Elementary Board Report

A Paws-itive Learning Community Striving to Meet the Individual Needs of Each Student as a Whole Child

Our theme for the month of September is. The following shares a little bit of what is happening.

Bobcat Walk/Run

You may remember our Bobcat Walk/Run event from the spring of 2012. During this school sponsored event, students participated in our walk/run to promote exercise and a healthy lifestyle while raising money for such projects as our playground improvements. We also wanted to improve our efforts by having all the proceeds raised go to our students. Previously, we had collaborated with fundraising companies to run a magazine fundraiser and a cookie dough fundraiser which raised around $7500 yearly. Our students and families raised over $11,000 for our students with our first Bobcat Walk/Run. The success of this effort led us to take the 2012-2013 school year off from fundraisers. This helped us to give families a break from fundraising and also gave us the opportunity to move our next Bobcat Walk/Run to what we believe is a better Fall timing. This is where we plan to continue our annual Bobcat Walk/Run. Treasha Reser (K-2 p.e. teacher) has been leading efforts to prepare for the 2013 Bobcat Walk/Run. Students and staff are preparing for our two days of class track walking and running on September 25 and 26. Our goal is to have a fun time promoting a healthy lifestyle together while striving to raise $10,000. All students who participate will receive La Center Bobcat water bottles they can use in classrooms, in the cafeteria with our water dispenser, at sporting events, and more. Top earners will also receive Bobcat Walk/Run shirts. Students will vote within the week for what they want the money raised to go toward. I look forward to experiencing all the great efforts and seeing how our students and families help to improve our school.

Assessment Change

Like many schools around the United States, we strive to utilize assessments to help understand how our students are progressing in their learning. We use these assessments to do such things as help us realize which strategies are supporting our students and where we need to consider changes to better support them in their learning. Our assessment efforts can also be a balancing act between assessing and learning. We seek to find the best ways to learn about our students and our support systems while also trying to lessen time away from learning. Last spring we found we wanted to make changes to help find a better balance while at the same time trying to better understand what our students' needs are. We have started implementing changes this fall. One change is that we will utilize students' spring DIBELS scores from the previous school year in place of doing a DIBELS assessment in the fall. Overall, we have found students' scores/results stay relatively consistent over the summer. Now we only assess students new to our school using the DIBELS in the fall. We have also worked to utilize the Analytic Reading Inventory (ARI) in each class this fall. The ARI is a diagnostic which should help us to realize more specifically each students' strengths and needs in reading. We can then utilize strategies to help each student with his/her specific needs. DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is really only a common assessment which basically tells us if a student is on-track or not in their reading learning. While its information is helpful, it does not necessarily tell us what we need to help each student with. So, our belief and hope is that with these changes we will better understand how to help each student and will spend less time pulling our A.C.E. team to work on assessing. As far as time goes, our assessment changes have already allowed us an average of two to three more weeks of A.C.E. staff time supporting students in their learning than in past years.