

The theme for the month of April is respecting the environment. The following shares a couple of things that have been happening in the elementary environment:

### **Smarter Balanced Assessment**

As you may remember, last school year had us participating in the pencil-and-paper version of the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA). We learned from our experiences and have prepared for the electronic version of the SBA in grades 3-5 this school year. Just last week, our third graders were the first in the elementary to take the electronic version of the English Language Arts (ELA) portion of the SBA. As with any new endeavor, especially in the technology realm, there are lessons to be learned. One was that the SBA system can at times have glitches that tell students that they may have lost their previous answers and they need to start over. We have learned to be patient with this potentially alarming message and seek help from the teacher. We have also learned that the teacher needs to refresh their computer page periodically when assessing or students may be timed out of the test. As a whole, the experience seemed to go quite well. It went well enough that the third grade teachers decided to not take a day off from testing to go from the computer adaptive test (CAT) portion to the performance task portion. Now we share what we have learned with our fourth and fifth grade teachers.

### **Gifted and Talented (HiCap)**

The elementary HiCap leadership team has been working hard since late September to redesign our HiCap program to be implemented the 2016-17 school year. Our team is made up of staff and community members and has been meeting on Wednesdays, about every other week. We have been researching, debating, and working on three basic components to our HiCap program, including a basic definition of who a HiCap student is, how we can effectively find our HiCap students, and what program elements we need to best support our HiCap students in their learning. I thought this might be a nice time to share a draft of our HiCap definition (based off the state definition) and descriptors. They are below. We are currently testing identification screeners and the hope is to submit procedures for the screening and identification process for your approval prior to summer.

#### **HiCap Definition:**

Highly capable students are students who perform or show potential for performing at significantly advanced academic levels when compared with others of their age, experiences, or environments. Outstanding abilities are seen within students' general intellectual aptitudes, specific academic abilities, unique leadership capacity, and/or creative productivities.

#### **HiCap Descriptors:**

- Learns rapidly and easily
- Offers original, imaginative responses
- Is widely informed on many topics
- Is self-directed and has a long attention span
- Is inquisitive, skeptical
- Uses an extensive vocabulary
- Constantly asks questions; is curious about many things
- Seeks out challenging work or changes simple tasks into more complex tasks
- Associates with intellectual peers, regardless of age
- Has an advanced sense of humor; understands adult humor
- Is easily bored; argues that she/he does not need to do some of the assigned work
- Has intense emotions; cries easily when frustrated; is empathetic to people and events
- Understands concepts easily and quickly
- Challenges the teacher's knowledge base
- Does not accept things as "face value"

- Dislikes arbitrary decisions
- Often seen as an academic resource by others
- Produces original ideas and projects
- Uses logic to solve problems
- Is intrigued by abstract ideas

### **Community Member(s) of Mystery**

**Our April Community Member of Mystery** has worked at the elementary school for 17 years. She grew up in Juneau, Alaska. Later she met Jack, and they have been married for 25 years. They have lived in La Center for 17 years, the same amount of time she has worked at our school. Together, they have four children, two boys and two girls, who are all grown up. They also have five grandchildren. Our April Community Member of Mystery likes to get a good coffee each morning and can often be spotted in town picking it up before reporting for work. She enjoys baking and decorating cakes and traveling to places like the beach and Disneyland. Who do you think our April Community Member of Mystery is?

**Our March Community Member of Mystery** is in her second year at our school, though her first official year as an employee of the La Center School District. She was born and raised in Yacolt, gained her Master in Education from Portland State University, and now lives in Orchards with her husband of 15 years (15 years this April). Her husband owns and operates All County Towing. They have two children, a tenth grader who attends Prairie High school, and an eighth grader who attends Laurin Middle School. She enjoys spending time outside hiking, finding waterfalls, tent camping, and riding quads on dunes. Who do think our March Community Member of Mystery is?



If you guessed Teresa Warnke, preschool teacher, you are correct.