

This Week at Central Academy

April 26, 2010

This time of the year always seems like an incredible whirl of activities as we move closer and closer to the last day of school. It's also a good time to take stock of our year and the work we have done together as a school community. At Central we truly believe that learning is not just about what you do with a paper and pencil. It's about those incredible moments when students and adults alike suddenly realize they have come to a new understanding about themselves and their world. Sometimes this happens individually, and sometimes it happens collectively; but it always is a moment that we prize.

I hope you'll take a minute to look over the various article this week as we focus on how we foster a love of learning in our students. From our oldest to our youngest students, we are busy reflecting over our work thus far this year.

Nowhere is that more apparent than with our 8th graders as they finalize their academic portfolios and prepare their graduation presentations for their committees. The past week has been exciting, sad, and a bit frenzied for these students. I've overheard sharing about specific learning events that occurred for them throughout their time here at Central. I've also been part of conversations with them as they sometime express doubt that they can pull a graduation presentation together, assemble a committee, and then present and orally defend their work. But just behind their eyes, you can also see the excitement and confidence that they have gained throughout their years with us. I am really looking forward to watching our oldest students demonstrate their knowledge and love of learning as they prepare to leave us.

Dianne

Central Academy's Website

Find out what's going on at Central by frequently visiting our website. The website includes:

Important Dates Newsletters Classroom Web pages

Pictures of Students (**You can search by student's first name, teacher name, or by level!**)

www.middletowncityschools.com (click on Central Academy)

IMPORTANT DATES

April 30	Central Sensations
May 5	Early Dismissal – 2:00 pm
May 7	NO SCHOOL
May 10	NO SCHOOL
May 10	M.S. Conference Week

EARLY PRIMARY CLASSROOMS

This past Thursday in Mrs. Brooks' Early Primary Class, we celebrated Earth Day. We read books about earth, plants, trees, and what these things need to be healthy. As we talked about what we knew about the earth and ways to help keep the earth clean, *Taylor* came up with a suggestion to put our words

to action. She said, “Mrs. Brooks, could we go outside and pick up litter from our school yard?” What a wonderful idea! Many of the students agreed that this would be a helpful way for us to do our part to help the earth. Students were running to wrappers, plastic, and paper and throwing them in a trash bag to help clean up the earth. *Gavin* brought up a few dandelions and put them in the trash. “Weeds take away the good stuff that real plants need to live, so these dandelions aren’t good for the earth.” *Gavin* explained.

When we came back in the room, we sat in a circle and discussed what we had just done and why we did it. Students shared the different items they saw that could potentially hurt the earth and talked about different places that they could do this. *Tristan* stated, “When I get home I’m going to see if there is any litter in my neighborhood that I can pick up.” *Lorenai* came up with the idea of making flyers to share with the rest of the school about cleaning up trash, not littering, and recycling. You can check these out outside of our classroom!

Although this activity may seem small, these students are taking ownership of their learning. They were excited about what they were doing, which in turn, turned into more curiosity and a desire to learn more. By taking ownership and being engaged in what they are learning, we are developing a love of learning that will last a lifetime!

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Thursday, April 22, was Earth Day. Here in **Mrs. Jantausch’s** Early Primary room we began with a discussion of what the kids thought Earth Day meant. There were different ideas, but most of them centered on using that day as a reminder to us to take better care of the Earth. *Trevor* and *Nicholas* both brought up the idea of “trash hunting.” They suggested that we should go out, find trash, and put it into the garbage where it belonged.

After watching a short informational video (where we learned that some people create up at 4.5 pounds of trash A DAY!) we decided to head outside! Armed with a glove for one hand and several trash bags, our class hit the green space around Central. We roamed the park area, our playground, and the area behind our classroom in search of unsightly trash.

“I found a wrapper,” yelled *Elijah*. “Mrs. J, Mrs. J., we found a SHOE!” screamed several others! And *Jayden* was certainly surprised to find a hammer out behind the building. The best thing though was hearing *Brooklynne’s* joyous exclamation, “This is awesome!” as she ran across the yard with her trashy finds.

The giggles, laughter, and yells of success were wonderful to hear as we helped make Central a more beautiful (and safe) place. By using the students’ own idea -- going on a trash hunt – my students were engaged and excited. They also deepened their understanding of Earth Day and what it means to be a friend to the environment. Now, the next time they study about recycling or similar topics, my students will have a positive memory and prior experience to build upon as they learn new material.

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It is hard to believe that we are nearing the end of the school year already! This is an especially exciting time for our Olders in **Ms. Roe’s room**. During this time of year we often think back to when each individual began Early Primary with us and how far they have each come in these two years! I’d like to take this opportunity to highlight some of our olders and their love of learning in this article of *This Week at Central*.

