

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT for the BOARD

Garden City Community School

November 15, 2010

## ENROLLMENT: 136 TOTAL as of 11/12/10

Elizabeth's Kinder: 20, Marti 1/2- 20, Gina 1/2- 24, Wren 3/4 – 15, Ben 3/4- 15, Ryan 5/6 – 22, Brenda 7/8- 20 NOTE: *We still have some openings in classes, so please pass the word!*

## RECENT SCHOOL EVENTS

- **Thursday Oct 28. - Community Council with Parent Rep, Michael Tetrault facilitating,** the group discussed changing the school name. The unanimous choice to present to the board was “DaVinci Charter School” or “DaVinci School of Arts & Science”. A more detailed report will be given by Michael during the November board meeting.
- **October 29 – “Fall Festival Fun”:** Each class held a party the last hour of their day. Costumes were worn as part of our theater arts integration. Any costume was allowed (within dress code!) as long as the child could explain how their character fit one of the 5R's: respect, responsibility, resourcefulness, responsiveness or resiliency. They shared these during their parties or circle time.
- **November 13- Annual School Auction** – by the time you read this, we'll have all enjoyed our auction. Thanks to Tiffany Coffey and her crew!

**COMMUNITY CIRCLES** *These take place every Wednesday morning at 9AM and everyone is invited to attend any of them! It's incredible how quickly students are mastering public speaking and performance skills!*

- **October 20 – Brenda's 7-8 grade class.** In addition to their great skit using masks to teaching students information from their unit, they also celebrated our bus driver, Gaylen as part of School Bus Safety Week.
- **October 27** – The firemen were scheduled to attend as part of Fire Safety month, but evidently had to go to a fire! I ended up having an impromptu class share by two or three children from each class. They shared their interpretations of what they have been learning in their classroom recently. It ended up being one of the most incredible CCs moments we've had. To hear 5-14 year olds use their own words (totally unprepared) to describe excitedly and proudly what they saw as the best things happening in their classes was proof that GCCS is definitely on the right track in educating children. There were a lot of chuckles and teary eyes from the adults.....wish you could have witnessed it!
- **November 10 – Dave Bazan, the Yo-Yo Scientist** (and two time world champion yo-yo'er) who is now program director at the Boys & Girls Club. Students not only learned how to use a yo-yo, but he also taught them manners, safety and a lot of very interesting science about motion and energy – keeping their interest by relating it to yo-yo's and toys and matching the information to real-life situations. He usually charges for this program, but did the presentation free since we let him sell yo-yo's to interested children. We now have a “designated yo-yo safety zone” on the playground for students to practice during recess.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CURRICULUM

1. **Oct. 19 – Michele Roth** is attending the **Idaho Educational Technology Assn's** trainings on the new **Idaho State-wide Data process (ICEE)**
2. **Oct. 21** – No School as all GCCS staff attended the **Teaching with Poverty in Mind workshop by Eric Jensen**. About 140 attended this incredible information event. Staff immediately started using his ideas and as NNU adjunct professor for the college credit offered, I'm seeing some great assignments coming in to show various lessons and workshop documentation using his information in meaningful ways. The post evaluation forms everyone completed were compiled showing very enthusiastic comments towards Mr. Jensen and his information – in addition to GGCS for hosting the event. I feel incredibly helpful information was gained and it was an excellent public relations tool for the school.
3. **Nov. 3** – School Improvement Team met with Capacity Builder, Joanie. This group currently consists of Brenda (7-8), Wren (3-4), Angela and I. We plan to add a rep from the younger grades soon. The meeting was to discuss Response to Intervention, narrowing down our school-wide assessments to develop consistency and best data gathering methods. This is very time consuming and will continue to evolve.
4. **Nov. 5 – No School, Professional Development Day**. The agenda included: 1) **“Differentiated Strategies for All Students” the class all teaching staff is taking. This lesson focused on the use of CENTERS**, by Cindy/NNU adjunct prof, I will be filming all staff as part of their presentation of the use of centers in their class. This will take place Dec-Jan and provide them invaluable feedback to see their instructional methods and classroom management effectiveness. 2) **Teaching Empathy and Compassion to Children** by Gina Munkers (1-2 teacher) and Angela Banning (Special Services/Counselor), 3) **Brainstorming session** for all staff to discuss next spring's **all-school performance** which will have a music focus. We brought in Rebecca Weeks Demeritt (former GCCS arts & integration coordinator) to facilitate this as I hope to find way to hire her part-time to assist the teachers and me in the coordination of such a huge event. Carrie Jones, community performance artist, also joined this session. The ideas were hard to narrow down, but the group is excited to meet again to finalize plans and start developing each class's part after winter break. Stay tuned....!
5. **Nov. 8** – I attended the **SDE's evening “Dinner & Chat” for superintendents** at the Hampton in Boise to learn about the educational potential for the **ICEE – the state's new data longitudinal system** that Michele's been working so hard to enter all the data into. ....to be continued.....!
6. **Teachers Formal Classroom Evaluation**– As part of our teacher evaluation process, I have been formally visiting each teacher's class for 60-90 minutes to observe a lesson of their choice. These will be completed before Thanksgiving Break. These observations start with teachers completing paperwork regarding the lesson and goals for me to read in advance. During my visit, I script every word/action of the teacher and the students. The time is written for each transition and everything that happens is coded to represent an aspect of the Danielson Frameworks our evaluation process follows. (Last year's staff was trained in this all year by the Capacity Builders project and new staff has had the mini-training.) This helps teachers see patterns in their instruction and classroom management. Within 24 hours, I visit with the teacher to reflect on their lesson with a written form completed as we analyze it. This information is kept in my working file and will be used to write each teacher's formal evaluation which will be completed and placed in their personnel file before winter break.

