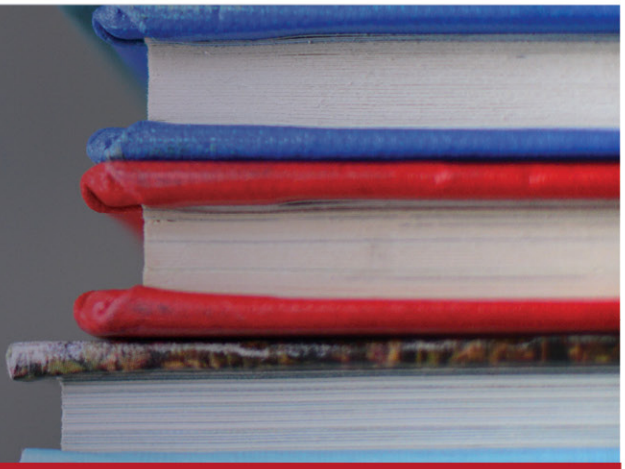
Superintendent Updates

February 19, 2021



Raph Rittenhouse
Superintendent

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Dear Gull Lake Families,

The other day, I went out for a walk in my neighborhood. It had been a long day of problem-solving and I was still deep in thought about how best to bring help to one situation in particular. My walking route is several miles in length, and I found myself looking up in surprise as I arrived back at my driveway as if no time had passed at all.

It was at this point that I realized I had not been observing anything during my walk, and that I had been "lost" in thought the entire time. In fact, I had missed several things along the way, such as the large group of Trumpeter swans that gather on the lake ice. I also did not get a count on the number of ice fishing shanties or the deer tracks that crossed my route like I usually do.

I realized that I had missed out on some of key reasons for taking a walk in the first place, which include taking in the sights and sounds and feeling the elements around me, which I have always found to be a restorative practice. Fortunately for me, I arrived home to find the neighborhood kids sledding down our back hill and my wife taking videos of them while they all happily chatted back and forth about each run down the hill.

It was a stark contrast to what I had just been experiencing, and I was reminded how valuable it is to be *present* in the moment. It is a lesson that we all keep learning in life, and one that keeps presenting itself in various forms, like the one I had just experienced. That moment left me feeling grateful for the day and all that it had brought, including the chance to work on a solution and the opportunity to witness the neighborhood kids having fun outdoors. As we go into the weekend, I encourage you to practice *mindfulness* in the moment, and to be fully present for those closest to you. Our kids want our attention, and they grow and thrive when we are really there with them.

Our Gull Lake staff do an amazing job being present and mindful in order to deeply engage kids in learning and relationship building. It is something for which we can be deeply grateful.

Be safe, be well,

Raphael Rittenhouse/Superintendent
Gull Lake Community Schools