Austin enjoyed our recent visit from *Mr. Tom* (*Heath’s babysitter*), our fossil expert. *Mr. Tom* shared a variety of fossils he had found and collected throughout the years. The very next day, *Austin* brought in

fossils that he had found in his own backyard. He wanted to know what kind it was. *Rowyn* chimed in, "We should research that!" *Dallas* shared that he had seen a book about Fossils in our library that might help find the answer to *Austin's* questions about his fossil. Great teamwork friends!

Lately, we have had some more olders that are improving their reading comprehension and fluency. They are so enthusiastic about their ability to read the REAL WORDS INDEPENDENTLY in the books that they choose! *Chloe* loves reading the *Arthur* books! *Eristan* is elated to be able to read the *Junie B. Jones* books now! *Mark* loves any informational books on animals, especially manatees! I am so proud of all of our olders! Keep up the awesome work!

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Mrs. Uhl, Mr. Jarrell & Ms. Stillwell's Early Primary Class has discovered how much they love learning! Each student has found a particular subject that they are excited about, and are in the process of becoming an expert for the class! During our Silent Reading time, *Trinity* and *Alex* were curled up with their copies of *Frog and Toad*. *Lexey* was engaged in her copy of the *The Frog Princess* and *Ariel* was avidly reading the book, *Buzz*.

During our poetry response time, *Kyler, Isaiah, Gabe* and *Trey* worked together eagerly to find all of their rhyming words and the hunk & chunks in our poem. *LaTeria, Nathan, Hanna, Jakob, Ahvonni, MyOnna* and *Eniyah* are busy each day publishing creative stories during our writing time!

During math, *Jordan, Charlie, Tye, Noah, Addison, Paige, Ashley* and *Madelyn* have become true mathematicians by sharing ways to solve their word problems! As you can see our class has been very busy! They have each tapped into their own talents and grown as a community of learners! They inspire one another to do their very best and learn as much as they can! While we are wrapping up our school year, we are still enthusiastic to see how much more we can learn this year! Keep up the amazing work Early Primary!

LATE PRIMARY CLASSROOMS

In **Mrs. Andrade and Miss Zumbahlen's Room**, we foster a love of learning through extra-curricular activities such as field trips. Not only does this afford us real-world experiences, but it also builds our sense of community.

This past Thursday night (April 22nd), the entire Late Primary Team took a field trip to see the Broadway Performance of *Mary Poppins*. There were 130 individuals representing Central Academy. Boy did we look like a strong force gathered in the lobby of the Aronoff.

Do you remember those times when you were a kid and had just seen something larger than life? That's our reflection of the night for some of our students. When we walked into the theater, a lot of kids were in awe of the grand feeling. Watching sets construct and deconstruct while characters flew through the air and climbed walls can give you some sense of why they were amazed.

But, why just rely on my observations. Let us ask the kids how they felt about our evening out on the town. *Allison* and *Rowan* said that this was the greatest experience of their life. *Jake* said he loved the stunts. *Amalia* said she cried when *Mary Poppins* left the kids. *Briley* loved the special effects. *Emily* liked the part where the old nanny was upset about her bird. *Hayden, Chris J., and Jocelynn* said it was awesome when the man walked on the wall. *Donnie* liked the chimney sweepers and how they danced around. *Kya* liked it when the park statues came alive. *Chris R., Anastasia, Madison, Briella,* and

Savanna liked when Mary Poppins was floating around on her umbrella. *Austin Roe* enjoyed all of the songs, especially ‘A Spoon Full of Sugar.’ *Mrs. Beatty* and *Aly P.*’s favorite song was ‘How To Fly A Kite.’ *Chelsea* liked how big and fancy the place was. *Gabe* said he enjoyed comparing the show to the movie. *Daniel* liked seeing everybody dressed up for a special evening in Cincinnati. *Austin Finch* loved going as a whole Late Primary Team because we were all together.

In the essence of time and space, we only mentioned each child’s favorite feature of our field trip. The students were also enthralled with the ride down to the Aronoff. We had three charter buses at our beck and call. Here is some of the feedback in regards to our wheels. The five TV’s were awesome. Kids can’t get bored with movies. That was the most comfortable bus ride ever. It was like riding in our living room or staying in a moving suite.

Even as adults, we agreed with their youthful opinions. The show was amazing, but the memories we made together as a big group are etched in stone forever.

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How to foster a love of learning continues to become increasingly difficult with the pressure of students passing tests and the anxiety students feel. In **VanBurgey’s** class we are always trying to find ways to engage students in their learning so they will think it is fun and learn at the same time. We want our students to want to come to school and enjoy learning.

