

# This Week at Central Academy

## November 7, 2011

This week's TWAC focuses on collaboration, another component that is a strong part of the philosophy and practice at schools like ours. Collaboration is an interesting thing. For the most part, human beings have an inborn desire to be with others. We can see this if we watch children as they grow. Although we begin life seeing things mainly from our own list of desires, by the time most children are in Kindergarten, they show marked signs of wanting to work and play together. But doing that well and resolving any conflicts that may arise in the process, can be a very tricky thing. If we watch adults trying to work and play together, it's sometimes not that different.

Learning problem solving skills, as well as the skills needed to work productively together with others is something that takes time and attention. Those skills often need to be learned. Schools like Central believe strongly that learning how to work with others is just as important as is learning specific academic information. Because of this, we begin to teach and give students practice in those skills in Kindergarten, and then continue that work throughout the school to our oldest students. In fact, we believe in it so strongly that we, as educators, practice collaboration on a daily basis ourselves, with our fellow teachers. This is why we hold team planning, and solve our operational issues together through a process we call Consensus meetings. We find that at times, working together can present problems and challenges for us, just as it does for our students. And we also find that as adults we continue to grow on a daily basis in our collaborative skills.

If you walk through our classrooms and hallways during the day, you will see many students working together in small groups. And if you stay after school, or come in before school begins, you will also see many adults working together in small groups. It's amazing how far we all grow in life only to find that at times, we're not that far removed from our children. The ability to live and work together productively and peacefully really is a universal need. Think of the difference each of us leaving Central can and will make in the lives of others if we live this belief each day!

*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](http://www.middletowncityschools.com)  
(click on Central Academy)

### IMPORTANT DATES

Nov. 14-18    Elem. School Conf. Week

Nov. 16    Early Release – 1:45

Nov. 21 – 22    Middle School Conf. Week

Nov. 23    NO SCHOOL-in lieu of conf. day

### EARLY PRIMARY CLASSROOMS

If you take a peek into **Mrs. Uhl's Early Primary Class** you might notice a busy hum to our classroom! That is because much of our day is collaborative. The students enjoy working together in small groups to share information and problem solve together.

During CGI (cognitively guided instruction) the students solve math word problems using various tools (drawings, cubes, two-color counters, or square tiles). After trying to solve the problem on their own, the students gather and share out their strategies. *Kennedy* shared how she used her fingers to help her solve an addition word problem. *Evan* shared how he used cubes to solve his problem. After he had created the two groups with cubes, he retained one of the numbers in his head and continued counting the rest of the cubes to get his answer! Not only do the students enjoy sharing out their strategies, but, they learn so much from collaborating. Often times, after a student shows their particular strategy, another student will try that out the next day!

Numerous activities in our current geometry lesson have encouraged collaboration as well. Several students were working together and sharing their ideas while using pattern blocks to fill various designs. *Avery* and *Naveya* worked as a team to figure out how to fill in their design with the most pattern blocks while *Gracie* and *Amanda* figured out how to fill in their design with the fewest pattern blocks.

Our classroom collaboration doesn't always happen in academic situations. Often, we meet as a group to solve problems, make decisions where we want something in our room to be located or how we want a particular time in our day to look. For example, after a few weeks of school we were noticing, as a class, we were having a hard time cleaning up after breakfast and getting to the carpet on time to start our morning meeting. So we had a class discussion and students shared their ideas of what we could do to make things better. *Rae* reminded us of a song we had used last year to help us be more efficient in coming to our share circle. The class cohesively agreed that they liked her suggestion and we immediately implemented the song into our morning routine!

These examples of our class working as a team demonstrates how students in a progressive classroom are active participants and have a voice in their learning environment!

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Here at Central, we feel it is important for students to have some control over their learning, rather than have the teacher do everything for them. Recently, in **Mrs. Jantusch's Early Primary** room there was just such an opportunity for student learning. During our investigation into sea creatures, *Lucas* came up with a grand idea. He suggested that a trip to the beach would be a wonderful way to research these creatures! Instead of smiling and informing the class that this would not be possible, I replied that it would be a great idea and asked what we would have to know to plan a trip to the beach.

