



Managers fine tune their skills

Early this school year, groups of Tillamook School District administrators gathered in classrooms around the district to watch individual teachers teach. Then they met later to discuss the experience and how they each might evaluate that teacher.

Guiding them through the process was consultant Jorie Ellis, a retired school administrator and educational consultant from Lake Oswego.

The goal was to give each administrator practice in observing and evaluating teachers in ways that are productive and helpful in fostering good teacher performance.

Then, later in the year, Ellis returned again to help administrators conduct their own teacher evaluations.

It is all part of the ongoing professional development program funded by the CLASS Project.

If the key to student success is good teachers, then the key to good teachers is ongoing training, evaluation and a constant striving for optimal performance.

That is why professional development for both teachers and the administrators who manage them is at the core of the CLASS Project in Tillamook.

From the beginning, among the resources funded through the CLASS Project has been a series of training sessions for district administrators by Ellis.

In previous sessions, Ellis helped administrators learn how to develop an array of student engagement strategies to get students involved in

See PAGE 6

Teachers teaching teachers

Peer leaders step up to help coach colleagues

Teachers teaching teachers. That is one of the important concepts being supported this year in a Peer Leader program being funded by the CLASS Project.

“The idea is to use the knowledge base of some of our most successful teachers to help their peers develop skills in their specific areas,” explained CLASS Coordinator Linda Shuford.

“This principle not only helps leverage the knowledge resource we have in our district, it also enriches the culture of excellence among our teachers and is an extremely cost-effective and sustainable strategy,” she added.

One example of the program is at Liberty Elementary School.

Principal Jennifer Guarcello tapped Darla Barbee to introduce some effective math instructional tools to her colleagues after she observed that Barbee’s students were doing exceptionally well on their math scores.

“I asked her what she was doing different, since we were all using the same curriculum,” Guarcello explained. “She told me that she had a supplementary curriculum that she was using. So I asked her to share it with her team.”

The CLASS Project provided funding to help Barbee develop the materials for the teachers, as well.

“Darla prepared binders for the teachers to use and showed them how to use them. Now they are using them in their classrooms. It really was a great opportunity for her to take some leadership and also for the other teachers as a team to pick up something new that they knew was working.”

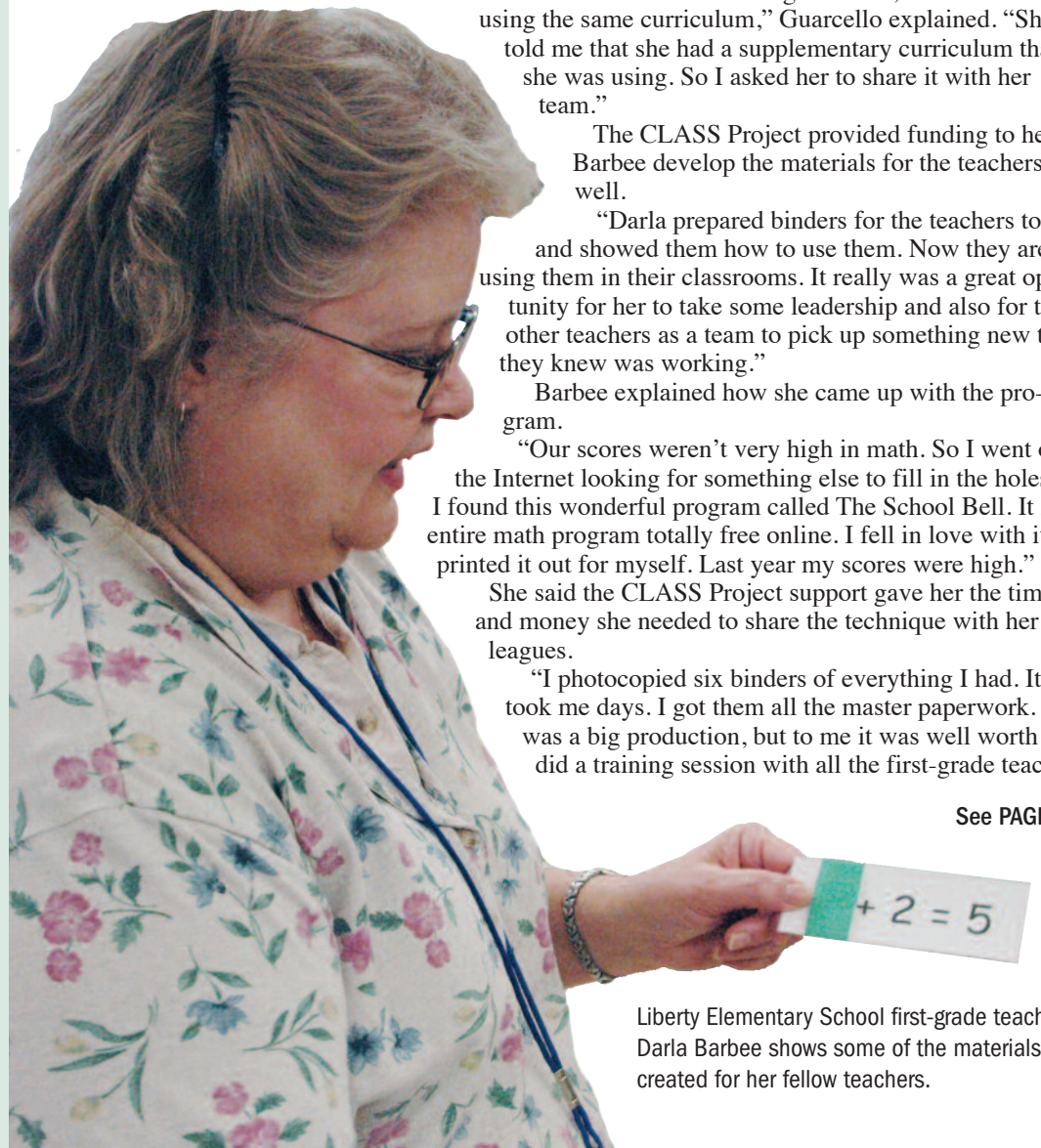
Barbee explained how she came up with the program.