## ARTS INTEGRATION

*I have seen incredible arts integration this year in all classes. Many staff members gained some great ideas from the Art Ed conference we facilitated in October. A few samples are:*

**Elizabeth's Kinders** painted Van Gogh Sunflowers that were sized according to the child's height and body measurements. They learned a lot of math and measuring during this!

**Marti's 1-2 math class** has learned geometry as they discussed shapes and placed them together to make their own dragon designs.

**Gina's 1-2 class** learned patterns in math as they created pastel drawings following a famous artist's style.

**Wren and Ben's 3-4 classes** recently started a salmon migration unit where students learned about the fish using their sense of smell to follow the route back to their birth place. The Commons Area had river routes taped on the carpet, with cups along the routes containing a different scent in each. Students started by smelling four scents (there were many "sets of four" to use) and seeing if their noses could lead them to the ocean. They learned how difficult salmon's migration was and the factors that could affect their return to spawn.

**Ryan's 5-6 students** used learning contracts as part of their geology unit. The final assessment choices for students gave several options to prove what they had learned – each acknowledging a different learning preference (art, writing, etc)/

**Brenda's 7-8 class** is always full of interactive art integration. I recently observed her class using a lot of the information from the Jensen Workshop to help students review information for their science unit on pollution. As a class, students had created their own method to remember difficult vocabulary. When a word or symbol would come on the screen, students hollered out the same sound or gesture to represent what the terms meant. It was a great "brain break" – let alone they all enjoyed it and everyone was engaged! After seeing an entertaining media clip about traffic congestion in LA, their final activity was creating and sharing a poster showing their team's idea how to improve car pollution.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS

*All classes have been using the wetlands a lot more this year. They've created some great core curriculum integration with the hike and resources there. The Boise Watershed is now shuttling our students free-of-charge to their facility for some great programs – in addition to joining many in their classrooms and wetland trips.*

- **Gina and Marti's 1-2 classes** took a good walk (with many parent volunteers joining them!) to Summer **Wind Assisted Living** recently. The walk was great, but the children also sang to the residents and visited, interviewed and ate goodies with them. They learned about their community's environment and people.
- **Wren and Ben's 3-4 classes** will be attending a series of programs at the **MK Center** to learn about water/fish
- **Ryan's 5-6 class visited the Foothills Learning Center** during their geology unit with the same staff coming to the school a few days later to show an exciting experiment on the playground simulating an exploding volcano.
- **Brenda's** working hard to line out financing for her 7-8 class to be able to attend the **McCall Outdoor Science School (MOSS) Camp** again this year. It was extremely successful with the group last year, so she plans to take them to the 4-day experiential camp again in March.
- **Elizabeth took a PE class to the Wetlands** one day when the Boys & Girls Club was closed. What a great option to have this nearby!

