



March / April 2020 Newsletter

Principal's Message

Greetings. As I write this from home, what has also become our new working spaces for learning and teaching, I want to take an opportunity to highlight some of the work we accomplished before the beginning of the COVID-19 school closure. Thanks to our teachers, students, and families for celebrating student progress at our 2nd round of family conferences in March. Research shows that when families and schools collaborate around shared goals, students come out on top. We appreciate how busy everyone's schedules are, so it really sends a clear message to our students that their learning matters when we set aside time to highlight their achievements and set goals for continued progress. We are also grateful to our families for a successful Hearts campaign with over \$330,000 raised and 100% donated in so many of our classes. While the closure interrupted reaching our goals in some cases, we are thrilled by how everyone came together for the benefit of our students. We are also excited that with our matching donation from one of our families, we raised over \$15,000 through our spelling bee pledge drive. This puts us in a very comfortable position for next school year's field trips and student events. Way to go CDA!

As we look ahead to our new normal, we have to take stock in what we have accomplished as we have transitioned to a new kind of learning. Our teachers almost seamlessly shifted from one way of teaching and learning to another, the latter being one that is completely new and uncharted. I am exceedingly proud of their efforts. We recognize that this dramatic change could not have been accomplished without the support of our families. The ways in which you recognized our efforts and offered suggestions has made this work that much easier. As I've said in my emails to you, it is at times like these, ones of great adversity, that the strength of a community is tested. Our focus and resolve have become a model for our students and have set in place a sense of calm that has undoubtedly been a source of comfort and reassurance for what for all of us has been very unsettling times. We know that everyone's situations are different, and our only expectation is that you honestly communicate with us what you are able to accomplish and support. There is no doubt in our minds that you want what is best for your child(ren). Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you need support, resources, or just someone to listen. A community grows stronger when its members rely on each other. *Andrew Jenkins*

Parent Education: Coffee and Tea with the Principal

Our teachers have worked tirelessly to ensure that you have the tools you need to support your child's learning remotely. In order to provide additional resources for families, I will be hosting weekly Coffee and Tea with the Principal meetings during which I will share practices inherent in our research-based approaches, balanced literacy and Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), and how you as co-facilitators of learning with your child(ren)'s teachers can support problem solving and literacy at home. Each week there will be a different focus, and meeting announcements will be emailed prior to the meetings. Our first meeting's focus will be "The Role of Algorithms" in mathematics. We will start with two meetings each week, both identical, and if there is more interest than 200 spots allow, we will consider a third meeting. Join us this week either on Monday at 8:00 AM or Wednesday at 3:30 PM, via Zoom. Have a pen and paper ready for some problem solving! Thanks.

Morning Assembly

Thanks to everyone who was able to join us for our first weekly morning assemblies via Zoom! It was so great to see so many of our students' and parents' faces in an informal setting. We will continue with this tradition Tuesdays through Thursdays at 08:00 AM. The maximum number of attendees is 100, so if you are unable to join on one of the days, try the next day. To enhance security, we will be locking the meeting after the first 10 minutes. Feel free to email me with ideas for what we might share or discuss each week. Each of the assemblies will last 30 minutes. Thanks.

Principled Ideas of CGI

Guiding principle:

Children bring intuitive knowledge of mathematics to problem solving situations

Teaching approach:

Elicit children's mathematical thinking and use it as the basis for instructional decisions

Connect new mathematics ideas to prior knowledge to promote learning math with conceptual understanding

Overarching goal:

Foster students' development as problem solvers who bring skill and confidence to mathematics situations and see themselves as important math contributors

Tips for Working with Your Children at Home in Math

- Children have innate understandings around number and operation
- When we ask questions to understand their thinking, their understanding deepens
- When given the space and opportunity to solve problems in ways that makes sense to them, children will develop strategies and invented algorithms that support understanding of what are considered the "standard" algorithms
- Mathematics should be fun, creative, and meaningful. When we pose problems and create experiences and tasks that are relevant, interesting, and foster creativity, students will think of themselves as mathematicians *and* they will enjoy math
- The person who is doing the explaining is the one who is learning

Important Dates

04/13/20 Coffee & Tea with the Principal 04/21-23/20 Morning Assemblies
 04/14-16/20 Morning Assemblies 04/22/20 Booster Club Meeting
 04/15/20 Coffee & Tea with the Principal 04/22/20 Coffee & Tea with the Principal
 04/20/20 Coffee & Tea with the Principal 04/27/20 Coffee & Tea with the Principal