

## **Report of the Ellis School Principal**

There have been many changes at Ellis School over the past few months; most notably, the reorganization of the Ellis School Administration. This past Fall, I started my third year in the Fremont School District, acting previously as the Principal of the Middle School program. Through the reorganization, I have been appointed Principal over Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth Grade. My goal was to treat this new responsibility as if it were my first year here at Ellis School. The restructuring of the Ellis School Administration includes the addition of an Assistant Principal and Special Education Coordinator. We are very pleased to have Douglas Totten, Assistant Principal, and Sarah Krebs, Special Education Coordinator, join the Administrative team at Ellis School.

Mr. Totten was previously a Math teacher at Sanborn Middle School. Prior to that, he was a 6th Grade Math teacher at Rochester Middle School. Mr. Totten studied Finance, before turning to education. He has worked with all grade levels as a Residential Teacher, where he developed and implemented behavioral management programs for emotionally handicapped children.

Mrs. Krebs comes to us from the Raymond School District as the former Special Education and Pre-School Coordinator at Lamprey River Elementary School. Prior to that, she was the Assistant Special Education Director at SAU 44 (Northwood, Nottingham, and Strafford).

One of my goals for Ellis School was to establish a formal Response to Intervention (RtI) program at the Middle School. This may be a familiar concept for our 5<sup>th</sup> Graders, as it is similar to Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) in the Elementary School. We have expanded our RtI model into Grades 3 and 4 since the beginning of the school year. The goal is to have the RtI program implemented school wide by the end of this school year. The “Interventions” provided are not merely for struggling students, as many of the activities are focused around enrichment. Ellis School has seen steady growth in our District and State Testing as a result of the efforts of the RtI model. We continue to evaluate our programs and will work toward growth in student achievement. Our Literacy and Math Committees are working toward developing curriculum and essential outcomes based on State Standards, and look toward the future with the National Common Core Standards.

This year, we have been piloting a new reading program in Grades 5 and 6 called *Treasures*. We are looking to implement a new reading program so that we may have a uniform and scientifically research-based instructional approach. The need for the reading program is not based on the ability of our teachers to deliver excellent reading instruction to our students, as our teachers have been and will continue to deliver highly qualified instruction based on best practices. However, the reading program will make reading instruction more student centered. As opposed to our students going from grade to grade through Ellis School being exposed to different styles and approaches to reading instruction based on teacher expertise, teachers will use a reading program that will unify instruction for all grades. This will give each and every student the same approach to reading instruction, no matter their grade level or teacher.

The 2011-2012 School Year has been an excellent year so far. The climate in the building among staff and students has been predominantly positive. We are blessed to have a group of students that are respectful and willing to learn. 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 the opportunity to work in this great community.

Respectfully submitted,

John Safina  
Principal  
Ellis School

“Nothing contributes so much to tranquilize the mind as a steady purpose –  
a point on which the soul may fix its intellectual eye.”

~ Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley  
*Frankenstein*, 1818

“What is possible?  
What you will.”

~Augustus William Hare and Julius Charles Hare  
*Guesses at Truth, by Two Brothers*, 1827