

Monitoring Report
Prepared for the Guffey Community Charter School's Board of Directors
December, 2016
By Pam Moore, School Administrator

Policy Number: E-6

Policy Type: Ends

Policy Title: School Community Connection

The school and the community will work together to accomplish the following:

Pam Moore writes: *The teachers and I have shared in the writing of these policies. As evidenced by the following monitoring, I am in compliance with this policy.*

Middle School teacher, Hillevi Peterson-Hirsch writes:

6.1 Student work is intellectually powerful, embedded in the local setting, holds personal meaning and is authentic – related to real life;

Throughout my tenure at Guffey Community School, I have tried to place an emphasis on reading and vocabulary, as it is the gateway for all of education and our life. A while back this year I had a student tell me that no one really visits England; they don't have the money! In response, I assured him that even HE could go to England – if not in person, though the real life experience of literature and I read this poem by Emily Dickenson:

*There is no Frigate like a Book
To take us Lands away,
Nor any Coursers like a Page
Of prancing Poetry –
This Traverse may the poorest take
Without oppress of Toll –
How frugal is the Chariot
That bears a Human soul.*

As I design our academic content, I have tied it to very practical applications: i.e. more emphasis on consumer-based math, works of literature that evokes honorable values, examples of heroic sacrifice, historic content, travel experiences, geography that is reinforced through history, useful technology, methods of research, as well as the new science curriculum that is applicable to real life – audio, visual, biological, mechanical and environmental.

It is also my goal to incorporate local experts in the classroom – as is already exemplified through art, math and science classes.

In a middle school classroom, it is especially important for students to understand the relevance of what we are learning. These are the traditionally inquisitive years of questioning who we are and exploring our purpose. In my opinion, it is this time period that is essential to making or breaking the “life-long learner.” If we can engage young minds with making the content personal and enforce classroom accountability balanced with compassion, we have harnessed the heart of young learner for a lifetime.

Written by 3-5 teacher, Lynda MacDonald:

6.2 Community expectations for school and students include a large focus on the local environment, work outside of school, long-term projects, active learning and public performance of academic work.

This End really drives what makes Guffey Community Charter School, Guffey COMMUNITY Charter School. This year the 3-5 grade class is studying Colorado history. We are so fortunate to live in an area where we can get out to actively learn about what we are studying. We are also fortunate to have a school where it is possible to take many field trips. This fall, the whole school went to Mueller State Park to learn more about this beautiful area and environment. We also got to go to Colon Orchards again this year to learn how apples are grown in this area. It is always interesting to see the changes year to year based on environmental factors of this region. We went to the Wolf Center here in Guffey to learn more about wolves and wolf rescue. To supplement our studies of Colorado geology, the 3-5 grade class went to Cave of the Winds and Garden of the Gods. To support our unit on fossils, we will be going to the Dinosaur Resource Center and Florissant Fossil Beds. In the spring, we hope to go to Starsmore Visitor Center to learn more about the Ute culture. We also hope to get a tour of the Cripple Creek-Victor Mine when we learn more about the gold rush of Colorado. To help supplement our music program, the whole school went to see the symphony perform at Pikes Peak Center.

Every year our 8th graders are required to complete a yearlong project in an area that they are passionate about. The culmination of this project is an hour-long presentation where each student teaches us what they have learned. This student initiated project includes an autobiography, a life skill, performing or visual arts, as well as community service. Every year the students are nervous about doing something of this magnitude, but every year they always pull it off. It is amazing to see what each individual student puts together and how they grow through the process.

Our school is very well known for their public performances, thanks to the direction of Hillevi Peterson-Hirsch, our middle school teacher. In the fall, the students put together a very well attended Veteran's Day program. This year we even took our "Show on the road" and performed for the veterans at the Veteran's home in Florence. We are currently working on a winter program. In February, we will put on our annual Pie Palooza. The Pie Palooza is one of our biggest fund raisers and is eagerly looked forward to by the community. In the spring, we will have a spring program performance.

This year, as well as last year, students presented our classroom curriculum during the monthly board meeting. This meeting was attended by parents, community members, as well as members of the district board. Each class put together a presentation appropriate for their grade level. Every student participated, kindergarten through eighth grade. The students were nervous. This was a great opportunity to practice fluency, expression, and eye contact.

