

REPORT OF THE ELLIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

It is with great pleasure that I write this yearly review for the Ellis Elementary School. Each year I am at Ellis, I am amazed at the level of community support residents show for our school and their families. A perfect example of this support is the adoption of public kindergarten and the support for a gifted and talented program now called the Eagles Challenge Program. Each of these efforts supports our goal of an individual education for all of our children. I again, thank you!

The teachers and staff at Ellis strive each day to achieve high academic standards for all students, provide developmentally appropriate and challenging activities, foster communication and critical thinking skills and provide a safe and welcoming environment for students. Administration and teachers are committed to a collaborative leadership model and shared responsibility for student achievement.

Though as this year passes I reflect on the past events, but primarily I think about how learning is an act of both the present and the future. I consider the conversations I had with the community and educators this year and how significantly they have changed. We can no longer just talk about day to day activities, and deficits, but we have to shift our conversations to hope and planning for the future. The world is changing, and changing fast. Our children have every inch of the universe at their fingertips. As educators we must change as well. We must change and challenge our skills and perceptions about learning and achievement and change the educational practices that are getting in the way of individual student achievement.

Change is difficult, but exciting and inevitable. It can provide the motivation for creativity and life long learning. It can and should inspire innovation. The foundation of this innovation is with the teachers and staff at Ellis school. Every employee at the school has an obligation to inspire and collaborate. Success comes from people not programs.

To this end we have been walking down two paths: One involving student achievement, instruction and assessment, the other is to build highly effective teaching teams and improve individual teacher skills. We are working this year to increase our understanding so we can be better communicators, collaborators and leaders. We have redefined roles and responsibilities; we have learned to understand each other communication styles, strengths and weaknesses. We continue to inspire and learn from each other and our community. We do this with one goal in mind, that no matter what, we must focus on your children and our students.

In terms of student achievement one of our greatest challenges rests in the area of assessment. A complicated world requires a better understanding of what exactly our children know, how they apply that learning, and then how is it connected to the next level of skills. Teaching is not what it was 10 years ago! The value of a solid assessment system lets teachers and students make use of results to improve real time teaching and learning. Assessment is ongoing and dynamic. It informs what we should teach every day.

We continue our instructional focus on improving literacy, math, writing, science and an understanding of the world around us. Teachers strive to differentiate instruction to meet the unique learning needs of all children. The addition of the Eagles Challenge Program allows not only expanded learning opportunities for gifted children but provides a universal enrichment system for all students as well as teacher resources and training.

With the addition of Kindergarten we can begin to work early with students getting them ready for first grade. Now students will be entering first grade at Ellis with a set of uniform skills directly tied to the state grade level expectations. Students participate in art, music, PE, library and health to round out their educational experience.

This summer we hosted our “First Grade Academy” and “Kindergarten Academy” program. Students who would be entering first grade or kindergarten were invited to attend 2 to 3 days in August to ease the transition to school.

We continue a successful preschool program providing special education services and preschool opportunities for community members to be part of the Ellis School experience. We honor our close working relationship with Early Intervention providers and area preschools. Our Family Resource Coordinator continues efforts connecting families to valuable resources in our community and state.

Our PBIS program is going strong, a comprehensive system of supports and services are available to all students. With the introduction of the Passport System in the elementary grades, students are learning at the earliest ages what it means to be a Responsible, Respectful and Prepared student. We recognize and embrace the fact that good behavior, communication skills and students “learning to learn” are behaviors that must be taught throughout the elementary years. PBIS helps us to achieve this goal.

The Parent Leadership Council and PTA involvement enhances our educational practices. Without the help and collaboration of parents and community members the educational experience at Ellis would be diminished. The PTA not only provides great resources and volunteers; they fund many innovative programs, Artists in Residence, special science presentations and the very popular Field Day to name a few. They also have provided an opportunity for teachers to receive grant monies for their classrooms. Individual and community efforts for fundraising, such as collecting Box Tops or Campbells labels are truly amazing. With these efforts valuable pieces of equipment have been added to the school for student use.

This year there were many opportunities for families and friends to join us at Ellis. Open house and holiday concerts were well attended. Presentations on PBIS, Every Day Math, first grade and kindergarten programs, and standards based reporting began our year. Community collaboration is growing. The town energy committee is working with school officials to find ways to save energy as well as teach our students about the important care we must take with our environment.

The Long Range Facilities Planning committee has taken on the task of looking at the needs of the students at Ellis school. This group made up of community members is volunteering their time to help the school board look toward the future of the Ellis school.

In reflection, 2007 has been a year of change and growth for both students and staff. The Fremont School District continues to be an innovative leader in education. With continued community involvement and support, engaged parents, collaborative leadership and effective teaching the Fremont district will continue to grow and provide a quality educational experience for the students that fill our buildings each and every day.

It is a privilege to be able to work with the community of Fremont, the staff at Ellis school and of course your children.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn M. Lewis
Elementary Principal



Weymouth Construction
Volunteering time and equipment to renovate the Fremont Memorial Park Babe Ruth infield
Summer 2007