

Bowden Grandview students assist author in writing his next bestseller

For Immediate Release, January 23, 2017: Students are learning all about the impact and intricacies of creating a story through a unique, yearlong writer-in-residence program underway at Bowden Grandview School.

Sigmund Brouwer, award-winning author of nearly 30 novels, launched the program last fall through a high-spirited Rock & Roll writers presentation to students and families at the Kindergarten – Grade 12 school. He has kept in close touch with individual classes through technology and will visit the school each month for the rest of the year. He kicked the excitement up a notch when he visited Bowden Grandview earlier this month, by enlisting student feedback on his work in progress.

"I believe that focusing on The Story is the key to motivating kids to become better at reading and writing," said Brouwer, who splits his time between Nashville and Red Deer with his family. "Great stories are like great songs – they grab your feelings. I approach these kids like a story ninja, sharing my excitement about the great power of a story and telling them some of my ninja tricks for making writing more fun. They begin to think of themselves as story ninjas and that's the engine that motivates them in reading and writing.

"My job is to help teachers motivate kids to read and write, because this is how they will be more successful in everything they do as adults. Reading and writing opens up many different worlds – students become more empathetic to others, more creative, more intuitive in how they solve problems – all by getting stories into their hands. I think teachers have the most difficult job there is, because they are helping kids reach their dreams. The administration and staff here at Bowden Grandview have been amazing in their great focus to help students flourish in reading and writing. This whole school is focused on a targeted literacy initiative that I'm very proud to be involved with."

Brouwer has a new story underway and is incorporating his own story development into his work at Bowden Grandview. Every student in Grades 3-8 will read each chapter as he finishes it, giving feedback and suggestions on his work. When it is published next year, they will know they helped a bestselling author in shaping his story.

"I've really been enjoying his visits and it's important to me, because one of the things I'd like to be when I grow up is a writer," said Genevieve Chapman, Grade 5 student. "My teacher says my writing is descriptive and interesting, which made me proud. I also love to read, because vocabulary is very exciting and books take me to another world. I'd like to be able to do that for people – see a story in their mind and be the person who gives that story to them. It is so fun to be working with a real author – Sigmund asked if I could provide him with a 300 word review on his work. That made me really happy to know I will be impacting a real book that will be published!"

The Bowden school's administration team built some of the writer-in-residence costs into their budget, and their 'Friends of Grandview' group supported this school priority. Principal Jeff Thompson said Sigmund Brouwer has sparked excitement across all grades.

"Sigmund's excitement for reading and writing is infectious," said Principal Thompson. "Our students can't help but get very engaged when he takes them through a story idea or writing activity. He has a unique ability to engage a grade three room full of eight year olds, and then walk down the hall to our grade eight room and do it all over again at the level that will excite and engage that age group. He has enhanced our school wide literacy goal tremendously!"

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