The class quickly decided that we needed to know where the beaches are in order to go. *Savannah* remembered that we could find a map online, so we hopped on the Internet and used our projector to show the map of the United States. Once we located Ohio, it was fairly easy to notice that we are not very close to any major oceans or beaches. We decided to use the Internet again and determine how long it would take to drive there, and how much it might cost for an airline or train ticket. Soon enough, the students discovered that the beaches were simply too far and too expensive to visit.

That didn't discourage them though, *D'Asia* remembered that there was an aquarium in Kentucky. Perhaps that would be close enough to visit, and would cost less than the \$300 plane ticket! After researching our options, the class finally voted on a trip to the Newport Aquarium. Now, this would have been my original suggestion for a field trip -- -but if I had merely planned the trip for them, how much real learning would have been lost?

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In **Mrs. Brooks' Early Primary Classroom** we work together to build expectations of how we want our classroom to function during different parts of the day. For example, at the beginning of the year, our class sat down together and discussed what a community is and what kind of rules we agree to as a community. This set the tone for other specific parts of our day. During counting jar, students were becoming frustrated with the noise level of the room of students who were finished counting and those who were counting loudly. We had a class meeting to discuss the issue, problem solve, and try to come to an agreement of how to fix the problem. Students began to talk about what they wish the room sounded like and how they wanted their friends to behave. We decided that a "Looks Like/Sounds Like" chart would be a good idea to come up with, specifically for counting jar. We had already been using one during Silent reading time so the students thought this might work for counting jar as well. We then decided that the students should be the ones who come up with what it should look like and sound like during counting jar. *Kody* said, "It should not sound like yelling"! *Savannah* said, "It should sound like quiet, whisper, counting voices." "I think it should look like people counting their own objects." *Ella* added to the "Looks Like" side. Allowing the students to come up with the expectations for how the room should look and sound is more meaningful to the students and creates ownership over their behavior. We review this chart each week before counting jar and throughout counting jar, I often see students reminding each other of what it should look like and sound like.

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**The students in Ms. Roe and Miss Cozza's Early Primary room** have been working with pattern blocks during our Geometry unit in Math. During the unit, they were able to explore with the different types of pattern blocks (triangles, squares, rhombus, trapezoids and hexagons) to fill designs. *Shane* shared that it was so much fun! It reminded him of putting a puzzle together (finding the block that fit just right in the design). The next day, the students were challenged to fill a design puzzle two different ways. *Matthew* made a connection to our CGI Problem Solving time, where the students are asked to solve story problems using two different strategies.

One of the most important parts of our Math time is the discussion that occurs at the end of the Math workshop time. During this particular day, I asked *Hailey* how she had filled in her design. She demonstrated her work to the class. After she finished I asked if any other student had used the same design, but had filled it a different way. *Maddy* shared that she had used 6 green triangles instead of the yellow hexagon in *Hailey's* design. *Gabby* said that she used 2 red trapezoids instead of the hexagon. *Sydney* was anxious to tell how she had used 2 green triangles instead of a blue rhombus in her design. *Trinity* summed it up best, "We don't have to use the same shapes to make these designs."

We concluded our Geometry unit with parameters for our designs. This time the students had to make two different designs, but the second one had to have less blocks. *Nathan* was quick to conclude that the smaller the block, the more he had to use to fill the design. The larger the block, the less he had to use to fill the design. Wow!

**The students in Ms. Roe and Miss Cozza's Early Primary room** understand these important concepts more deeply because they were able to work collaboratively through their discoveries and discussions about the pattern block designs. Way to go Early Primary!

## **LATE PRIMARY CLASSROOMS**

Do you know what happens when you give **Mrs. Andrade and Miss Osborne's Late Primary Community** a chance to develop mutual expectations? They will ask you for a say in composing their

own community agreements. They will reflect on how each member is an integral part of a puzzle. And then, they will think of ways to create a utopia in which the golden rule, uplifting one another, and going above and beyond are everyday pastimes.

