Intermediate Elementary News!

November 18, 2009

The other day I was chatting with a 4th grade student in my office about math. He had some concerns about how to solve a particular problem in math. He couldn't explain the entire problem to me, but knew he wanted to talk with someone, possibly another student from his class, about how to solve that particular math problem. In trying to guide him to someone in class that he looked up too, I asked 'who do you believe is one of the smartest math students in your class?' The student looked confused. I tried again, 'who in class do you really think knows math so well that you could ask them for their help?' Still confused (and this was my learning moment!) the student replied, 'We all know math the same.' He went on to inform me that everyone works together to understand how to do math. He was confused on why I would ask who could do math 'the best.' They all can! So the real question of the day was 'why do we believe some are smarter than others when everyone is discussing, problem solving and learning math.'

What a great kid! So isn't this what we have been striving for? As the staff continues to work with the idea of being the facilitator for student to student discussions, teachers are also asking questions that have students apply, analyze and evaluate their skills within the learning environment. We are moving out of the age of rank ordering students. Students are realizing how to problem solve, research and seek answers, and how to trust their peers when they contribute to the learning community. The classroom environment is changing. It is an exciting time for learners!

As math learners, our staff is involved in book studies, grade level planning and vertical teaming discussions. Sharing of ideas and having the opportunity to watch their colleagues teach is very rewarding. In addition members of the Intermediate Lab Classroom have observed student learning in the team's classrooms followed with in-depth discussions about improving the flow of information within cooperative learning groups.

The Music Adoption Committee has met and created a mission statement and identified specific indicators that apply to all students in K-12 music programs. Currently the elementary staff is working on identifying indicators that tie with K-4 grade bands which blend with the core concepts of the state standards. The middle and high school teachers will follow this process, and then final input from the parents and students on the committee will meet for the final proposal. This is a year long process as we look at all the state standards and the CBA's for implementation into the music K-12 curriculum.

The Veteran's Day Assembly was fantastic! The entire assembly was student led, including performances from the entire student body, the 4/5 choir and student read essays. Mr. Derrick Stabell was our guest speaker and he shared some of his experiences in the Air Force. Many members of our community Veterans attended our celebration, as students were able to take a moment to thank our service men and women.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Carol Patton
Intermediate Principal