

Elementary Board Report

A Paws-itive Learning Community Striving to Meet the Individual Needs of Each Student as a Whole Child

Our theme for the month of May is diversity. The following shares a couple of efforts this month:

Smarter Balanced Assessment Learning

We are almost through our first year of participating in the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAs) in grades three through five. Our students and staff have been great. They have each done their best to help those involved feel as comfortable and supported as possible through the process. We have finished the third, fourth, and fifth grade ELA and Math portions in class. Fifth grade has also finished their Science MSP portion. Around ten families have officially chosen to withdraw from all or portions of the assessments. We now have two more days to complete make up tests for those who were absent, though not all students will be back in time to do so.

Like any learning organization, we have learned a great deal from our experience. For example, it makes a difference knowing details about the testing format prior to testing so that we can better support our students. Once we participated in the third grade ELA, we were able to debrief together as third, fourth, and fifth grade teams (not on any specifics, mind you). We learned that the ELA portion was more intensive for students than the math portion. For example, many third grade classes tested all day for at least three days on the ELA portion, compared to two or so hours on average for the math portion. The ELA assessments also confused some of our students with the use of two testing booklets, one for the questions and prompts, the other for the answers and writing. Too many students had difficulty matching up the correct questions and prompts with their answers. Given this and some other factors, our grade level teams have shared their wishes to transfer to the electronic version next year. We will learn if we have the financial and hardware resources to do so. The state also had difficulty giving out the correct classroom activities for the paper and pencil tests, giving us the wrong ones twice until finally getting us the correct one the day before implementing. We were able to do proctor training the Wednesday before testing. Many of our staff were trained as proctors. This was great, but not as helpful when trying not to shut down student learning programs for testing. We learned that we need to be able to train more substitute teachers so that they can help without dipping into our support staff. We have learned a great deal more from our SBA experiences. Right now, we are happy to be at this point in the process.

Bicycles in 5th Grade PE

We shared last month about preparation for our first foray into including bicycling in fifth grade P.E. Last week, our fifth graders learned about the bicycle ABCs, bicycle safety, helmet fitting,



bicycle fitting and more. Just today, we had our first two classes actually riding bicycles on our campus course during P.E. It was a lot of fun to participate. Rob Bucklin has obviously put a great deal of time and effort into preparing. Katie Kipp was also kind enough to help with riding support today. Our students were excited and ready to go. They got their helmets worked out, found their assigned bicycle, got a quick briefing and pep talk and they were off. Students rode on our painted course, working on such things as comfortable riding, riding with one hand at a time off the handle bars (preparing for signaling), signaling for turns, obeying signage (like stop signs), keeping their front tires on the white lines as long as



possible, and more. All of the students appeared to have a lot of fun. Students at recess seemed to enjoy watching what they may be doing in P.E. someday. We also learned a lot. For example, the experience provided a great reminder that although they are all fifth graders, each student and class have different skill sets. Another reminder was that of motivation. When students are motivated, they will do their best to make positive choices, persist, and

strive to reach learning targets. A couple of questions have arisen from the first lessons. How can we best support students who are not able to ride bikes when our number of adults to support them limited and why are there not quick release skewers on the seat post adjustments for the smallest bikes and should this be changed?



Tomorrow brings our second day of riding and three classes of new students ready to ride bikes during P.E. for the first time. I am sure it will be fun. Thank you to all who have helped to make these riding experiences a reality.

Community Member(s) of Mystery

Our May Community Member of Mystery is in her eleventh year working at La Center Elementary School. She grew up in Vancouver and now lives in Battleground with her children and her husband of almost 17 years. Her son is in fifth grade and her daughter is in second grade. Interestingly, she met her husband when she worked in the movie business prior to becoming a teacher. This Community Member of Mystery loves animals, yoga, walking, hula hooping, and is a movie nut. At times, it can feel like she spends most of her time supporting her children in softball and football. Otherwise, she enjoys going to the beach, shopping, and going to garage sales with her family. She played the violin for five years when she was younger and would like to start playing again. Who do you think our Community Member of Mystery for May is?

Our April Community Member of Mystery has worked in the elementary two to three days a week for the last three years. This will increase to full-time during the 2015-2016 school year. She grew up in Lake Oswego, Oregon and still lives in the same house of her childhood. The college she graduated from is from a little farther, the University of Montana. She did come back to Oregon and married her high school sweetheart. They have been married for 23 years. Our community member of mystery enjoys reading and gardening. She also enjoys fishing and camping. Her fishing mostly includes fishing for trout, salmon, and steelhead. For many years, she and her husband tent camped, but now enjoy camping in their truck camper. One of her favorite camping outings was a three-week trip through Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, and California. Who do you think was our Community Member of Mystery for April?



If you guessed Lisa Bires, elementary psychologist, you are correct.