As soon as they begin to brainstorm a list of important values they want to exhibit, their class agreements will start flowing onto the chart. Characteristics like be caring, be helpful, be respectful, and take care of one another will produce themselves loudly and proudly. It is likely that holding each other accountable will be challenging. However if given the right amount of latitude, growing their backbones will occur over time. Sooner or later, they will start to form a tight bond.

Suddenly, they will begin to problem solve through the bumps in the road. And getting help when you ask for it turns out to be more like the norm. One such instance included *William, Madyson, Charlie, and Taylor*. Each of these youngsters stepped right in to help a couple of groups complete step number six of our dream school projects. This step involved constructing school buildings out of paper. And given the use of interdependence we talked about in the last edition of TWAC, this job flowed smoothly. Without the expertise of each of the students mentioned above, some groups may not have kept up with the process. But because we are a learning community, we stick together. If one of us is on a successful path, then the rest of us will be on a successful path.

As we work together, and take the time needed to nurture our community, time will fly. Surprisingly, summer will roll around. Before you know it, last year's youngsters will have ripened into next school year's olders over the sunny months. And just like clockwork, the entire process will start all over again. Except this time the bar is raised by most of its own members right out of the gate.

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Part of our democratic, progressive values at Central includes teachers as coaches, guides and facilitators. Students have ownership of their learning experiences. One example of this in **Mrs. Brubaker and Miss Smith's class** is our current Dream School Project. The students are creating their own plan for their "dream school" based on teacher requirements. However, when the requirements stifled *Ian's* groups' creative playground plans, they were asked to justify the need for more space and they did an excellent job with that. So I revised my requirements. With this project, the students and the teachers are creating a rubric to establish what high quality work looks like. *Ashlynn* did a great job of giving the characteristics of what a 1 in teamwork would look like. This helped students determine what a 5 in teamwork would look like. *Sebastian* connected our community agreement concerning respecting one another to respecting each other's creative ideas and not discounting them.

*Demetrius* has demonstrated taking ownership of his own learning this week through his new vocabulary notebook. We created a vocabulary notebook for *Demetrius* to define words through writing and drawing from a book in his reading group. After we developed the initial words to define, *Demetrius* decided to find words he did not know in other things he was reading, and compiled a list of new words to add to his vocabulary notebook. He realized that the vocabulary notebook was a tool to help him, and chose to continue adding to it. This was initially an activity for one book the students read, but because we listened to *Demetrius* share how this activity helped his learning, it is now a permanent learning tool for him. Go Central! Go Room 108!

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Watch Out! Be on the lookout....HGTV might be pulling into the parking lot to film a "Design on a Dime" show! This past week in **Mrs. Neu's Class**, the students were all hard at work designing their own "dream school!" Late Primary students have been working on a collaborative activity to support our study of 2 and 3-Dimensional shapes, lines, angles, area, perimeter, symmetry, and congruent figures. When we talk about the follow-up, hands-on learning, for students at Central Academy, this activity is a perfect

example. As a community, we frequently discuss the expectations of working independently, with partners, or in small groups. As the students began the planning of their designs, many groups began arguing about which person had the best design plan, which person would make what, and so on. A teacher often finds it difficult to “let go” of the need to settle the disagreements among the group members. Yet, we know it is important for the students to struggle through these difficult conversations in order to meet the needs of every member of the group. I overheard *Will* telling *Alexis*, “Don’t glue that cube on top of the school. That’s wrong.” Immediately, *Tristan* and *Alexis* explained why the cube was on top of the building. Together they clarified for *Will* how it was part of the roof. *Will* responded with, “Oh, I get it. Cool!” A true testament of how we must let them voice their differences in order to enable a deeper level of thinking to problem solve.

