Elementary Board Report

A Paws-itive Community Learning and Playing Together

Our November theme of the month is gratitude, being thankful for the things in our lives and showing it. There is a lot to be thankful for and I would like to share some of it.

Celebration/Honoring
Our veterans have given so much for our freedom. We wanted to honor them and strive to make sure that students' experiences in doing so were meaningful. This year's experiences were longer lasting and we believe better tied to students' lives. Students brought pictures and information on veterans from their families in the days leading up to Veterans' Day. This was displayed for all to see in our hallways and in a wonderful Veterans' display in our main display case. Information was shared and questions were asked daily about Veterans' Day with our morning announcements leading up to Veterans' Day. On November 10, we were honored with veterans joining our classes and discussing their service and what Veterans' Day means to them. We feel this was more personal and helped students to feel closer to the ideas being discussed. In talking with students afterwards, I was impressed with how many shared great detail and seemed to better comprehend what our veterans have done to support us.

To show our gratitude, we are about to start issuing Paws-itive Bobcat Postcards. Fun and creative versions for our older and younger students have been created by one of our artistic teachers. We want to be able to honor our students for their daily efforts to support our Paws-itive Community and our monthly themes. All students can be honored for the great things that they do daily. Our students' efforts will be recorded on postcards and presented to them. They will also be congratulated by the principal or associate principal. From there, students will take them home to share with their family. They have also been designed so that they may be mailed home when future budgets may allow.

Back by popular demand, our staff will be participating in our second annual La Center Elementary Thanksgiving Feast in the cafeteria prior to our Friday early release work. Each of us will bring something delectable to add to the feast. Parent, Sarah Harris, will be sharing two fine turkeys she is baking for the occasion. All have been working so hard to support our learning community and we need to celebrate those efforts.

Health
As you know, we have a fun and challenging traverse climbing wall in the elementary gym. We have been enjoying twenty feet of fun. On November 2, the company which installed the original installed twelve more feet that was purchased by our PTO. We now have 32 feet of climbing wall which can challenge more students at a time. This also includes foam "noodles" which can be used to contribute to the climbing challenge and add more three-dimensional loops to climb through for our students' climbing experience.

To further support our students in striving for healthy lives and contribute to positive recess experiences, our PTO is working to raise money for our outdoor climbing wall. Our hope is to install this Spring. We have the design possibilities narrowed down to two

main designs. One looks more like a gigantic boulder with a flat overhanging top and the other is fashioned after a mobius strip (used in math). Students will help us to choose the design which will be purchased and installed.

Early Release

Our teachers shared their thoughts on what makes learning effective and which professional development ideas would be beneficial in supporting our students in their learning. We were impressed with the thoughtfulness of the feedback. While there were more than three ideas for professional learning shared, we will start with three of the top responses. They are learning targets and cognitive demand, team/expert model teaching collaboration, and assessment and grading. We would also like to give some flexibility, more ability to choose what is meaningful to teachers, and provide needed time. So, on Friday we will have three options which teachers need to choose one to attend (They may attend others if they wish.). Each optional discussion will take place in our library. When teachers are not in attendance, they may choose to do such things as meet with others to collaborate, work on projects, work in your classroom, etc. We hope to model more of our professional learning opportunities off of this model and look forward to experiencing the impact we have on student learning.

Math

As mentioned in the last Board report, we have many efforts going on to effectively support our students in their learning. I would like to mention two updates. Our web-based version of SuccessMaker is in the process of being purchased. This will allow us to support more students in math beyond the school day, thus having less impact on other student learning during the school day. We still have a lot to do to effectively implement, including scheduling students throughout the evening, training parents on effectively supporting our students with the program, and loading needed software onto home computers. When implemented, we should soon see a positive impact on student learning.

Our math leadership team is working to plan and lead three grade level math support meetings for this school year. They will take place in December, February, and April. We have found that we need to support our teachers in keeping our literacy and math learning momentum in the non-adoption years. These workshops will help us to do so by collaborating to do such things as realize and strengthen areas of need, continue to support our math beliefs, work together as vertical teams to share incoming strengths and opportunities, and create letters of support for incoming students and their work over the summer months. These workshops have proven and will continue to prove to be effective in continuing successful support of our students in their learning.