



Percy Baxter
Middle School

101 Mink Creek Road
Whitecourt, AB T7S1S2
780-778-3898
www.percybaxter.ca



ROCK STARS REVIEW

ADMINISTRATOR'S MESSAGE — Ms. Sorensen, Assistant Principal

"The most precious jewels you'll ever have around your neck are the arms of your children"
-Author Unknown

WOW! Here we are, breathe in and breathe out! Five months into a school year amidst a Global Pandemic and to say we have worked through all the up's and down's together Percy Baxter Strong, Whitecourt Strong, and Alberta Strong would be an understatement. As an Administration Team we are beyond thankful for the continued support and positive messages we receive from our parents and caregivers; because, without all of you we would not be where we are today. Thank you for holding us up. To our families we say, "thank you" - you are truly the unsung local heroes and we cannot thank you all enough for trusting us to hold your children, the most precious jewels, during this unprecedented time.

As we approach the month of February, there are a few important dates for parents and caregivers to be aware of. On February 4th and 5th all teachers in Northern Gateway will be attending the North Central Teachers' Convention. Teachers take part in professional learning sessions on curriculum, assessment, instruction and bring engaging new ideas back to the classroom. There will be no school on these days.

Parent Teacher Interviews will be held on February 24th and 25th, your child's teacher will be in contact with you to schedule an interview time. We are looking forward to these interviews as we have missed seeing our parents and caregivers in the building. We cannot wait to connect with you MORE in regards to your kiddos and their academic achievements and areas of growth.

There will be no school on Monday, February 15th for Family Day. We hope all have a safe and enjoyable Family Day.



Northern Gateway
Public Schools

Wanting to stay connected to Percy Baxter school? Look for updates and school news via the PBS Facebook page!



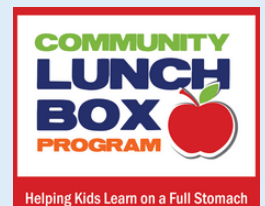
PARENT REMINDERS

- Over 30% of our parents currently are not using Parent Portal. Please be sure to login to see your child's attendance and academic progress. Progress Reports are no longer being sent home. Please login to PowerSchool from our Percy Baxter webpage and then click on the Parent Portal Login link: or click the following link: <https://ps.ngps.ca/public/>. Please login using the username and password you created. If you have never created an account or you have any difficulties, please contact the school and we will be happy to help you.

Parent Portal Login

SchoolCashOnline

- School fees are now past due - if you have not yet paid your Technology Fees of **\$31.50** please pay via school cash online or contact the office to make arrangements.
- We are using all the emergency breakfast and lunches provided by The Community Lunchbox Program. If you are able to support this very worthwhile cause please make a donation to the through school cash online or the Community Lunch Box Website.



- Attendance is done daily at 8:55 and 12:46. Attendance calls will be generated to go home for all unexcused absences by 9:15 and 1:15. A call will still go home if they arrive after attendance calls are generated or we have not been notified of an absence in both am and pm. Please call us at 780-778-3898 to notify if your child is away. If your child arrives late please bring them to the main school door.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT.....

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

KLOEY RATZLAFF

G
R
A
D
E

6



LUCAS WILSON

G
R
A
D
E

7




TREYDEN JAMES

G
R
A
D
E

8



February 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 ONLINE STUDENTS RETURN TO IN-PERSON LEARNING	2	3	4 TEACHERS CONVENTION NO SCHOOL	5	6
7	8	9	10 VIRTUAL SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING 7pm	11	12	13
14 Happy Valentine's Day	15 FAMILY DAY NO SCHOOL	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 	25 VIRTUAL PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEWS 5-8pm	26	27
28						



2020/2021
Percy Baxter School
Bell Schedule

TIME	BLOCK
8:55	Bell
8:55-9:05	TAGS
9:05-9:52	BLOCK 1
9:55-10:42	BLOCK 2
10:45-11:32	BLOCK 3
11:35-12:05	BLOCK 4
12:05-12:25	LUNCH BREAK A
12:26-12:46	LUNCH BREAK B
12:47-1:34	BLOCK 5
1:37-2:24	BLOCK 6
2:27-3:14	BLOCK 7
3:15	Dismissal

My Heroes of COVID-19

**"Even as we grieved, we grew. Even as we hurt, we hoped. Even as we tire, we try."
~ Amanda Gorman**

I recently heard a radio story of a first grade teacher who was teaching her students virtually when she accidentally released gas, making a loud noise. The response of the children was priceless. I laughed so hard at their joy, innocence and delight that tears ran down my face. Soon those tears turned to ones of sadness. Listening to the purity in the precious giggles of each child, on a computer in their home, connecting with their teacher and classmates, yet physically alone, struck me as terribly heartbreaking. *These small children are my heroes.*

I know a seven year old boy who lives and breathes all things hockey. School, not so much! With ADHD he nearly climbs the walls and his single, working mama is nearly pulling out her hair! With the cancellation of his sport, this little guy is suffering through a loss so great, it is like a death to him. It was a lifeline not only for him but his exhausted mother. *The kids who have lost their sports, music, drama productions and extra curricular activities are my heroes.*

Another child I know is supposed to graduate high school in June. Such a milestone to celebrate and a year that is meant to be full of memories, relationships and excitement. It is her last year at school and possibly at home, yet is filled with many disappointments and losses. Thankfully she is focused on exams, college applications and part time jobs or she, like many graduates, would sink into an abyss of desolation. Through tears, she sobbed, "it is not fair! This is not how my last year is supposed to go!" *The graduating class of 2021 are my heroes.*

I was curious as to what others felt were the most difficult and what, if anything, has been positive about COVID. In conversing with other children, the predominant responses were: I miss my friends, I miss my cousins and grandparents, masks are annoying, I miss the freedom of sitting and playing with who I want. I miss my sports, my lessons, my practices, normal life.