Our class often discusses the need to strive to achieve your absolute best in all that you do each day. If you listen closely, you will hear my students openly voice their expectations with each other. It’s even more exciting when you hear them give constructive criticism to one another while expressing their expectations of how to be treated socially and academically. I overheard *Trey* telling his team, “I know you have good ideas, but you need to listen to mine too.!” In response, *Payton* and *Au’Laila* both agreed that he was right. They stopped, listened to him, and did a great job working it out. Through the discourse of finding what worked and what didn’t within the designs of their schools, it became apparent the students were learning to listen and communicate with each other. Although it took approximately three-days for the groups to quit arguing and begin meeting the expectations of how to treat each other, it was quite magical!

In the days that followed, designs are being drafted, plans made, and materials collected. Based on the criteria for the project, students are beginning to use their imaginations and create buildings, parking lots, playgrounds, equipment, and much more. Each day they cannot wait to begin working on their schools. When you have a chance, stop in and see their hard work!

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**In Mrs. Van Ostrand’s** room students are currently working on their Dream School projects. Collaboratively, in small groups or with a partner, they are designing and planning a school and a playground. Students are incorporating all of the geometric 2D and 3D shapes and concepts that they have been learning about.

How does this look in our Late Primary Class at Central Academy? You will see students working around the room in their “huddles.” Together they have been brainstorming, planning, and designing all of the components that they want to include in their Dream school. As educators we know that young students learn best through doing “hands-on” learning. Students in Room 113 are so excited about working together on this engaging project! Throughout the day you will hear student’s comments about their excitement and not hardly being able to stand waiting to get started!

My role during this time is facilitating problem-solving, asking questions, and giving them the time, space, tools, and support to “work through” the challenges and bumps that arise.

How are expectations learned and communicated to students during our Dream School project time? One example is through our discussions and sharing out: what worked well, what did you notice? What challenges are you having? Another example is group members holding each other accountable: accountable for staying on task and remembering their Community Agreements. Additionally, to help students learn how to work in a cooperative group, we have role-modeled what teamwork would look like and sound like. Lastly, our fabulous olders serve dual roles as leaders and “go-to” buddies.

During our tribes meeting students shared how our working in groups is helping them with their Dream School project. *Jessica* said, “ You learn from others.” *Ronnie* shared, “It helps you to not get into trouble and to do better. Responsible people are role-modeling, and that reminds you [how to behave]. If you notice someone [working hard] then that reminds you.” “Buddy’s help you to keep on track,” *Addison* thought. *Katie P* said, “You can role model for people and be a good listener.” Wow! Great learning from and with one another as we are continuing to learn and grow in Room 113! Until next time! Go Central!

## INTERMEDIATE CLASSROOMS

The other day during Community Circle in **Mrs. Larison’s and Mrs. Koonce’s Intermediate** classroom the students shared frustrations. Some of those frustrations dealt with classmates’ behaviors. One student bravely admitted that his behavior was causing disruptions in the classroom. Because of this disclosure, other students began to recognize that their behaviors could also be improved. One by one, students voluntarily stated personal goals, which they are willing to work on improving. For instance, *Paige* is going to focus more on her schoolwork and less on socializing. *Katie* and *Emily* are going to think carefully before they act. *Josh* is going to thoughtfully choose partners, so he can get more work accomplished. Students collaboratively problem-solved their frustrations and, hopefully, the goals they set will help improve the overall atmosphere in the classroom. Students offered their support to ensure that everyone accomplishes their goals.

*Madison B.* took the initiative to ask if she could move her seat so that she could sit next to a classmate who is having difficulty staying focused. She recognized that her classmate needed some support and feels that she will be able to provide assistance. In a similar situation, *Kylie* helped her tablemates address an issue that was creating tension at their table. She guided them to a resolution, which resulted in a more cohesive group. Oftentimes, students are able to figure out ways to handle issues without requiring the direct assistance of teachers. In fact, as in *Kylie’s* situation, we discovered her helpful actions after the students had already solved the problem.

