The Early Word
May 2018

DPS Early Education Updates

Celebrating Champions of Early Education

Cheryl Caldwell

Cheryl has devoted her life to serving children and families in every professional role she’s taken on. As Director of Early Education, she leaves the legacy of championing inclusive practices across DPS. At the beginning of her career, she worked as a Speech Pathologist with the Diagnostic Center. In the 80s she was principal at University Park Elementary and then became the Director of Special Education. She left DPS to serve as Executive Director of Sewall Child Development Center and then Vice-President of Clayton Early Learning. DPS was fortunate to have her return as Director of Early Education in 2002. We'll celebrate her 36 years of service to DPS at her retirement party in June.

Maddie Henninger

Maddie has spent the past 18 years, serving kids and families in DPS through her role as Office Support with Head Start and State Child Care Licensing. Prior to this important work, she earned her B.A. from the University of Northern Colorado. She worked at Samuels Elementary, and then joined University Park Elementary School as an ECE para where she was part of the Tools of the Mind pilot program. It was during that pilot program that she gained a lot of knowledge in regards to preschool education and is very proud of the successes they had with ECE students from diverse backgrounds. Maddie’s talents will be missed when she retires in June!

One Book 4 Colorado!

The team at Greenlee Center for Talent Development, including Principal Sheldon Reynolds, Learn to Lead Para Ryan Nunn, and DPS Early Education Executive Director Dr. Lisa Roy welcomed Mayor Michael Hancock who read Groovy Joe: Dance Party Countdown by Eric Litwin to the ECE students. A groovy time was had by all!
Spotlight on Tools of the Mind

Each month we're spotlighting a different pedagogical philosophy - last month we looked at Reggio-Inspired, and in the future we'll be examining other philosophies such as project-approach, Montessori, and Expeditionary Learning.

This month we're celebrating the ongoing engagement of schools across the city using Tools of the Mind as a guiding philosophy and approach to learning. Our current cohort includes:

Cheltenham
Denver Green School
Escalante-Biggs Academy
Godsman
Greenlee
McGlone
Montclair
Schmitt

The Tools of the Mind approach incorporates the developmentally appropriate practices expected across the district, with extra focus on executive function, self-regulation skills, and mature make-believe play across all learning centers.

"Write Along" scaffolded writing in Ms. Knight's classroom at Schmitt

"Venger Drawings" incorporating scaffolded writing, in Ms. Sabatte-Doyle's classrooms at Schmitt.
From the Tools of the Mind page (https://toolsofthemind.org):

The Tools of the Mind curriculum began in 1993, when Dr. Elena Bodrova and Dr. Deborah Leong began working together in early childhood classrooms to improve children’s ability to learn, and teach educators new techniques for working with children.

Melding Vygotskian theory with cutting edge neuroscience research, Tools is a unique approach to teaching and learning with research demonstrated outcomes for children and teachers.

Tools of the Mind is based upon a specific set of beliefs about how children develop and learn. Tools teachers focus on helping children become intentional and reflective learners, creating a classroom in which instruction in literacy, mathematics and science reflect children’s learning capacity, rather than age-level expectations.

Tools combines a comprehensive early childhood curriculum with an innovative approach to teacher professional development to effectively transform early childhood teaching and learning, and improve child outcomes.
Spotlight on Tools of the Mind, continued

Cupcakes for sale in the grocery story bakery, made by students at Cheltenham.

Preschool classrooms spend the school year working through interactive play studies including grocery store, hospital, and veterinarian (all pictured here).

Kindergarten classrooms work from the same base of building executive function and self-regulation skills, through in-depth study of Magic Tree House chapter books. They are able to dig in to science and social studies themes, while exploring literacy and mathematics.

"Message of the Day" in Ms. Sabatte-Doyle's ELA-S classroom at Schmitt.

The learning continues outside, at Schmitt.
Mira's Mindfulness Minute
Register for the Summer Mindfulness in Education Course!

Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques in Education (SMART) is a 20-hour evidence-based personal renewal program designed especially for adults working in ECE-12 education. DPS Wellness is proud to offer DPS employees a discounted rate for this course! This is a PDU eligible course and/or option to receive one graduate credit.

Dates and Times: Mondays and Thursdays 9AM-1:30PM (June 7th, 11th, 14th, 18th and 21st)
Location: Aurora Public Schools (ESC 2 – Vygotsky Classroom) 15751 E. 1st Ave, Aurora, CO 80011

Click HERE to learn more and register!

Important Dates
May 31 - last day of school for students
Aug. 13 - first day back for ECE teachers and paras
Aug. 20 - first day of school for students

How to Find Us
In person:
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http://earlyeducation.dpsk12.org/