

News from Clackamas River Elementary

Thank you for the opportunity to share information about current and upcoming activities at Clackamas River. This is a very busy, productive time of year, as staff and students are in their groove. Routines and expectations have been taught, relationships of mutual respect have been built, and learning is occurring in every classroom.

Staff and students are happy with our new math curriculum, particularly the technology components. With funding support from the Technology Department and our PTA, our classrooms are equipped with document cameras and in-focus machines; and nine of 13 rooms have interactive Promethean Boards. This is changing the way instruction is delivered, and we're seeing higher levels of student interest, engagement, and interaction with content. We're hoping to purchase Promethean Boards for our four remaining classrooms so all students have equitable educational opportunities. Students and teachers are also enjoying the manipulative kits, which provide hands-on learning opportunities as students move from concrete to abstract thinking. We're working hard on mastering math facts at every grade level and are monitoring student progress weekly. Our goal is to have 85% of our students meeting the math facts benchmarks by the end of the year.

In addition to a focus on math, we're also working to improve reading achievement for all students. While we celebrated that an average of 87% of our students met the reading benchmark on the Spring '09 OAKS, we realize the state benchmark for "meeting" is very low (between the 17th and 25th percentiles). We are setting our sights higher and looking at other assessments like DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) and AIMSweb to provide better indicators of future reading success. We're collaborating with the District Literacy Team to establish a reading protocol, including minimum minutes per day for reading instruction and additional interventions for students at-risk of not meeting benchmarks. Our goal is for 85% of our students to meet the DIBELS benchmark by the end of the year, and we're setting aside extra time each day for fluency instruction and practice. We understand it is critical that our students leave our elementary school with strong reading skills so they can be successful at the junior high and high school.

While all of the above may sound like a lot of hard work, we're also having a great deal of fun! Positive Behavior Support has been fantastic for our building, and we've seen a decrease in discipline referrals and an increased feeling of "community." Our monthly assemblies provide an opportunity for all 360 of us to look at our data, celebrate our successes, and make goals for continuous improvement. It is also a time of singing, laughing, and fun as staff and students entertain and teach through skits and role playing. The "Golden Plunger" is the most coveted of our awards, and both boys and girls work hard to keep restrooms clean to earn the right to hang the plunger outside their bathroom entrance. We are currently working with a high school student who will produce our first PBS video, and we'd be happy to share it with you when it is complete.

Other special events the past couple of months included Read Across America Week, Battle of the Books, a fundraiser for Haiti, Jump Rope for Heart, Mad Science classes, Guitar Club, PTA Movie Nights, and the Greek Olympics. Upcoming events include our Book Fair, March 15th-19th; Family Literacy Night, March 18th; Grandparents' Day, March 19th; Talent Show, April 16th; and science instruction provided by OMSI the week of May 17-21.

Thank you for everything you do to support the students in our school and community. Stop by anytime to see the fruits of your labor. Amazing things are happening for kids!