## **ADLERIAN BEHAVIORAL PLANS: The Family Team Meeting**

I want to comment on how well this current staff is adhering to Adlerian psychology and working with the students to help them learn from their mistakes. The entire staff is finally on board. Due to my experience working as a scribe with a social worker one summer and learning some successful ideas from them, I have developed what I call FAMILY TEAM MEETINGS. We set a goal of October 29 to have met with all families with children having behavioral difficulties and have come close to meeting this.

If a child is having difficulties following our school's 5R's – especially after much help from their teachers and our counselor, I call a "Family Team Meeting". This is designed to be a very positive experience where everyone involved in the students life (24/7): all parents/guardians, sitters, teachers, aides, and the child meet. No one is "in trouble" and I am simply the facilitator. The format is as follows:

1. The meeting starts with everyone – including the child – creating a long list of all the "strengths/good stuff" about the child. I read this over to be sure everyone – especially the child – sees how special they are. I ask parents to be sure this is posted at home and read out loud often.
2. We next list everyone's "concerns" – making sure the child gets to be heard about anything "bugging them".
3. With the child's input – a plan of action to help improve their experience at school, with clear consequences also included if the plan is not followed.
4. Everyone signs the document, is given a copy and is expected to follow the plan so the child will have a team working together in a fair, consistent manner. This helps everyone feel heard and the child knows we are working as a team that cares about him/her. We have seen incredible results – if everyone follows through.

Our Adlerian consultant, Wes Wingett, said he loved the idea and it fit Adlerian psych so well that he asked my permission to publish it in his next handbook (with credit given!)...so that was nice kudos to help us know we're on the right track!

## **FINANCES**

- We just received the details on the Job Stimulus federal funds Friday, so will work through the requirements to determine how it can be used to discuss with the fiancé committee. GCCS will receive about \$26,000, but it can only be used for very specific items.
- Michele and I met with SDE employee, Lester Wyer, on Oct. 27 regarding IDEA, Part B (Exceptional Child funding) to clarify our 2009-2010 ARRA/stimulus reports. The directions were not clear last year so many schools were informed incorrectly. It was an interesting and informative meeting and we now seem to be becoming a popular source of information for other SDE employees and schools since we stayed until it could be clarified in understandable terms to be meaningful and useful!

## **BUILDING**

- I met with the appraiser who helped us start gathering potential school sites for the future, Ron Clevenger, and a realtor friend of his who works in the commercial area. They brought many possibilities to discuss and are now gathering information to answer my specific questions prior to narrowing down ideas to present to the finance committee. They had many ideas, but few are in the Garden City limits, so will continue to search. At this point, we are under no obligations to them, but may have to address this in the future. The finance committee hopes to find more options to buy a building as there are very few that fit in the "HUB" location to help us receive special loans.

## MARKETING

- Marketing this past month consisted of the exposure gained during the Poverty Conference and school tours given to potential students/families. In December, I will have the Public Relations committee developed and meeting as we need to immediately start serious plans for promoting the school for the 2011-12 lottery.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Nov. 17 & 18. 5-7PM Student-Led Conferences.** All families are required to attend these with their children. Students will be sharing their portfolios and achievement reports with their families and have been working hard practicing introductions, adding academic and art samples to their portfolios and preparing to explain rubrics and why the pieces were chosen. It's an impressive process where parents get a chance to have a good visit about academics and goals with their children. Families are also welcome to tour the school to see all the displays documenting student learning.
- **Nov. 22-26: Thanksgiving Break**
- **Nov. 30, 2-3PM** – The Trey McIntyre Project will be performing for our students. They are usually very expensive to have perform, but each year offer their program to a few Title I schools. Thanks to Tiffany for finding this opportunity for GCCS! Also – PBS will be filming the event!
- **Thursday, Jan. 13: GCCS's Update to the Idaho Public Charter Commission, 9AM+** This is a "state of the school" power point/report I prepare and present, but the Commission expects the board president and treasurer to also attend. Anyone else interested is invited.

***NOTE to BOARD: The staff and students are absolutely amazing this year! You're always invited to our school events and classes so you can experience the great "feel" first hand!***

Respectfully submitted,  
*Cindy Hoovel, GCCS Director*