



Leopard News – September 20, 2022



The Myth of Parent Involvement

When I was a younger man, I had three school age daughters, from 6 to 12 years old. We lived in a small community and the school sponsored or hosted events almost weekly. Concerts, and festivals, parent-teacher conferences, Donuts with Dad, Muffins with Mom, and on and on, filled the calendar. The school wanted families to feel a part of their child's education, and created opportunities for this to happen. Every week, I felt like I was letting one or the other of my children down by not attending some event. To make matters worse, our family was struggling to make ends meet, so buying the shirts, bidding on baskets, donating to the art class, were all stressors on our simple existence. I was working two jobs every week, and three on the weeks my daughters were with their mother, just to get by.

I watched with envy as other parents served as officers in the PTO, walked out of carnivals with big baskets, or brought in donuts for all the dads and their kids. "I must be doing something wrong," I thought to myself, "I am really failing my daughters." The message I received, though it was never intended by the school or the other families, was that parent involvement was a high-level commitment, crucial to their development as human beings, that meant time in meetings, time at school, time that I just did not have.

I floundered along with this feeling for years, filled with guilt and remorse for my perceived short comings. In part, I became a teacher just to be more connected to my children and their school. Being a teacher was not the difference maker however, it was my children's' advice, and years of experience in education, that opened my eyes.

So, let me start with this, be involved in your child's school. Join PTA, attend the concerts, go to the festivals! They are fun, fun, fun, and being a part of this community is a unique opportunity. You, and we, get to see your child in a new and different light, and that is always important. But research tells us, that this is not the involvement that matters. My daughters never held it against me that I could not go to all of the concerts. I did go to all of the parent-teacher conferences.

Family involvement with school, that really makes a difference, happens in the car on the way to the grocery store, or at the dinner table. It happens on Saturday mornings over a bowl of cereal, or walking to school on a crisp, fall morning. You see, for education, the involvement that matters is the interest you show in their education. Do you care what they learned in reading, or science? Is there a problem in math that they mastered today, that was too hard yesterday? More than anything, according to lots of research, your interest helps create their engagement and belief that this is important, this school thing. Ask them what they learned today at school, and don't take "Nothing..." for an answer, because I promise you, they learned something today.

If it is important enough for you to listen to, for you to be involved in, it must be pretty darn important.

Randy Foster



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**With Mrs. McCurry
Assistant Principal**

A question I often ask kids when they are frustrated by not being able to perform a skill well yet, is: “to get better at *anything*, what do you have to do?” Almost every child will respond with, “*practice.*” Learning any new skill takes time and effort, and lots of practice. We set our children up for success when we allow them the opportunity to be at school as often as possible so that they can get the adequate time to practice what they are learning at school. Routines and structures are a key component of students feeling ready to be at school on a regular basis. Below are just a few strategies that you may want to add your own list of routines to get kids ready for the school day:

- Nightly routine with an early bedtime
- Lay out clothes, backpack and other items for the next day the night before
- Set an alarm to help get out the door on time, and plan for unexpected delays
- Set a morning routine with a plan for breakfast (at home or at school)
- Schedule appointments for after school or on non-school days whenever possible

No matter which structures and routines your family uses to help with school attendance and students’ success, each one is helping to lay a strong foundation for the practice kids need to learn and improve.



In counseling the next couple of weeks, we are going to talk about the importance of listening. Why do we listen? Does listening help our friendships? How do we listen? What does listening look like?

Here are some activities that you can do at home to help support listening skills.

*Play a game of Freeze Dance. *Go on a sound hunt outside and think about all the different noises you hear along the way.

*Play musical chairs. *Play a game of Would You Rather. *Have a conversation, here are some conversation starters...

oWhat is something you have noticed about making friends

oWhat is something you would change about school?

What is something you enjoy about school?

Grade Level and Specials Updates

Fourth Grade

Fourth grade is off to a great start! Students have been learning and practicing what it means to show their best R.O.A.R. We have been teaching what Respect, On task, Always safe and Responsible behavior looks like in all areas of school.

We are going on our first field trip in September to Connected Lakes to learn about bird banding in our Grand Valley. Bird banding is one of the oldest and most important techniques used for studying and identifying birds. This is always a great field trip because of the hands-on activities. This trip supports our science standards because it is a firsthand example of what students will be learning.

Fourth graders had the opportunity to write personal narratives. They learned how to write engaging introductions, develop the main event, and satisfy the reader by writing a closing in which they reflect on their experience.

In reading, students are learning about how to make inferences with fiction and nonfiction text. Students are practicing writing text-based written responses by restating and answering the question, and providing specific text evidence to support their answers.

In math, students are learning about multiplicative comparisons and what prime and composite numbers are. Multiplication and division is an important skill that we all need to continue to practice.

There are many ways parents can support their students this year, one way is by having your child read daily. This will increase their vocabulary and improve comprehension

Music

Although we have time to spare, it is ticking away and will soon run out as students prepare for their music programs. The fifth-grade performance this year will be on November 17th, at 6:30pm with a time-based theme. Everyone is welcome to join us in the gym for their performance.

Write down the performance dates for the other grade levels as well, so that when your kids are performing there will be no surprises the night before. Already, in the first five weeks of school, I have heard the students’ singing voices grow stronger, and hopefully you have as well as your kids have been singing some of what they learn in music around the house.