

MONITORING REPORT
ENDS POLICY #6
PREPARED FOR THE GUFFEY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS
December 2017
By Martine Walker, School Administrator

E-6 School Community Connection

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

- 6.1 Student work is intellectually powerful, embedded in the local setting, holds personal meaning and is authentic – related to “real life”;
- 6.2 Community expectations for schools 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;
- 6.3 School and community interactions are rich, complex, varied and natural;
- 6.4 Schools and communities actively collaborate in seeking to make the local environment a good place in which to live and work;
- 6.5 Students value their local places and see them as having the potential to sustain a life of quality;
- 6.6 School decision-making is responsibly and democratically determined by the people the school serves for the benefit of the entire community;
- 6.7 All students, regardless of circumstances (economic, cultural, linguistic, geographic, etc) have access to and participate in high quality educational experiences.

Martine Walker writes:

The teachers and I have shared in the writing of how we are all working together to ensure our school has a healthy and symbiotic relationship with our community. As evidenced by the following monitoring, I am in compliance with this policy.

Written by Lynda MacDonald, 3-5 teacher

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

This year I have been focusing a lot on writing. There is no better way to learn how to write than to model authors we have been reading about. Recently we have been focusing on stories with the theme "That's Amazing". As a culmination of this theme, the students wrote their own "That's Amazing" story about the "Biggest, Baddest Blizzard that ever hit Guffey". Through this writing assignment, we learned about literary elements such as using metaphors and similes. We also learned about idioms and the use of alliteration. Students learned how to use conversation in their stories as well as include powerful words. We learned how to catch the reader's attention through a catchy beginning and learned how to wrap our stories up with a conclusion that felt finished and left the reader feeling something. When the students finished their stories, a local artist came and helped us create art pieces to go with our stories. We read our stories to one of our volunteers. Finally, we displayed our stories in the hall for all to see and read.

It was fun to read each student's story. Although they all had the same topic, they each approached the "issues and solutions" in their own unique way. By placing the setting in the town of Guffey, many students included local sights and businesses in their stories. I also very much enjoyed watching the students creative writing talents bloom in front of my eyes. Each student clearly understood the requirements and rose to the occasion of including those elements in their stories. Now when we read

stories and I refer to these particular literary elements, the students are able to pick them out and are excited with their new-found knowledge.

Written by Hillevi Peterson-Hirsch, 6-8 teacher

6.2 Community expectations for schools 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;

Guffey Community Charter School is truly a place of learning and living within an incredibly supportive community. Therefore, this particular Ends Policy is easily applicable every year:

- 8th grade students demonstrate this particular Ends with their long term 8th Grade Graduation Requirements which include: community service projects, their student initiated project, demonstration of life skills, a reflective autobiography, visual or performing arts components, and academic portfolio -- all culminating in a presentation/public performance of their work.
- 8th grade students also take the lead with the middle school students as they participate in community service projects like this year's community drive for foster children, Wings and Warriors fundraiser at the Veteran's Day Concert, and a variety of year-long service goals throughout the community.

Guffey Community School students invite the community to come and enjoy performances that demonstrate skills in music, movement, and theater.

- We celebrated with our Veteran's Day music program – reinforcing gratitude to the many individuals within the community who have served and sacrificed for our country. As a class, the middle school examined the military character values and applied them in context to expectations we have for students and as we grow into adulthood.
- Theatrical productions continue to demonstrate speech and communication understanding as students examine the motivation of why we say what we say and how the hearer receives it. The Pie Palooza Play and Auction brings in the community to participate in our annual fundraiser and enjoy a melodrama presented primarily by the middle school.
- This spring our music program, Kids on Broadway, will showcase great music from Broadway musicals that feature children in their storyline.

All in all, we are encouraging confident young people who are capable of demonstrating their skills throughout the community.

Written by Jenny Hartman, K-2 teacher

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

Our school has a wide range of interactions within our community. For starters, our students have the opportunity to work with many wonderful community volunteers each and every day. In the K-2 classroom, we have 2 reading volunteers to help with the 3 leveled daily reading groups. These volunteers include Linda Parrish, Cheri Moehle, Paula Bennett, Kathie Boucher, and Vanessa Budd. We also have Linda Parrish, Pam Moore, and Pam English who each help with math once per week. In addition to academics, we also have volunteers who provide art class and yoga classes for our students. Bill O'Connell teaches yoga for the students on Wednesdays. The students absolutely LOVE doing yoga! I am looking forward to future yoga classes with Bill. Heather Piotrowski and Dana Peters teach an art class for the kids every Thursday. They always plan very cute, "Pinterest Worthy" projects for our students to complete.

Written by Hillevi Peterson-Hirsch, 6-8 teacher

6.4 Schools and communities actively collaborate in seeking to make the local environment a good place in which to live and work;

Guffey Community Charter School students are invited to become involved in our local businesses and families on a regular basis. Within our community, we are gifted with dozens of multi-generational individual volunteers who have given of their time and talents to help our students academically as well as helping them to learn to appreciate what makes Guffey an outstanding community with which to become a part of.

Guffey Community invites our school to participate in a number of special events such as the annual Halloween parade -- a rousing tribute to the community spirit with the fire department, community members out on the streets interacting with our kids. Gatherings are held at the Freshwater Bar and Grill as well as the Bull Moose.

Freshwater Bar and Grill has generously invited the students of Guffey School to a pumpkin carving, Christmas decorating party, and an Easter egg hunt.

