Class Write-ups Dec 15, 2015

Class 1-2

The 1/2 class has been working on a geography unit about landforms this month. Students learned to identify different landforms such as mountains, valleys and peninsulas. They build various landforms in salt dough, painted them and arranged them on a plate painted as a map with land an water. It has been an exciting hands on learning experience for the class. We are on track with the math program with students showing success on assessments as we work through the chapters. We have been focussed on writing paragraphs, nouns and verbs, and increasing fluency and comprehension in reading. The students continue to enjoy having Ms. Lynn for music and our aide Sarah has been a great help in designing and carrying out art projects.

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Class 3-4

* Finished Trumpet of the Swan; next semester we will start another novel; I hope to do three novels this year, if possible.
* Working on several art projects
* Nearing the end of the CCSS math book, first tome
* Working on writing; learning to properly construct paragraphs ( in the interactive notebook), while responding to prompts requiring higher order thinking
* Furiously working on California Missions project – difficult for a few of the third graders, but we are providing a lot of in class support, and time, to minimize homework demands. Written reports are almost finished. Fourth graders are rocking it!
* Tea Time 12-11-15 with Ms. Morgan’s students as guests
* Wednesday swap with Ms. Normoyle is going well; she does drama in my class while I do art with her class.
* Mendo County Road Show was very nice; with the exception of sitting still, I think the 4th graders really enjoyed it.

Class 5-6

5th and 6th grade are working on their novels which will be due next week and then published. They have been working very hard.

They also have been working on their 2nd book report which is on a Newbery Award winner book and they also create a diorama from a scene in the book.

The Mendocino County Roadshow came out on Thursday, and did a presentation to our 4th and 5th graders. It was about the Oregon Trail and California History. They sang songs and told stories. The students really enjoyed it.

We will have our Winter party on Friday, 12/18!

Happy Holidays!

Class Jr. high

The Junior High students are coming up on the last week of the NaNoWriMo novel writing project. Students have been typing away and will be sending off their drafts Wednesday, Dec 16th. In Life Science students have been learning about Darwin's voyage to the Galapagos Islands and subsequent theory of evolution. They also participated in a really fun and interactive lab entitled "Battle of the Beaks" where they witnessed the process of natural selection first hand when challenged to survive with different beak types. The second round of progress went out to be signed by parents, along with a communication survey that I created to help me improve communication with families. Students will be celebrating Winter Break with a white-elephant gift exchange the Friday, Dec. 18th. Hope you all enjoy the Winter Break as well :)

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High School

The high school students are working hard with an eye to the end of the semester, fast approaching.  While my high achieving students are wrapping up classes and trying to improve their work where possible to earn straight A's,(4 students out of 20 have finished 2 classes already and are just waiting for grade reports from BYU)  the students who struggle chronically with their work in one or more classes are trying to see if they can pass their classes on time.  I have been meeting with the families of all students who are behind in order to discuss with them the causes of the situation and plan additional supports for the students.  I am also keeping up a continued dialogue with these families so that they can track progress via email and face-to-face conversations at pick up time.

As a result of trying to support these struggling students I have re-instituted homework club in the high school by "mandatory invitation" :  )  for those students who are dangerously behind in their classes.  I tutor students Monday -Friday after school until 4:30 or sometimes 5:00when I am not in meetings, but I am worried that it isn't enough.  I often have to work hard to ensure that the students I need to, stay. It would be nice if we had the budget money to provide more one-on-one tutoring for the students such as Austin Williams is providing them in math twice a week.

Juniors and seniors who are taking Mendo College classes (English, Psychology, and Art courses) are wrapping up their finals as the last week of classes is this week.  We have also begun the process of enrollment for spring college classes. Giada Fattori who is trying to make sure she gets all of her credits completed that the Board approved for her individualized graduation plan has run into a road block in our plan. We predicated the plan on her ability to take some classes through Mendocino College.  Because these classes are more advanced our concurrent enrollment policy allows us to award her 10 credits for a semester class instead of the usual 5 credits (colleges cover a year's worth of material in a semester).  However, the community college system to which Mendocino College belongs requires one year of residency in California before a student is eligible for in-state tuition and Giada has not yet met this one year requirement.  She therefore was not able to take college classes this semester and may just miss the deadline for next semester as well.  She will therefore not have enough credits to graduation TRCS by June. Giada and her family are willing to keep her enrolled in TRCS until she is able to complete her credits and we are working on several contingency plans to help her do this as quickly as possible. I have proposed that we allow her to walk in the graduation ceremony with her class this June, even though she will not receive a diploma, as she was very disappointed at the idea of missing out on that. That way, if she is able to complete her units through summer work and classes next fall 2016, she would not miss out on a graduation if she finished some time in the winter. She plans on going to college and wants to move on to that as soon as she is able.

Both of the students in my class who were considered English Language Learner students took the CELDT test and have tested out of the EL program.  One of these students was Giada which was very exciting as she was unable to speak any English at all when she first enrolled in our school last December. Kudos to the SRA program that Roger let me borrow and taught me how to use with her and to all of the high school students who have worked hard to help her learn as quickly as possible and help her keep up with her academic classes as she learned.  We have all learned a lot about the ins and outs of English through this experience!

In terms of student engagement activities in the high school, the students are very excited about the Penny Wars and the efforts to raise money for the new Students Helping Students medical clinic in San Marcos, Nicaragua.  Even before the penny wars began, several of the high school students had donated money to help with this project.  A big thank you to the whole school, staff, and Board for supporting this project our students have been instrumental in starting. Extra thanks to Roger for ramping up the excitement with the pie throwing idea!

The students are also excited about their upcoming field trip to the San Francisco Exploratorium on January 7.  This will be a one day field trip - our first big outing for the year.  In addition they are awaiting the arrival of the high school class t-shirts which were designed by James Holiman and drawn by Mikhaila Keaton!

Over all every day is busy but full of enjoyment and challenge in the classroom!

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