Elementary Board Report

A Paws-itive Community Learning and Playing Together

Our theme for the month of April is diversity. Some people have different feelings and beliefs than I do. Some people dress and act differently than I do. Although there are many ways we are all the same, I can learn from and respect people who are different than me. The following shares a just a bit of our diverse happenings:

Incoming Kindergarten Parents Round Up

As you know, we are looking into the options of every other day kindergarten and four day kindergarten so that we may better be able to meet our students' needs in the future. In order to gain further parent feedback, we are inviting all potential incoming kindergarten parents to our Incoming Kindergarten Parent Round Up on Thursday, April 21, 6:30-7:30, in the K-8 library. Those who attend will have opportunities to learn about our potential kindergarten models for next year and share feedback. This is more of an informal affair, with attendees choosing table discussions to participate in with our kindergarten teachers, current all day kindergarten parents, and incoming kindergarten parents who have observed both of our kindergarten models. We will ask that those in attendance share their thoughts regarding the models by filling out a quick exit survey prior to leaving. Childcare will be provided.

Students Taking Charge

We are a caring community of learners working together to support our students. Adults are doing a great deal to help out. But should the adults be the only ones solving problems, coming up with ideas, making decisions, and doing the work? It only makes sense that our students have opportunities to impact our learning and community. There are many examples of this happening inside our classrooms and outside. I would like to mention two more recent efforts.

We just finished up our Pennies for Japan event the last day before leaving for Spring Break. Altogether, our students and community donated $789.85 to the Red Cross relief effort in Japan. This was not an adult created and run event. Our students, Christian Pratka-Sutherland and Rebecca Hobart, led the efforts. They formed a petition and gained numerous signatures, planned all the details for the event, created the posters, donated the coin jars, and even wrote the morning announcements script. This would not have happened if it were not for our caring and generous students.

Students have also been helping us to improve recesses. Those in Mrs. Hollopeter's class have been working to help out. They have presented to our playground teachers. We have made changes using their recommendations. Some examples include work to create and implement a student feedback system and initial limited playing of Four-Square led by adults who are not supervising safety and behavior. We will also be taking a small number of students and a playground teacher to visit a nearby school in order to find ways we might improve our recesses. Other classes, such as Mrs. Alanko's and Mrs. Collin's, have also started improvement efforts and have offered suggestions. I look forward to seeing all that we accomplish.

Watch D.O.G.S. Having a Barkingly Good Time

Our Watch D.O.G.S. program is off to an excellent start. Dads and father-figures have been volunteering full days at our school since the week before break. Students can hear them bark and introduce themselves daily during morning announcements. From there, students look forward to seeing them in class and out at recess. I hear that students can be seen lining up at recess so that they may have the opportunity to spend time with them at recess. Kids are excited and so are the Watch D.O.G.S. Students whose father-figures have participated are recognized by other students and are proud of their support. Watch D.O.G.S. have shared how much they have enjoyed themselves and how students will come up to them outside of school and recognize them as Watch D.O.G.S. Sherri Birgensmith has also received donations so that we may purchase school lunches for our Watch D.O.G.S.