For example: In our room we have been studying contractions. We are thinking “How can we teach contractions to get the students excited about learning them?” We came up with the idea of cartoons. You can’t believe how many contractions are in cartoons from newspapers. Then they got together and made their own. The next day *Bobby* said, “Can I work on my comic strip contractions?” Then *Casey* said, “Can I?” And *Adreanna* and *Hannah* said, “Can I?”

Making lessons engaging and interesting is an important part of helping students foster a love of learning. This is so much better than our simply saying “Open up your book to page 8. We are learning about contractions today. Please copy and write the first ten.” Until next time, GO CENTRAL!!!

INTERMEDIATE CLASSROOMS

When students discover how the material they are learning in school is relevant to their world outside of school, they begin to develop a deeper appreciation for it. For some students, this appreciation leads to the development of a genuine love of learning. So...how does this happen in **Mrs. Larison’s Intermediate** classroom?

One thing we try to do is make personal connections between our learning and our lives. These connections sometime seem to be made more easily in language arts than in other subject areas. For instance, during read aloud, we often stop reading to discuss how the characters lives or how the events in the story mirror the students own experiences. Students start blurting out connections and are really excited to share with everyone how their lives and experiences are connected to the story.

For instance, *Nic* made a personal connection to our current read aloud story because of a family illness that both he and the character are experiencing. That connection allows him to relate to the character, and he is eager to learn what happens to him. This same character has numerous siblings and sometimes feels overwhelmed with all the activity that occurs in his household. *Alec* and *Valkyrie* are able to make connections because they each have numerous siblings in their own families.

The excitement students feel when they are able to make personal connections often translates into an eagerness to read more on their own, to read other books written by the same author, or to read books from a similar genre.

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When children genuinely care about their learning, they show it in different ways. In our last article, we wrote about students in **Muenchenburgey Land** who take their learning beyond the classroom walls and continue it at home, especially their research topics for theme. Recently, as we have prepared for the Ohio Achievement Assessments, students have again stepped up and extended their learning beyond our classroom walls.

For example, *Kiki* decided to expand her knowledge of graphs by learning more about line graphs from a book she had at home. She was excited to share not only the book she used, but also her new understanding of when it is appropriate to use line graphs and how to create them. *Carter* also spent extra time at home working on creating different types of graphs. He practiced creating bar graphs, line graphs, and pie graphs in order to prepare for the test. *Gracie* has also discovered a new interest in fractions and decimals. She, too, spent extra time at home before testing, investigating more about these concepts. While the OAA results are only *one* measure of a student's understanding and growth, we appreciate the students' desire to demonstrate what they do know on this one assessment.

Another time when a student's love of learning is evident is when they get excited about learning something new. This is particularly noticeable during goal work time when students are working on their individual learning goals. After building a stronger understanding of decimals and what they mean, *Steven* was eager to request goal work in his journal, which focused on decimal work. It was exciting to see how efficiently he completed the work and had that goal journal turned right back in for more! *Lily* and *Alexis F.* are two other students who have expressed a great deal of excitement with their learning about decimals and have also come seeking opportunities to show what they know! *Bailey* has also recently shown a great interest in and a desire to demonstrate her knowledge of using a protractor and a compass. She requested to do an activity *at home* and completed what she could in order to finish it the next day. The fact that she wanted to extend her learning beyond the school day showed that she was demonstrating a love of learning.

Each time our students show excitement about their learning, we know we are continuing to foster that love of learning within them. It is so important for students to feel that what they are learning is important and valuable, so when we see them take ownership and charge of their learning, we know what they are learning is meaningful to them.

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Central Academy and **Ms. Thinnies' Intermediate Class** fosters a great learning environment that nurtures a love for all student learning. Students research topics of interest and then have an opportunity to share with the rest of the school during a Celebration of Learning Assembly. This school gathering is a chance for students to present to the entire school what they have learned about a student chosen topic. Students enjoy performing for former teachers, peers, and even visitors to our school.

Karah W. and *Bailey S.* have worked hard on preparing a Leukemia presentation that can be shared for Celebration of Learning. The students wanted to learn more about the symptoms of the disease and whom the disease could possibly affect. The Celebration of Learning is a great way to celebrate what the students have learned through their own research and the research of other students school-wide.

Before students have an opportunity to participate in the assembly, they are required to present to our class. The class provides immediate specific feedback to the students on their presentation. The

presenters are provided with a positive comment from individuals in the audience, an area that needs to be worked on for the next presentation, and another positive comment about the student work. Students are reminded that the student work is only being discussed, and this is not a put down or criticism of the student as a person. Students are encouraged to treat the experience as a learning experience, and as a chance to grow in their journey as a life long learner.

