

Report of the Ellis School Principal

Dear Fremont Community,

I am pleased to submit this annual report to the citizens of Fremont. As the Interim Principal of Ellis School, I look forward to serving the children, parents, and the community, as we all strive for educational excellence. This school report reviews the programs that make Ellis School a special place to work and learn. The staff at Ellis School is committed to both personal and school growth as demonstrated by the many hours spent planning, collaborating, and furthering the development of core curriculum. I witness their efforts, dedication and genuine concern for students on a daily basis. I am fortunate to lead this group of professionals

The current school year is focused on four areas: Student Engagement, Collaboration, Climate & Culture, and Mandates. By focusing on these areas, we aim to provide high quality instruction and improve student learning.

Student Engagement

At Ellis School we believe that students should be self-directed learners who make good choices and have pride in both themselves and their school. During the summer a small group of teachers attended the NH Department of Education's Summer Summit and revised our Response to Intervention program (RtI) to make the change of an additional block for RtI with a focus on math.

Last April, our Destination Imagination Team traveled to Knoxville, Tennessee to compete at the global competition after placing in the State of New Hampshire's Destination Imagination competition.

Our students participated in The Future City competition during January at Northeastern University in Boston. The Future City Competition is a national, project-based learning experience where students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade imagine, design, and build cities of the future. Students work as a team with an educator and engineer mentor to plan cities using SimCityTM software; research and write solutions to an engineering problem; build tabletop scale models with recycled materials; and present their ideas before judges. Congratulations to Irma MacEachern, coach, and the two teams representing Ellis School. Both teams did well and one team brought home the "People's Choice Award."

In addition, we have hired a Spanish teacher, Heather Wardwell, who is offering exploratory Spanish for our middle school grades. Our fifth and sixth grade students have an exploratory Spanish for six weeks. The seventh and eighth graders have a twelve week course, with the plan to have a full year Spanish class for eighth grade students next year.

Collaboration

At Ellis School we believe that the Fremont community should be knowledgeable about the high expectations and varied programs at Ellis School. We continue to enhance our practices as a Professional Learning Community with a focus on improving student learning.

The Teacher Support and Evaluation Program is in pilot phase this year with the addition of outside evaluation consultants to make sure that we roll the plan out with fidelity. The new plan makes sure that teacher evaluations are timely and useful. Our staff members are collaborating monthly to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and to develop a common understanding of the high standards and practices for teaching.

Climate & Culture

At Ellis School, we believe that staff and students should exhibit a high level of collegiality, trust, and pride in themselves and our school. The staff has worked with our curriculum consultant, Lyn Healy, to develop a Work Study Practices curriculum in Kindergarten through Eighth grade where progress will be reported out on report cards. This will develop students into self-directed learners. We have been working with a data coach helping the staff access and analyze student achievement on standardized testing.

The District's curriculum consultant is working with both the science and math committees to finalize our district's scope and sequence in those subject areas. The middle school science curriculum is greatly enhanced by the complete overhaul of the 7th/8th grade science lab and the addition of more cabinets and work space in the 6th grade science classroom.

Mandates

Our third through eighth graders participated in the pilot of Smarter Balanced Assessment (this test replaces the NECAP that we used to take in the fall) during the Spring of 2015. The Smarter Balanced Assessment consists of an English language arts section, along with a math section. Within each of those subjects, students took two sub-tests, a computer adaptive test and a performance task. The computer adaptive test asks students single questions at a time and adjusts the difficulty of the next questions based upon how well the student is doing. The performance task is a longer, single item that requires deeper thinking skills. For the English language arts portion, it is a writing task, broken up over two days. Day one is research (very basic) and organizing of ideas. Day two is writing a final draft. In math, the performance task is usually a multi-step, real-world math problem. If you would like to see the practice tests, and the types of questions students will be working with, go to the NH Smarter Balanced Portal here: <http://nh.portal.airast.org/students-and-families> and take the practice tests.

The School's Emergency Operation Plan has been revised and renewed during the last two years. We will continue to practice fire, lock-downs, and other life safety procedures to make sure that the school is prepared for emergency situations. The New Hampshire Department of Education has offered greater flexibility with our designation of a Focus School to place funding into the areas in which the school self-identifies as weaknesses. The administrative team has

worked to align our Focus School plan with the district's strategic plan and building initiatives to improve student learning.

Closing

I am excited about the progress we have made in parent support, community outreach, and student achievement. It is a privilege to work with a staff, both in Ellis School and at the SAU office, who have the best interest of the students and the school in mind. Thank you for your continued support of the Ellis School.

Sincerely,

J.R. Bridle

John R. Bridle, Interim Principal