Elementary Board Report

A Paws-itive Community Learning and Playing Together

Our theme for the month of October is Citizenship. We all have an important role in creating a Paws-itive community for our classrooms, school, neighborhoods, and town. We show we are good citizens by following the rules, working as a team to get things done, being kind, and helping others. Many have shown great efforts in the area of citizenship. I thought this could be a good time to also briefly share some of our school focal points/efforts for this school year. These focal points/efforts will help us to realize our hope to meet each student's needs as a whole child.

Student Empowerment

Our school is for our students. We believe they need to be empowered and be an integral part of how we do things. Many efforts are being made by our students to do so. Bobcat Ambassadors is starting up for the year. Students continue to help us to improve our recess experiences, such as providing ideas to improve the safety of such games as 4-Square and develop ways to practice musical instruments at recess. Mrs. Crandall's students are helping us to learn more about what our students believe would effectively recognize student accomplishments and achievements.

Supporting Professionalism and Decision-Making

Our teachers are professionals. Among many positives, they are well trained, very experienced, caring, passionate, and reflective. They are also the ones who are directly involved in supporting our students daily. Given opportunities and support, they use their passions to improve our learning environments and effectiveness. We trust them, strive to directly communicate our ideas with them, and provide opportunities for reflection and growth. They help us find our path.

Staff Finding Their Effective Ways/Strengths/Styles

As mentioned, our teachers are professionals. Like our students, each is different, including their areas of strengths and styles. While we differentiate for our students, teachers need to have opportunities to find their best ways to meet our students' needs. Just some of our many efforts in this area include work to differentiate for whole classes, team teach, teach blended classes, research and prepare for future multi-age classrooms, and create effective learning conditions.

4-Day-K

As you know, this effort is critical to our school's future. Our students join us with different experiences and learning. We need more time with them to effectively support them in meeting standards early on. This will help our students all the way through high school. 4-Day-K has already started showing positive impacts.

Art Specialists

As mentioned above, we strive to meet each student's needs as a whole child. A part of the whole child concept includes the area of the arts. We have wanted to have staff who can focus on the arts and better support our students in this area. Our kindergarten teachers have worked hard on Fridays to develop and involve students (each grade level about every three weeks) in meaningful art experiences they may not normally have opportunity to be involved in. Our art specialists are working to integrate math,

consistent themes, and varied medias. I have been impressed with the experiences and look forward to many more for our students.

Flexible and Fluid Intervention Team
Our Math and Reading Clubs have joined together to become our Learning Club. They work and share space with our Special Education Staff. Together they communicate, support one another, and find more effective ways to support our students. This includes meeting weekly with our grade level teams to support students and cross training support staff to help students in math and reading with less separation and more utilization of strengths.

4th Grade SPED Push-In
Many of us have experienced the positive impact pushing special education into student classrooms can have on learning. With this in mind, our fourth grade team and Greg Hall of our special education program, have been working to effectively support our students with individualized education programs inside their classrooms, rather than pulling them out to a resource room. While both push-in and pull-out programs can be very effective, I do look forward to learning more about how push-in can effectively support our students.

Personal Responsibility to be Bully-Free In/Outside School
Bullying is not something we want any of our students to experience. We strive to prevent and stop all bullying at our school. At the same time, we know we are not aware of all bullying that takes place inside or outside school. We cannot always be with our students and want all our learning experiences to support our students for their lives outside school as well. Mrs. Birgensmith and staff are working to research and best support our students in understanding our personal responsibility to eliminate bullying and be self-resilient inside and outside school.

Exercise/Healthy Lifestyle
Another critical component to supporting the whole child is helping in the areas of exercise and healthy lifestyle. Our culture too often seems to be moving away from a health focus. We are working to support our students through such efforts as our Spring La Center Elementary Bobcat Run/Walk (also a fundraiser to replace the magazine fundraiser), our field's climbing wall (Mobius Climber to be installed in the next two weeks), and soon to be announced Walking Schoolbus.

Some of our other focal points and efforts we are working on this year that I cannot fit into these two pages include our work on:
Report Cards, SuccessMaker Math Support Program Expansion, Intervention Collaboration/Communication, Team Collaboration, Capacity Building, Paws-itive Community and Monthly Themes, Learning Driven and Simplified Schedule, Watch D.O.G.S., and Jumpstart Backpacks.