

Superintendent NEWSLETTER

May 13



Dear Gull Lake Families and Staff,

Most of us can remember childhood moments that stand out because of lessons learned, or because they were fun or scary. There is a process that etches these experiences in our brains for future recall. One moment that stands out in my memory was a birthday gift and how I used it. I was living in Northern Wisconsin at the time and attending Niagara Elementary with my siblings. I had been making my wishes known to my parents that I really wanted a pogo stick for my birthday present. I wasn't too sure the message was getting through because my folks were pretty good at keeping their cards to their vest and did not want to spoil the surprise.

When my birthday arrived, I was in such a state of wanting to know, that my parents pushed up the timeline for opening presents. As luck would have it, there was the coveted pogo stick wrapped in a box that gave it away even before I could open it! Upon opening the gift, I rushed outside and immediately began attempt after attempt to imitate what I had seen so many other kids expertly demonstrate with their own pogo sticks. I remember the sense of frustration at not being able to control my own body or the pogo stick, and how difficult it would be to actually master the skill. A few of my older siblings tried to help me, but it was beyond their patience level, and I eventually found myself alone with the pogo stick and my dwindling prospects for success.

I remember wondering why none of my skilled friends had ever shared their difficulty with mastering their pogo sticks. All I had seen was the evidence of their skill and how much they were enjoying the rewards of being able to use them. At this point, some internal drive kicked in, and I made the decision to stick with it until I could master the skill. My desire to learn overcame the frustration of my first attempts. There was no one left to hear my complaints and I remember grimly jumping on again and again, at first being thrown to the ground on the first hop. Eventually, I made it through two very disjointed hops, then three, then four...now encouraged by these first halting improvements. My second wind kicked in and I can remember the moment I was able to stay upright at will. The sweet thrill of success after such difficulty and early failure was overwhelming.

My parents had gone into town to run some errands during the time I was improving. When they returned, they found my pogo stick lying on the ground with the rubber stopper worn completely through. The front lawn was covered in round indentations from my endless repetitions. When they stepped inside to check on me, they found a very satisfied kid still flushed with the success of the day.

My wish for your student is that they always have the luxury of initial failure when they decide to step up to a difficult challenge. Improving and growing requires courage and risk-taking but is so often rewarded by the outcome. Encountering failure in pursuit of new skills builds resilience and sets the stage for future success. Observant parents and teachers recognize when kids need the next challenge, and they help engineer these growth opportunities in ways that are developmentally appropriate.

Here are examples of [GLCS Good Things](#) that happen when kids and caring adults work together on new skills.

Enjoy your weekend and encourage your child to try something new!



Updates

GLHS Student Senate Blood Drive
May 16, 2022, 8:00 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.
Gull Lake High School

GLHS Band Spring Concert
May 17, 2022, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
GL Center for the Fine Arts

GLMS Band Spring Concert
May 24, 2022, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
GL Center for the Fine Arts

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raphael Rittenhouse".

Raphael Rittenhouse/Superintendent
Gull Lake Community Schools

www.gulllakecs.org