Primary Board Report

A Learning Community Works Together and Plays Together

Spring is upon us. With Spring can come better weather and thoughts of more outdoor learning. We have been pondering our outdoor learning and would like to share a little about what is going on.

As you know, our new track has been installed and heavily used by our students. It has helped students to exercise and promote a healthy lifestyle we would like to see continue throughout our students' lives. Though it has been in use for over six months, we have not had the opportunity to celebrate with a grand opening. This will change on the afternoon of Friday, April 16. We have been planning for a grand opening which will include such things as a speech on the history of our field and track, thanks to the many who have helped to make the track possible, the unveiling of our official "Speed Zone" sign, and a balloon arch starting a ceremonial walk of the track by all students. It should be a great time and give our track the opening it deserves. You are cordially invited to join us in celebrating our grand opening.

Our track grand opening will also signal the official start to our Recess Olympics, which will begin the week following the ceremony. Many are involved in the planning of the events. Holly Cole, a new kindergarten parent to our school as of January, has taken on a leadership role in helping us to plan and run our Recess Olympics. She has taught as a p.e. teacher outside our district in the past. Our p.e. teachers, Rob Bucklin and Katie Tyrrell, as well as our playground teacher team are also involved in planning and working together for a successful set of events. Some of the main goals for our events includes providing events which may be of interest to every student at our school (including the eight multiple intelligences), promoting positive and healthy activities on the playground throughout the year, and helping our students to have a good time at recess as they strive to improve in their abilities. We will have ten events which will take place at recesses over a period of three weeks. They will include events ranging from an Olympics style 100 meter dash to such nonstandard events as paper airplane competitions and a math game involving our nine position square hopscotch court. It should be a great time on the playground.

We want our students to have a say in which activities, games, and toys are allowed on our playground. Students have been applying and presenting for approvals to add games, toys, and activities on our playground for a year now. Last week, four groups of students presented to our playground teacher team, received recommendations to the Building Council, and gained approval from our Building Council to implement their ideas. Loren Brown gained approval for the playing of two marbles games on the playground. He had previously led a popular and successful pilot to test the games on the playground. Grace Nolan gained approval for the use of play phones on the playground. Michael Edwards,

Jeanette Doorenbos, and Zen Stapleton gained approval for a paper airplane competition. They had also previously piloted their ideas on the playground. Their work has been so successful that the playground teacher team also decided to create a special paper airplane area on the field which will include a 35 position paper airplane hangar. Joyce Minihan and Keeley Meade also gained approval for an art contest to take place in the playshed area. Each group was impressive in their thoughtful preparation, presentation, and sharing of specifics on how to make for safe and successful playground additions. Their efforts will help to make our recess experiences positive.

We are also starting our garden project as collaboration between our school and community members. Karen Kennedy, Lola Nordstrom, and Liz Crandall are leading the efforts to plan for and create our school garden. This includes working to gain donations of wanted materials. Our initial garden will be located between the portables occupied by Mrs. Nordstrom and Mrs. Hollopeter. Rob Williamson has worked to plan for and move the fence between the two portables, allowing a larger access point to the garden area. Moving the fence will also provide a second safe escape route for students in the event there is a fire in the area. Rob has also been kind enough to plan for and create two water access points for garden support. Some of the goals of our garden leadership team include such things as promoting healthy foods with our students, providing experience with growing and gardening (not as common for our students today), and integrating the gardening experience with our current school learning. I look forward to seeing how students, staff, and community will benefit from the experiences.

As we know, not all learning takes place outdoors or at school. We have recently concluded a reading challenge with our PTO Book Fair. Students were asked to participate in a five day challenge to read 100,000 minutes outside of school. This was not an easy task. Students worked each night to read and record their minutes of participation. Each day they turned in their sheets showing minutes read and their parent signatures. In all, our students read a total of 101,022 minutes. What an impressive feat! Leading classes by grade level, as well as leading individuals, will soon have the opportunity to enjoy a day of Bounce House fun provided by our PTO.

Capacity, Collaboration, Contemplation

Our recent K-3 Exploration Meeting provided examples of capacity building, collaboration, and contemplation. Volunteers met to discuss and plan out how we could utilize such ideas as teaming for learning and departmentalizing in order to improve our effectiveness in meeting our students' learning needs. It was full of creative and diverse ideas. We will soon have a guest speaker share her experiences to help us gain a better understanding of what we may choose to implement. Teams of teachers will also be visiting such effective and successful schools as those in Corbett in order to learn more about how we can improve on our current efforts.