Dear families,

There are several exciting new things happening as we work with your child(ren) on becoming more independent and self-reflective learners.

As you know, the BC Government has implemented a new and exciting curriculum. The biggest changes to the curriculum are the core competencies: Thinking (Creative and Critical), Communication, and Personal/Social Responsibility. Students are now not only required to learn content (ex. 2+2= 4), but also curricular competencies or skills (communicating, reflecting, exploring, explaining, justifying, etc.; all the metacognitive stuff!). This allows students to go deeper and learn the **why** behind the content and concepts, instead of just memorizing facts. In order to support this way of learning, the intermediate team will be doing **digital portfolios** for all core subjects this year.

Why portfolios?

Digital portfolios are used as a tool to **make learning visible**. Portfolios are a **personalized** and **differentiated** form of assessment that provide students the opportunity to show their learning in a way that makes sense to them. Portfolios allow students to choose how to **communicate** their understanding and must be **creative** and **critical** thinkers as they need to justify why they selected or created specific pieces. Digital portfolios also allow for students to work with technology, becoming increasingly proficient and responsible digital citizens. Additionally, students are involved in reflection and self-evaluation, so become more aware of and engaged in their own learning.

What is the format?

There will be many things added over the course of the year and will offer a snapshot of the progress of your child. They are not intended to only show the final product of learning, but rather the process. The portfolios will focus on the curricular competencies (as mentioned above), however the artifacts, or demonstrations of learning, will stem from the content studied. Essentially, students are working on their core competencies via the content. As a result, we encourage you to look at the different examples of work your child chooses to upload as a representation of the skills they are acquiring, as well as look at the artifact itself for content.

 So… the children are being set free with technology?

No. Portfolios do not replace good teaching. Students will have lessons, guided practice, partner/group work opportunities, and individual work. We will still be addressing curricular components. They will just have more opportunities for choice on how to complete their work and how to demonstrate their learning.

We will also be group brainstorming and working on portfolios, in a structured, guided manner. Children will have support and teaching around being responsible with technology, and how to use the new apps and platform to create their portfolios.

What technology will be used?

We will be using an app/website called **Freshgrade**. This app is supported by the district, is user-friendly, all the information is stored in Canada, and no identifying information is attached besides teacher name. Most of you have already signed the consent form.

Please note that the learning goals ("I can" statements) that you will find in the portfolio are for the entire school year. There may be one or several examples of student learning in each of the learning goals over the course of the year. List of themes or material studied will be available either during or the end of each term for your reference and to help provide context.

What is GSuite?

GSuite (Google Suite for Education) allow students to access to collaborative tools such as google classroom, drive, docs, and slides, and many others. These accounts are made at the district level, and user names are the child's first name and initial and a random computer generated number. Its purpose is to allow for student and teacher collaboration as well as to save their work from home, school computers or iPads, or their own devices easily and quickly so that they have remote access and a lower likelihood of losing work or projects (especially off a shared iPad, for example). It will also allow for them to be part of Google Classroom forums (with event/homework calendars as well as interactive assignments etc) and allow for incredibly easy uploading to their Digital Portfolios. This account will prove especially useful as we prepare students for middle school as the account will follow them until grade twelve. GAFE is actively being used at all school levels and is an inevitable tool as students move forward.

Access to the above account does by no means replace engaging and quality teaching and learning. It will not increase screen time for students. It is simply a tool in today's modern education world, that allows learners to share their knowledge and store and share their learning and creations. Student work has been stored in similar (yet primitive) ways in the past for several years.

How do I access Freshgrade?

An email invitation will be sent to the email you provided the school. Please ensure to check your junk mail just in case. The portfolio format will keep you in the loop of your child's learning throughout the whole school year. You are invited and encouraged to provide positive feedback and ask questions in the comment section at any time. The digital portfolio has been approved as an option for schools in the district in lieu of a traditional report card and will act as such for your child this year. At the end of each term, you will see an overall teacher assessment in the portfolio as well as your child's self-assessment(s). We encourage you to comment in your child's portfolios regularly. They love feedback and positive reinforcement:)

Thank you in advance for your support and collaboration!