So, in our class we strongly feel that fostering a love for learning is critical to the child's educational experience at Central Academy and beyond.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

To foster the love for reading in adolescents, teachers at Central use strategies that enhance students' motivation to read and engage them in the learning process. We also make literary experiences more relevant to students' interests, everyday life, or important current events.

In Humanities, **Mrs. Hodson's** students select books that interest them for their independent reading time. *Brooke* has been reading *All the Lovely Bad Ones*. *Izzi* and *Ayreonna* have been working together to create a book list for over the summer for reading. *Brennen D.* is reading *Beyond the Grave*, which was suggested by *Jalan*. *Ali* has completed several books this year and is the "go-to" person for book recommendations. *Davey*, *Brennan C.* and *Andrew R.* have all read the same series *Percy Jackson & The Olympians*. *Cole*, *Izzi*, *Kaleb*, *Ayreonna* and *Ali* have all read *Number the Stars*. Good books are contagious!

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Allowing students to have input in their studies fosters a love of learning. Students are engaged and motivated, as their learning is meaningful and personal. In **Kristi Joseph's** math class, the students are working on self-selected group projects. *Andrew J.*, *Alex*, and *Angel F.* are designing their own project based on an idea they developed as a spin-off from their originally selected project. *Stevie*, *Siera*, *Ericka*, and *Ricky* worked collaboratively to choose a project they were all interested in pursuing. Once this group's project was selected, they adapted the project to fit their particular interests.

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Central Academy fosters the love of learning through student choice in their studies. Frequently we have allowed choice in both the math and science programs. The students are allowed to choose topics of interest to them. This encourages and directs student motivation.

Currently in **Mrs. Smith's class**, the eighth graders are preparing for their graduation by portfolio. They are selecting the areas that they feel are most relevant to their learning profiles. These young people are examining the areas of study that they have focused on for the past two years. It is exciting to see them reflect with such enthusiasm on the lessons and labs that they were most touched by.

Mikala, *Paige*, *Samantha* and *Kashley* were reminiscing over the algebra that they had spent so much time working with last year. *Lexi*, *Julia*, *Jacob H*, *Braden*, *Jonah* and *Corey* have had a great time looking at the science labs and the earth science from their earlier days. It was evident that they loved what they were doing. *Leta*, *Raven*, and *Aleah* spent the afternoon focusing on their math instruction based on the state standards. *Lydia* and *Kayla* were very focused as they put their hearts and minds into their reflections for their chosen pieces. *Emily* has been focusing on her research of a famous mathematician.

I am really proud of all these great students and will really miss them as they leave here. Good luck in your bright future.

Other Places and Voices Around Central

Mrs. Carroll works with students all over the building and in many classrooms. It is exciting to see students working on math skills from early primary all the way up to middle school. When a student gets the answer, he/she automatically wants to share the knowledge they have learned. It's really fun coming to school when the kids are so excited to learn!

In Ms. Roe's class I think every student wants to share their strategy of the day. While *Ian, Shawvontae* and *Eristan* use a strategy that is different from *Heath, Alayna* and *Rowyn*, the students learn the many ways to solve problems. *Chloe* and *Christian* might say that they liked *Emma's* strategy and want to try it the next time. The more the kids learn, the more they want to try and learn. The kids definitely learn from each other and they learn that there is more than one way to solve a problem.

In middle school the math can look very different but also very similar to early primary. Recently, many students have been working on finding the area and perimeter of various figures. *Jonathon* and *Jalen* enjoy finding the area and perimeter of the really odd shapes. It's almost like solving a puzzle. They try to solve it first so they can tell me the answer and then explain to the group how they solved the problem and ask for more! It is always exciting when I walk past a middle school student and hear, "Will you give me more problems like that? I like 'those;' they are fun!"

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One of the ways that **Mr. Perdue** has seen how Central has fostered the love of learning is our Celebrations of learning. Every time we have one, I am amazed at what the students are doing in their classes and how much they are enjoying the work that they are doing. For instance, there was a celebration of Learning where *Gracie, Lilly* and *Alexis* were really into the subject matter that they were researching, which was the homeless. You could see the passion that these young ladies had for this subject and how they could help others.

Another celebration of learning that stood out for me was the celebrating involving the middle school Internship that is part of our 8th graders graduation. The students had to select an organization, learn about the organization in the community and complete service hours at that organization. You can tell how much *Kashley, Julia* and all of our 8th graders have grown by finishing their internship and presenting their growth.

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T.E.A.M. would like to announce that May would be the last chance to order Market Day for this school year so stock up for the summer! Return order sheet by Wednesday, May 5 or order on line by midnight, Saturday, May 8. Pick up is Thursday, May 13. Free samples for everyone at pickup and a door prize drawing for everyone with a \$25 order. If you have any questions please give Michelle Proffitt a call at 594-9117.