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When we take an active role in making decisions, most of us have a better understanding of the decision being made and are more committed to it. The students in **Muenchenburgey Land** have a voice in many of the academic and social decisions made in the classroom, which in turn not only helps the students better understand why the decisions are made, but it also helps them take more ownership of them. This may be in the form of us asking the students to give us their opinion on an issue, or it may be in the form of the students personally bringing an issue to us or to our weekly community meeting.

Our weekly community meetings are full of opportunities for students to help make decisions that affect our classroom. We have an idea box in the room where students may submit any idea, suggestion, or concern about school issues. We then discuss these ideas at our community meeting. We even have a note taker to record the decisions made at these meetings. Homework policies and classroom structures have changed due to students’ suggestions in the idea box during our community meeting. The students are more committed to these decisions because they come from their needs/ideas/concerns...not just ours!

We have also found that if we have a concern about something in the classroom, a solution is much more easily reached if we share our concern with the students and let them problem solve. For example, just this week we told the students we were concerned with transitions. We felt they should be quieter and more efficient. After discovering that they, too, agreed with us, we asked them how we could fix it. *Savannah E.* suggested that they not be with friends while transitioning. *Hannah* suggested they stay

silent (versus quiet) during the transition to make it go faster. Wouldn't you know, after they made these suggestions, they had a fabulous transition!

We have recently started Mini-Society, which is an economics experience that involves the students developing a country within our classroom. Our students selected the name *Muenchenburgey Paradise* to represent our country, and they are now completing daily jobs to earn a weekly paycheck, creating businesses to open, and will have the opportunity to play the roles of producers and consumers. The students have been involved in decision making from day one of Mini-Society! For example, the students established the daily jobs that would be the most sensible for them to earn their paycheck each week. The students also applied and interviewed for "special" jobs in our country, such as Treasurer, Paymasters, Money Cutters, and Secretary. Prior to electing the students to fill the "special" job positions, the class interviewed the interested candidates. *Adreanna* and *Savanna G.* were elected the Treasurers of *Muenchenburgey Paradise*, and they have stepped up and filled the roles wonderfully! *Briella*, who is also a Paymaster, has assisted the Treasurers in getting the many *Muenchenburgey Paradise* citizens paid, and the class decided that she, too, should get extra pay for her help. The students have been key players in setting up and running *Muenchenburgey Paradise*, which has given them more ownership of this experience.

We want very much for the students of **Muenchenburgey Land** to feel they are not just at school to follow all teacher directions with no voice in what happens in the classroom. Rather, they are each a valued member of our classroom community with the right and responsibility to speak up. We value and respect their ideas, feelings and opinions, and we love finding ourselves in the position of being learners from our young teachers!

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOMS**

In schools that have a more traditional view, children learn primarily by having knowledge or skills conveyed to them in from adults who are "experts." At Central we follow a progressive educational philosophy, which differs from a more traditional view of learning. At times, this puts us at odds even with other educators who do not take the time to understand what we do at Central. As teachers we try to help our students construct their own understanding of content based on prior knowledge, skills and experience. Telling or lecturing is often the more traditional approach, in which student interests, talents and learning styles take a back seat. Instead, we understand that not all students will master the same thing at the same time, or with the same methods. We often see students' ability to develop their own questions as even more important than trying to find what the teacher feels is the "right" answer.

At Central, the student and teacher are co-collaborators. We want our students to investigate their interests, evaluate problems in a way that makes sense to them, and defend their conclusions. What makes us a progressive school is that we do not depend on drilling facts into students' heads, memorizing redundant facts, and repetitive drills. Instead, we strive to help our students make sense of the facts, ideas, and skills by applying what they know to complex projects.

