

Rock Lake School

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As the school year draws to a close, we reflect on the past year and evaluate how well we have succeeded in meeting our four school goals that were set out at the beginning of the year. Here is a report on the progress made in achieving these goals this year.

1. By June 2014, students will display increased engagement in the learning process in Science.

In order to help teachers meet this goal, all colony teachers from our division met on several occasions and contributed to creating and sharing Science units which included various types of activities and assessment tools. In addition to traditional tests, assessments took the form of student self-assessments on their projects and learning, teacher-created rubrics which included student input for their inquiry and design projects, and teacher observations.

Students in grades 1-4 were highly engaged in their Science units "Materials and Structures," "Forces and Motion," and "The Environment and Global Warming." Students participated in several hands-on activities in these units to increase their engagement. Learning in each unit was demonstrated with a final project to design and build, such as the bridges and vehicles projects.

In grade 5-8, students built models of the planets in their study of the solar system. For the "Particle Theory" unit, they conducted several hands-on experiments and activities, concluding the unit with an inquiry project.

In grade 9-10, students constructed an on-site planetarium to demonstrate their learning in the study of the solar system. They presented their planetarium to the entire student body, allowing them to experience a virtual solar system.

2. By June 2014, students will exhibit understanding of how their actions in daily life impact the physical environment.

To increase understanding, early years' students learned about global warming and its effects on their environment in the Science unit "The Environment and Global Warming." They picked up garbage in the school yard after the snow melted. This garbage was sorted into recyclable, compostable (or coming from nature), and garbage. It was disposed of accordingly.

In their study of chemistry, high school students learned about proper care, storage, and disposal of chemicals and hazardous waste. A presentation from Safe Workers of Tomorrow addressed these important issues.

School-wide awareness of paper usage and recycling resulted in one-third less paper (4 boxes instead of 6) being ordered for the upcoming school year. This was achieved by more careful use of paper, writing on both sides of loose leaf and notebooks, double-sided photocopying, and using the clean side of one-sided mail and extra copies in the fax machine and for scrap paper. Once paper was completely utilized, students were encouraged to recycle paper into the blue bins in each classroom.



3. By June 2014, students will display increased empathy for others.

High school students demonstrated a greater awareness of social justice issues locally and internationally through their ELA unit and projects. Grade 4-8 students participated in Roots of Empathy for the first time to increase their understanding of their own feelings and the feelings of others. The use of literature and discussions about the books and characters help early years students understand emotions and bullying behaviours. Health lessons teaching virtues and character education, as well as a new program called "Rick Hansen's Difference Makers" were also employed to help reach this goal.

Even though feedback forms for the Roots of Empathy program do not indicate an increase in empathy towards each other, teachers have noticed subtle changes in kinder language in some students as well as less incidents of tattling and reports of negative behaviours on the playground.

Mrs. Cassidy and Mrs. Coolidge have taken the first level of Restitution training, which is a program that "teaches youth self-discipline and skills needed to promote independence, critical thinking skills, and acceptance of personal responsibility for one's actions." They will be taking further instruction, along with Mrs. B. this summer in order to implement the program in September to increase students' self-responsibility and help with classroom management.

4. By June 2014, students will be more engaged in physical activity and display understanding of its role in personal health and wellness.

To increase our overall physical fitness we decided that it was important to let students know that small steps and changes can make a big difference that will help lead to greater changes. We started having our daily assemblies downstairs rather than in the hall outside our rooms and we discussed other ways that students could possibly increase their "steps".

In the Early Years Phys. Ed. classes we did a variety of strength and muscle building

activities, in which we targeted arm, leg, and overall body strength and flexibility. The students in grades 5-10 worked to increase their endurance in running laps.

For Christmas presents this year we purchased extra equipment for students to use to encourage physical activity rather than sedentary board games that were the gifts in past years.

In conjunction with the Winter Olympics and Paralympics, which took place this year in Sochi, Russia, we learned a great deal about the sporting events and Olympic values. We also kept track of events and athletes. We invited a former Olympian to speak to the whole school about these values and what it takes to be an Olympian. To celebrate the event, we held our own Winter Olympics at school which saw students participate in several events and even a torch run. In Health class for both Early and Middle Years we discussed a variety of Olympic values such as: sportsmanship, determination, acceptance, fairness, and dedication. We have also been learning about healthy foods and how that affects our physical fitness.

We enrolled in a Physical Education Program called "At My Best", which provided a variety of resources. The program promotes and gives ideas about hosting a final celebration of fitness and overall wellness called "At My Best Play Day" and we are planning this day as part of the picnic. It will include a variety of fitness, nutrition and fun play events.



As another school year draws to a close, we would like to commend all students on their achievements. A special note to acknowledge this year's grads, Daniel and Robert, and congratulate them on all of their hard work and accomplishments! Good luck in all of your future endeavours!

A reminder to everyone to practice what you have learned at Farm Safety and stay safe this summer and always. Wishing you all a wonderful summer! See you September 4, 2014.