We also have our bi-weekly visit to the library connecting with community members who volunteer there.

Our K-5 School Art Program is led by local business-woman, Miss Dana, and parent artist, Mrs. Heather Piotrowski.

Each year Ms. Sunny leads our school in her annual gardening extravaganza at the end of May.

This list only touches on some of the multitude of ways our school interacts with our community. Guffey Community Charter School – The generous spirit of this town is interwoven into our name.

Written by Lynda MacDonald, 3-5 teacher

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

This year, again, our local community has been SO supportive of our students and school. I will list just a few things here, however, so much more is going on. To start off with as teachers, we could not do it without our numerous classroom volunteers. We are so grateful to you for helping to give us the opportunity to give students much more one-on-one guided attention than they would receive if it were just us in the classroom. The students benefit so much from this extra support.

Our local businesses also continue to be extremely supportive of our school. For Halloween, the community always comes out strong to support our students in a fun way. Many businesses put on parties and events for our students as we paraded around town. For Veteran's Day, the students worked hard to put on a concert to honor our Veterans. This concert is always well received and this year was no exception. For xmas, businesses are also stepping up. On Tuesday, the students have an opportunity to go to Santa's workshop to "buy" a gift for their parents. On Wednesday, we will be making decorations to decorate the town. On Thursday, the students will be putting on our annual winter program. Santa will arrive bearing gifts for each student. We also have a number of "Christmas Angels" who have anonymously and very generously donated to our families to help ensure that everyone has a very happy holiday. Coming up in February, will be our annual Pie Palooza where the community comes out in droves to help support our largest fund raiser of the year. We cannot thank the community of Guffey enough for all the support you have given our school. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!!

Written by Martine Walker, Administrator

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

Since joining the team at Guffey CommUNITY School and simultaneously joining the community of the town of Guffey, I am continually inspired by the cohesion of our School and Community. Our school serves the community and the community serves our school. I have honestly never seen anything quite like it and I truly believe our little school in this little town is something special and something to be very proud of. I see this pride each and every day in the care and dedication shown by our volunteers, school board members, PTO, local businesses and school families. I see our community “show up” for our school in many ways and I love that Guffey CommUNITY School is a place in which the community that surrounds us and is a part of us becomes united, despite our differences, for the sake of our children. To give an example: a couple of weeks ago a teacher came to me to let me know that she would love to have a reading volunteer for her classroom. She wasn’t sure if we had anyone we could call upon. I decided to put an email out to the Guffey community via the Guffey Shares email exchange to see if there might be anyone in town who would be interested in volunteering. Within 5 minutes the responses to that email started coming in. I was so surprised, and yet not surprised at all, at the number of responses from people who were willing to help. With some coordination and communication with staff and our interested volunteers, we soon had not only 2 new volunteers for the classroom teacher who originally put in the request, but we had also found 3 new volunteers for another classroom that needed some help too! It’s happenings such as this one which truly shows that our school, combined with community and those we serve, are making decisions together to the benefit of all involved.

Also, it should not go without saying that the staff of this school never disappoints. We come together on a regular basis during our weekly staff meetings, chats after school or corresponding via email throughout the day, evenings and weekends. It is during these times we discuss items that present opportunities to make decisions, together. Some of the topics we discuss are discipline, behaviors, computer issues, school accountability, ends policies, special events, school-community linkage, school press and school safety. A recent example would be from a couple of weeks ago in which we faced an issue that required immediate attention. After the board was notified, a meeting was called that day with staff. I think we all came into that meeting feeling somewhat disoriented from the events, however, by the end of our meeting we had made decisions that needed to be made, together. The sense of cohesion was uplifting and by sharing our thoughts and possible outcomes together we felt confident and strong, as a unit.

The cohesion between staff, the support of a strong school board, the dedication of a small-but-mighty community, and the generosity of school families are all what contributes to ensuring Guffey School continues to be the special school it is.

Written by Jenny Hartman, K-2 teacher

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

Guffey School does an excellent job of providing high quality educational experiences to each and every student, regardless of circumstances. This year in particular, we have a wide range of circumstances that we have risen to meet. Every year, Guffey School provides a high-quality education to students of various economic and cultural backgrounds. This year, we have a more expanded range of students than what Guffey School normally serves. We have a vastly different criterion of both academic and behavioral needs to meet. Even though Guffey School does not have a special education teacher to pull out students with academic needs, those students’ needs are being met. Parents of students who have had academic struggles are overjoyed at how far their child has come and how much they have grown as a student at

Guffey School. Our school thrives on differentiating for the individual, meaning that the students who need a little extra support can easily get that. They get plans that meet them exactly where they are, not where their age says they should be at. In addition to academic needs, students with behavioral needs are nurtured at our small school. The staff works together as a cohesive team to set very clear boundaries and consequences for students who are struggling behaviorally. We also work very closely with the parents to make sure everyone is on the same page and we are all in agreement with the plan as to how to help the students understand what types of behaviors we would like to see and what types of behaviors are unacceptable at school. Not only does the staff set boundaries and expectations, but we are also there to provide support to the students with behavioral needs. We listen to them and try to 'dig deeper' to see what the problem really is, and why they may be expressing some of these behaviors. We provide times for them to express their concerns as well as a safe space for them to 'get away' if they feel they just need to be alone for a little bit as an alternative to showing frustration and anger towards other students. Though this year has many challenges to meet in order to provide the highest quality of education to every student, the Guffey School staff is working together to solve problems as they arise and find solutions that work so that every student can benefit from an education.