The **Blaxson Crew** is finishing their social injustice action plans. Members of the class picked topics of interest and then researched facts about their topics in teams. Cyber-bullying, bullying, elder abuse, human trafficking, animal cruelty and child abuse are the topics the class focused on. Students worked in interest groups developing action plans of things that they would like to do. *Kamron*, *Caleb*, *Jason*, *Jarek* and *Nate* are busy finding a video about Cyber-bullying to show parents one evening in the near future. *Cassidy* and *Gracie* are busy finishing their wish list for the pet drive for the Friends of Animal Society. *Asia*, *Ericka* and *Brooke* have been in contact with Laura Rogers on creating a Peer Mediation Group and arranging the training here at Central to help address bullying. *Eric* and *William* are creating a poster

about child abuse awareness. All of these students are investigating things that interest them. When finished, all students will share what they've learned and a way to help in their topic with the rest of the class. Sharing the knowledge is not the end result without developing some ways to help make the social injustice better for others.

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The students in **Mrs. Fagerlund's class** are all equal in the participation of teacher-learner. We often enjoy the inquiry of the students in a, "Did you know what I found when I was researching my project?" moment. Both *Kiki* and *DeAnna* have shared discoveries in health that have moved that subject to a serious academic level. Both girls have stated that when the current project is over they want to continue to research these items for their own personal knowledge. That is what it means to be a "life-long learner."

*Will, Brennan C., Miles, Jalan, and Chase* have found some interesting facts as they worked on the integrated studies unit. Frequently the students will share interesting facts with the teacher and the other students. We have developed a comfort level among all the citizens in our classroom where every member feels that they can share something they have found with anyone else. They understand that learning and teaching is the responsibility of every member. We use peer tutors, resident experts and co-learners in every activity in which the students participate. Learning is an enjoyable part of all of our lives.

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Central Academy is a community of learners. Teachers are committed to lifelong learning and strive to instill that love of learning in their students. When planning instruction, the teachers think about educating the whole child, not just mastering a skill or a chunk of knowledge. While lessons and activities are based upon the grade level state standards, they incorporate meaningful lessons and activities. Often the students have choice in assignment type or finished project, and they are able to select outcomes that match their learning style or styles. In addition, students are involved in developing rubrics for evaluating the assignments and projects that they and their classmates have done. Conferences are held in which both the teacher and the student evaluate student performance, and the teacher and student rubrics are compared and discussed. Independent research is developed around student generated topics based upon educator James Beane's model. Teachers and students work together to attain goals, and students receive as much (or as little) support they need toward mastering these goals independently. Often those who have mastered a goal become "experts" and demonstrate their knowledge by assisting a classmate who needs additional support.

**In Kristi Joseph's Humanities class**, learning is a journey **Kristi** and the students embark on together. Several students are proud of goals they have recently reached and have become classroom "experts." *Mikey* has helped several classmates begin a comic strip, a component of their geography lapbook. *Lillie, Yulia, Valkyrie, Matthew, Austin, Alexis, Barbie, Cole* and *Tyler* have recently demonstrated their grasp of a new concept by explaining the concept to a classmate. The ability to explain a new concept to a classmate not only demonstrates mastery of a concept or skill, but also solidifies and deepens student learning. *Bailey* and *Hunter* have really taken the initiative and joined *Megan* and *Carly* in accepting responsibility for completing work independently. Working both collaboratively and independently are skills students will need on this lifelong learning journey.

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This week in **Mrs. Brewer's classroom**, we went bowling and to Frisch's. The reason we go out in the community is to familiarize our students with skills they need for success as contributing, well-mannered members of society. In the community, we work on things such as making purchases, seeking help from

the proper personnel when needed, saying please and thank you, and some things as basic as knowing how to order food in a restaurant. I am very proud of how all of my students conducted themselves while away from school. During bowling, *Kyle, Marriah, Bobby, Kris, and Brittane* all cheered for each other while they enjoyed a game of bowling. They showed great sportsmanship. It is hopeful that the skills they practiced out in the community will also transfer to their school and home communities.

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In **Mr. Idoine's Middle School class** we have worked together to build mutual expectations for our classroom activities and academics. At the beginning of the year the staff and students sat down together to determine how our time would be structured. One such rule was created by *Eric* who determined that we must "keep our hands to ourselves." *Logan* used a picture symbol to indicate a rule we should follow, taking turns talking. During our time together students will monitor each other, and if they determine a rule is being broken will respectfully correct the student to restore the proper expectations.