Another way students have the opportunity to show public performance of their academic work is through the press club. A middle school student is helping to coordinate this club under the direction of myself. Many middle school students have offered to write articles about events that are going on at our school. These articles are either published in the local newspaper or put on our school's Facebook page. One of these articles, helped to bring in applicants for our administrator position.

Written by K-2 Jenny Hartman:

6.3 School and community interactions are rich, complex, varied and natural:

The students at Guffey Community Charter School have numerous interactions with community members on a daily basis. It is absolutely incredible how involved our small community is in our school. For starters, just the K-2 class alone has 10 volunteers who work with them on a regular basis. We have 2 volunteers who come for reading every morning from 8:45-10:00. These volunteers are Cheri Moehle, Kathie Boucher, Paula Bennett, and Denise Taylor. In the afternoons, we have a math volunteer. These volunteers are Linda Parrish and Cindy Stride. We also have volunteers who teach art to our kids on Thursdays – Heather Piotrowski, Dana Peters, and Barb Felton. Lani Gosslet teaches movement to the K-2 class on Tuesdays. In addition to our wonderful regular community volunteers, our students have opportunities for community interactions by visiting community establishments. The Thursday art class is held at Dana’s shop, Strictly Guffey. The students walk over to the community library every two weeks where Ms. Joe helps us as the librarian. We have also been very fortunate to have other establishments like the Freshwater Grill and Bull-Moose which hold holiday festivities for our students for both Halloween and Christmas where even more community volunteers were present. It is very apparent that our students have regular community interactions that are rich, complex, varied, and natural.

Administrator, Pam Moore writes:

6.3 School and community actively collaborate in seeking to make the local environment a good place in which to live and work.

Our school enjoys an incredible and supportive community. In looking back over my years at the school, for me, this is right up there as one of the biggest benefits of being a member of our school’s staff. And in a position where I get to wear so many hats too! When I wear my administrator “bottom-line” hat, our community volunteers have saved our school thousands of dollars through their dedication by being in our classrooms to work with small student groups or one-on-one under classroom teacher guidance. We have classroom mentors who are teaching a science and advanced math class to middle school students which helps to elevate our curriculum offerings. When I change into my leadership hat, I witness our community volunteers as the valuable school ambassadors that they become by sharing their experiences of working within our school with others in our community, thus generating good will and wonderful public relations for the school. And then there’s the “let’s keep it real” hat, which is how the community members offer their life experiences and love of learning by sharing their talents, trade, and time with our students and staff.

During the season of Christmas, I’m personally touched by the diverse desire of our community members who unconditionally offer gifts to our school’s children and their families. Here are some examples:

This year we had the generosity starting at Thanksgiving time with gift cards to help eight school families them with their Thanksgiving meal. (Value: \$2,000)

This has continued with 2- food baskets for families of veterans supported by the VFW from Lake George. (Estimated value: \$200)

A toy gift basket from the Teller County 4-H group for a school family of three. (Estimated value: \$150)

Strictly Guffey and their customers are supporting our students with a “Santa Gift Room” of handmade crafts, and other goodies for our kids to shop for presents for their parents/grandparents with the Santa dollars that they are earning in their classrooms here at school. Each gift will be wrapped by volunteers so that our students can have a gift under the tree for their family from them. (Estimate value: priceless)

Toys for Tots program out of Colorado Springs and coordinated by the Guffey Fire Dept. Auxiliary. (Estimated value: \$400)

Children’s books and middle school coloring books and pencils for all students from school friend in Michigan. (Estimated value: \$600)

The Christmas Angel in Colorado Spring, who gifts each student with a gift card from Family Dollar store and tosses in a few Walmart Gift cards. (Estimated value: \$250)

A family who donated new hats, gloves and snow pants to students in grades K-5th. (Estimated value: \$150)

Guffey and Canon City community members who generously donated 8 envelopes each with \$100 cash to be given to our families. (\$800)

Freshwater Grill who hosted a hand-made decorations party and tree lighting event for all school students with gifts given to everyone. (Priceless)

The Christmas Angel from Texas who again this year sponsors any school family who would benefit from help with their utilities, to gift cards for food, gas, or Walmart. (\$3900)

As you can see, our school attracts a healthy balance of love and kindness which manifests in a manner that makes our school and community a wonderful place to live, work, and grow together. Truly a school where community comes together for its children.