An overwhelming response was: *"There is nothing good about COVID."*

On a personal level, I felt bittersweet sorrow observing my teenager build a snowman with her brother. Watching her giggle and be silly opened the floodgates for me. You see, this child has suffered through the deepest, darkest pit of depression I have ever seen. COVID seemed to slam the door on all hope, light and comfort. She retreated so far into herself I did not know if I would ever be able to reach her. But together, with the help of professionals, family and teachers, she battled hard, pushed through and celebrated the moments when the sun shone. Watching her now, I can cautiously say there are more good days than bad. I know the depression would have still been there, but COVID certainly accentuated the symptoms ten fold. *The kids who are fighting through mental illness are my heroes.*

These stories are far from unique. COVID-19 seems to have brought a despondency and heaviness to our children unlike anything else. As parents, we cannot pull our children out of their despair by ourselves. We absolutely must *reach out to friends, family and professionals*. We must focus, point out and grasp onto the brief moments of normalcy, joy and *delight* like our lives depend on it. Maybe that is the secret to ours and our children's survival: *to seek out the silver lining*.

My message to the students in Northern Gateway Public Schools and beyond is this:

I am so sorry that everything is the way it is and wish I could tell you that everything will go back to the way it was before. I know it is not easy and you hate so many parts of COVID. I know your hearts are breaking and no one can stop the pain.

But I know that the adults in your life: parents, teachers, doctors, counsellors, grandparents, aunts and uncles are all so proud of you. We will continue to love you, stand by you, get you mental health help when you need it, rejoice with you in all you are succeeding at and all you are overcoming.

I am sorry that you are missing out on so much, but please do not overlook the strength and resilience that is growing inside of you. Just like precious diamonds are created by tremendous pressure, great beauty and strength is being created in you. You are learning to think and act for yourself. You are learning to question everything you read and hear.

You are learning that the **most valuable things in life are not things** but people, relationships and connection. I know this because that is what you are telling me.

As I reflect on the past 10 months, I believe that the real heroes are the children. May we all continue to savor in their resilience, adaptability and tenacity. Please, tell a young person today how very proud you are of them. Please tell them that *they are your hero*.

For Mental Health Support go to www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/page16759.aspx
Call Helpline 1-877-303-2642 or Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868

"Perhaps the butterfly is proof that you can go through a great deal of darkness yet still become something beautiful"
~Beau Taplin

This article was submitted by Tammy Charko BA, BSW, RSW. Tammy is Northern Gateway Public School's Student Support Facilitator. She is a support for schools, students, parents and caregivers to promote success in school. Tammy advocates for students and families, providing a link to the community programs. Tammy has been a registered social worker for more than 20 years and is a mother to 4 teenagers.



Northern Gateway
Public Schools

2021-2022 Official School Year

August

M	T	W	T	F
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

September

M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

October

M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

November

M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

December

M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

January

M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

February

M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28				

March

M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

April

M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

May

M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

June

M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

Instructional Days (Students) 184

Non-instructional Days (Teachers) 11

Total Operational Days 195

First and Last Day of Instruction for students

Vacation/Days in Lieu For Parent-Teacher Interviews

Teachers' Convention
February 10 & 11 – Onaway to Fox Creek
March 10 & 11 – Valleyview

<u>Month</u>	<u>Instructional Days</u>		<u>Non Instructional Days</u>		<u>Operational Days</u>	
August	0		2		2	
September	21		0		21	
October	19		1		20	
November	19		2		21	
December	13		0		13	
January	19	91	1	6	20	97
February	17/18		2/1		19	
March	18/17		1/2		19	
April	18		0		18	
May	19		1		20	
June	21	93	1	5	22	98
TOTAL	184		11		195	

Aug 30 - 31	- Staff Planning & Development Days
Sept 1	- First Day for Students
Sept 6	- Labour Day
Oct 8	- Staff Planning & Development Day
Oct 11	- Thanksgiving Day
Nov 10	- Staff Planning & Development Day
Nov 11	- Remembrance Day
Nov 12	- Day in Lieu of Parent Teacher Interviews
Dec 20-Jan 3	- Christmas Vacation
Jan 31	- Staff Planning & Development Day
*Feb 10 & 11	- Teachers' Convention (Onoway to Fox Creek)
Feb 18	- Staff Planning & Development Day (Valleyview)
Feb 21	- Family Day
*Mar 10 & 11	- Teachers' Convention (Valleyview)
Mar 11	- Staff Planning & Development Day (Onoway to Fox Creek)
Mar 28-Apr 1	- Spring Break
Apr 15	- Good Friday
Apr 18	- Easter Monday
May 19	- Staff Planning and Development Day
May 20	- Day in Lieu of Parent Teacher Interviews
May 23	- Victoria Day
Jun 29	- Last Day for Students
Jun 30	- Staff Planning & Development Day