## Other Places and Voices Around Central

"**Mrs. Carroll**, can I compare my book to the movie instead of the second book?" *Becca* asked. I suggested that we read the books together and it would count towards her reading goal for the year. She had planned to read both books to complete her book comparison. I offered to read the second book with her, so now we are reading the books together. We are currently reading *The Lightning Thief*, the first book from the series, *Percy Jackson & the Olympians*. Next we will read *The Sea of Monsters*. *Becca* is excited, and challenged me to finish reading the first book this weekend so we can start the second book. I'm learning together with *Becca* as we read. Who knows, maybe we will experience the entire series together.

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I (**Mr. Perdue**) have seen many examples at Central of teachers working with students to make decisions, and building mutual expectations, both academically, and socially. I am a big proponent of this. I believe students will not learn unless they do things for themselves. Sometimes they might fail at first, but that is part of the learning experience for them. Just because they got something wrong doesn't mean they didn't learn from that activity. An example of this is *Evan*, from **Mrs. Roe's** class (which is an Early Primary class). When he first started at Central, he had difficulty with counting jar. But as the year has progressed he has improved in this activity. Why? Because *Evan* kept trying at this activity until he was successful. The students that work on this activity know that we are not going to give them answers. If they count the object wrong, we have them double check. If they don't get the same number twice, we will ask them to do it again. All the students in **Mrs. Roe's** class who are doing a wonderful job in this activity.

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In **Mrs. Hicks' Music Classes**, once students discuss/learn/review classroom procedures at the beginning of the school year, they are trusted to demonstrate them each time they enter the music room. All students know they are expected to enter quietly and sit in a circle on the floor. That way everyone can see everyone else and a sense of community is fostered! Music classroom expectations are very simple: Respect each other, respect our equipment, and respect the music.

As we work with each other during class time, I often use student ideas that are shared during our lessons. For instance, if I ask a question, the student who answers almost always presents his/her response in a way that allows the opportunity for other questions/ideas to be included. It is typical for me to ask a student if I can use his/her "idea" as we continue the lesson. The students love this! Teaching in this way empowers the students to be creative and present thoughts we can all benefit from. It certainly makes my

day more interesting as well, because I never know what special musical moments will happen in any given class on any given day. Such moments happen every day here at Central.

I think the students know they can count on me to have high expectations for their musical progress and growth. They, in turn, expect great work from me and from each other. Since in the music room we are in the business of producing sound, the quality of that sound is of the utmost importance. The students are able to musically evaluate their work and hold each other accountable for the quality of the sound they produce whether we are singing, playing classroom instruments, moving, creating, or dramatizing.

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In **Mrs. Fordyce's Phys Ed class**, it is important that all students can work to establish mutual expectations for classroom conduct in order to foster an encouraging social environment. When students feel confident trying their best, real growth and creativity can take place. Put downs and negativity have no place in the gym and our students go out of their way to make each other feel good about their efforts in PE. Sportsmanship is a mutual expectation that helps everyone to feel more involved, encouraged and motivated to achieve his or her personal best. *Mia C., Evan, Guya C., Micah L., Victorie C., Donnie S., Nija S., and Davyn .W* have all done a great job displaying sportsmanship in PE.

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Students in **Mrs. Grim's orchestra classes**, including *Jonathan, Carter, NoAsia, Zion, and Asia*, expressed interest in playing some familiar songs that they hear on the radio. Party Rock Anthem got the most votes, so I (Mrs. Grim) searched the music stores and Internet for a string arrangement of the piece. There was nothing available, so I decided to write an arrangement myself. Using a program on my computer I have completed a large portion of the song, and we have been working on it on Full Fun Fridays. It has some difficult rhythms, especially for the younger students. *Camryn* was nervous about it, but after we worked on it I heard her excitedly say, "I got it!"