Elementary Board Report

A Paws-itive Community Learning and Playing Together

Our theme for the month of January is goal setting. Setting goals helps us to decide what we want and how to make a plan to make it happen. Some goals are long term and take longer to accomplish. Some goals are short term and can be accomplished more quickly. The following shares some of the shorter and longer term goals we are working on lately:

Watch D.O.G.S.
The overall student experience on our playground has improved in recent years, but we can always do better. We also understand that family involvement in our students' lives can have positive impact on their learning and well-being. At the beginning of the school year, I asked our counselor, Sherri Birgensmith, to work toward the goal of finding ways we can involve our families and community members in helping our students out at recess. She has found a program we believe will help us in our efforts and hope to have it up and running by the end of February. This nationally recognized and effective program is called Watch D.O.G.S. (**D**ads **O**f **G**reat **S**tudents). Basically, dads, grandfathers, uncles, and other father-figures volunteer for at least one day each year. One of our main focal points will be the playground and recesses. Volunteers will work to do such things as help students learn new games, have fun playing together, and just talk with someone they may see as a positive role model. They will also help out during the rest of the school day. We have already had very successful experiences with father-figure volunteers who focus on specific students who could use the extra one-on-one time. Two Watch D.O.G.S. have already volunteered to be the leaders of our school-wide program. Next we will communicate and gather volunteers for a pizza meeting where we will work on training and preparing for successful support of our students. I look forward to seeing the positive impact our Watch D.O.G.S. will have on our students and their learning.

Cafeteria Support
With the state's recent budget cuts comes the need for our learning community to work together in different ways. I have greatly appreciated how staff have gone out of their way to find how we can best support our students. One example is how when speaking with our para-educators about reduction of hours, many have asked if they may volunteer during the hours being reduced so that students will continue to receive the same support. These attitudes are impressive and are a part of why I feel so lucky to work with them. Another recent example has been our certificated staff's work to support our students in the cafeteria at lunch time. With the upcoming reduction in hours, we have been working together to find how we can supervise and support students in the cafeteria with certificated staff so that para-educators can focus and supervise on the playground. Teachers have been working to create the best plan and problem solve so that we can all work together and be ready for our February 17 starting date. We all will contribute to the needed efforts. Many have been so kind as to offer their time beyond what is being asked so that we may provide the best environment possible. Again, this is another reason why I feel so lucky to be a part of our learning community.

Love & Logic
Our teachers constantly strive to improve classroom management, discipline, and supporting our students in learning effective social skills. Many have been interested in

learning more through a well-known professional development program called Love and Logic. We have an onsite Love and Logic trainer of parents, Joni Hancock. She taught the series of parent workshops for our community about three years ago. Recently Joni traveled to Colorado to be trained and certified as a teacher trainer. She will be starting our first session of Love and Logic teacher workshops this week. Forty staff have signed up to participate in nine unpaid sessions of 90 minutes each. Joni will also be teaching a parallel series of workshops for parents in our community. I believe that the parent version is also filled to capacity. The workshops will greatly help our staff and parents to work together in supporting our students. I look forward to experiencing the results.

Intervention Teams

We have a great opportunity to improve our systems to provide interventions and better help our students to reach standards. Our intervention teams (Special Education, Math Club, and Reading Club) have met the past three months to work on how we can best support our students in need. Just this week, all staff has started participating in envisioning a new, more effective intervention system. We have started together to brainstorm a potential "perfect" system of support. At Friday's early release, we will continue to hone our ideas toward a vision of what we are striving for. Further collaboration in February will help us to detail out what steps we believe we need to take in our journey. With the thinking that has been shared so far, I believe we are on the path to further student success and am excited to be a part of it.