

Education Matters- Giving Children the Empathy Advantage in your home, school or community to create a more just and caring world

The question parents and educators always ask themselves is “What do kids really need to be happy and successful?” It seems lately the message the world has been giving children is to stress personal uniqueness and self-interest. Critics claim that this has created the most entitled, competitive, self-centered and individualistic generation on record. The current rage of taking “selfies” is indicative of this. Is this trend making the world a better place and helping children to be happy and successful? Current research would indicate just the opposite is occurring. Dr. Michele Borba says “The Selfie syndrome is permeating our society and slowly eroding our children’s character.” It is the root cause of bullying, weak moral reasoning, and mental health problems in our students.

Dr. Borba is an internationally renowned educational psychologist and an expert in parenting, bullying and character development who appears regularly on Today and has been featured on Dateline, The View, Dr. Phil and Dr. Oz. She has written a book called “Unselfie – Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World”. When asked “What do kids really need to be happy and successful?”, Michele Borba’s answer is “Empathy”. She believes that empathy is widely underestimated and low on child rearing agendas, but that it is integral to children’s future success and well-being. Her book “Unselfie” confirms that empathy can be instilled and it is composed of teachable habits that can be developed, practiced and lived. In her book, she explains that empathy is what lays the foundation for helping children live one essential truth: We are all humans who share the same fears and concerns and deserve to be treated with dignity.

The Beautiful Plains School Division believes strongly in this statement and has empathy as one of its core values. To this end the division has brought Dr. Michele Borba to Neepawa to speak to educators and parents about how to instill empathy in our children. On September 17<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Borba conducted a workshop for all Beautiful Plains School Division staff at the Yellowhead Centre and she spoke to the parents and the general public that evening at NACI at 7:00 pm. The evening session was sponsored by the Beautiful Plains School Division and was free to anyone wishing to attend. More information about Dr. Borba and her latest research can be found on her website [www.micheleborba.com](http://www.micheleborba.com) or on Twitter [www.twitter.com/micheleborba](https://www.twitter.com/micheleborba). The presentation was also filmed on Access 12 and will be televised on their channel.