kids, we are letting them know there are better options for dealing with difficult situations. Talking to our kids is teaching them important values and wisdom for everyday living in an uncertain world. It is the constancy of our love and care for each other that should be the one certain thing we reinforce with our children. When our kids are equipped with this certainty, they can overcome any obstacles and hurdles and achieve their full potential.

Food for thought.

Have a wonderful weekend,

Best regards,

Raphael Rittenhouse/Superintendent
Gull Lake Community Schools



Updates

½ Days on November 22nd & 23rd.

End of 1st Trimester is November 23rd.

No School on November 24th – 26th.

First day of 2nd Trimester is November 29th.

Winter Break is December 20th – 31st.

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