Written by 3-5 teacher, Lynda MacDonald:

6.4 Students value their local places and see them as having the potential to sustain a life of quality.

This end also defines what makes us Guffey COMMUNITY Charter School. Every year our community becomes more and more involved with our school. Already this year, it is amazing to see how much our community does for our school. First and foremost, we would not be able to accomplish what we are able to accomplish every day without our community volunteers. Teaching across multiple ages, it is difficult to address all the needs efficiently when you are just one person. With the help of volunteers in the classroom, we as teachers can very effectively keep every student at every grade level engaged at all times. This is especially critical in the K-2 classroom where the needs of each student are so varied. Thank you volunteers!!

We have other community volunteers coming into the classrooms to offer their expertise. Barb comes in to offer arts and crafts. Dana and Heather teach art out of Dana's studio. Lani teaches movement to the K-2 students. Sandy and Carla are offering a well-attended after school healthy snacks club.

The community is also very involved outside of school as well. In October, we are fortunate to be able to continue our annual Halloween parade tradition. It is amazing to see the whole community come out and support our students in this fun event. This tradition has gotten even more involved recently with the support of local businesses. This year we were invited to a

pumpkin carving party put on by the Freshwater, and a piñata party put on by the Bull Moose. Soon we will be having our winter program. During this program, Santa Claus comes from the fire department bringing Toys for Tots to all the children in attendance. Thank you, businesses, for all you do!

This fall my 3-5 grade class was learning about money. We decided to have a cookie sale to help us learn to count change. We decided to use the money we earned towards our field trip fund. Ms. Moore put the announcement on Guffey Shares and boy did the community come out to support us for our three-day sale. We ended up baking 10 dozen cookies and raised close to \$200!! The students learned a lot and felt so supported. Thank you Guffey community for supporting our cookie sales!

Sanborn Camp has also offered our students the opportunity to see their local place as having the potential to sustain a life of quality. Last year had the very generous opportunity to send a Guffey student to this distinguished camp on a full ride scholarship thanks to the efforts and coordination of Ms. Hartman. The program was so successful that Sanborn contacted us asking if we would like the opportunity to send another student this summer. Interested students were required to answer a questionnaire and go through an interview process. After much deliberation, we chose another student to attend Sanborn Camp this summer. Thank you, Sanborn Camp!

Administrator, Pam Moore writes:

6.6 School decision-making is responsibly and democratically determined by the people the school serves for the benefit of the entire community.

It is our school's small size and long-term charter school-community connection which embodies our school to act responsibly by listening and responding to the people that our school serves. What could be seen by some as "unique", has become a way of operating as a community charter school. There has always been a reasonable amount of input from the people involved when school decision-making happens. With such a small staff, and our weekly staff meetings, decisions as to scheduling, curriculum, school discipline procedures, and many, many other aspects of day-to-day school life are almost always made together.

Guffey School has an atmosphere that welcomes our community's involvement in our PTO, Accountability Committee, volunteers, mentors, and the school's board. Also, there is a feeling of teamwork, honesty, and openness among students and their teachers that welcomes new ideas that have brought about solutions that most everyone agrees with. Everyone has a clear voice in the decisions that directly affect them. Although it is impossible to completely satisfy everyone involved, I believe that we consider the pros and cons of each request honestly and fairly and make the best decisions for the students, parents and community members we serve.

Written by K-2 Jenny Hartman:

6.7 All students, regardless of circumstances (economic, cultural, linguistic, geographic, etc.) have access to and participate in high quality educational experiences.

All students at Guffey School have access to high quality educational experiences, not matter what! For example, all of our students are participating in our winter program. The requirement is that they all wear a white collared shirt and black pants. Even if a student's family cannot purchase these items due to economic need, they are still able to participate in the program because the school has been generous enough to purchase these clothing items for the students if

they were unable to. In addition, our school is doing an excellent job at teaching all of our students where they are at, regardless of if they are learning at a higher level or a lower level than their registered grade level. For example, I have a kindergarten student who is placed in the first-grade reading and math groups, a 1st grade student in the 2nd grade reading group, and a 4th grade student in the 1st grade reading and 2nd grade math group. These students have access to high quality educational experiences that are at their level, even if it is not their grade level. We are providing interventions and supporting the students who require a little extra help. We also have a speech pathologist, Nancy Roth, who comes every other week to provide speech therapy to two of my students and is helping us through the RTI/IEP (Responses to Interventions and Individual Education Plan) process.