“Our scores weren’t very high in math. So I went on the Internet looking for something else to fill in the holes and I found this wonderful program called The School Bell. It is an entire math program totally free online. I fell in love with it and printed it out for myself. Last year my scores were high.”

She said the CLASS Project support gave her the time and money she needed to share the technique with her colleagues.

“I photocopied six binders of everything I had. It took me days. I got them all the master paperwork. It was a big production, but to me it was well worth it. I did a training session with all the first-grade teachers

See PAGE 6



Liberty Elementary School first-grade teacher Darla Barbee shows some of the materials she created for her fellow teachers.

Incentive Program

Rewarding Excellence

Tillamook School District educators finding unique ways to improve student results

From providing seed money for new playground equipment to funding a beach party for TOPS students, the CLASS Project Incentive Program continues to energize teachers and students throughout Tillamook School District.



“Teachers, with the PTC, have made it a priority that the majority of our fundraising this year be focused on that playground. We want to be sure our kids are active and climbing and doing.”

*– Jennifer Guarcello
Liberty Elementary School
principal*

Liberty Elementary School

At Liberty Elementary School, which became a Kindergarten and first grade school this year, the staff is working to boost first grade reading scores in order to earn incentive cash that they will use to help refit the playground.

“Our playground was built for second- and third-graders in mind,” explained Principal Jennifer Guarcello. “So, if you go out there, you’ll see none of our kids are on that equipment because they can’t reach any of it.

“So the teachers, with the PTC, have made it a priority that the majority of our fundraising this year be focused on that playground.

Especially with the elimination of PE, we want to be sure our kids are active and climbing and doing.”

So, Guarcello and her staff drafted an incentive plan based on the Reading First program. The goal is to raise the percentage of students performing at or above benchmark levels. At the beginning of the year, she said, 43 percent of first-graders met or exceeded benchmark. The goal is to raise that to 80 percent.

She said student testing in November, March and May is monitoring the progress. Under the plan, all staff members attended training in the reading curriculum at the beginning of the school year. Parents were invited to attend a briefing at which the reading program was explained. And Guarcello has helped by substituting for teachers during the year to free them up for additional training.

She said the students are making progress. “We’re very proud of the kids and how they’re doing. We’re really hoping that playground will get something in this summer,” she added.

South Prairie Elementary

Meanwhile, at South Prairie Elementary School, the goal is to ensure that 95 percent of students be on time and attend class 95 percent of the time.

According to Principal Donna Minard, a National Drop-Out Prevention Center study revealed that students who have poor attendance are at a high risk for low achievement and dropping out of school.

Key to making the program work, she said, is parent involvement. The staff sent a letter introducing the program to parents and suggesting ways they could help getting their children to school on time each day, ready to learn. Then, in the classrooms, the teachers encourage the kids to have perfect attendance and give them daily feedback on their efforts.

As an additional incentive, said Minard, students are being rewarded with a second-grade celebration each trimester, such as field trips or parties for students who meet the attendance goal.

East Elementary

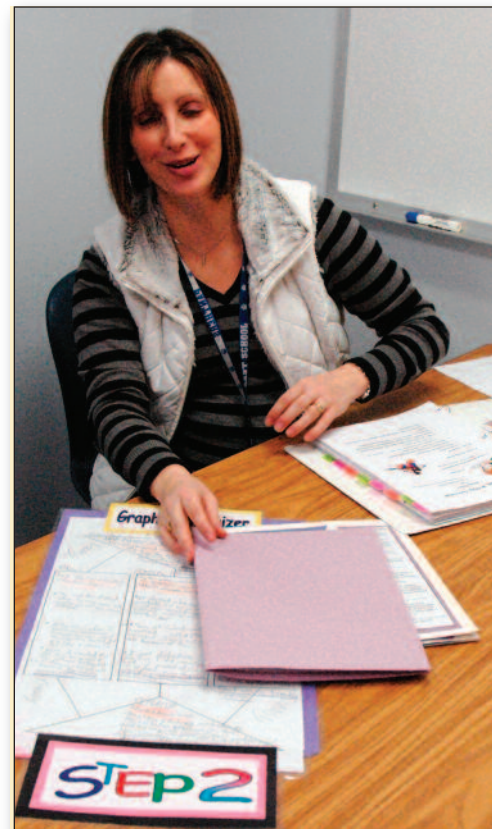
And at East Elementary School the fourth, fifth and sixth grades each have their own in-

centive programs. Among the fourth-graders, it’s all about writing.

“Our team decided to do writing because it is the area where our students struggle the most,” explained fourth grade teaching team member Jennifer Sheets.

“So we put together a program to get the students to write a five-paragraph paper. We would teach them what a beginning, middle and end look like, how to revise and edit.

See PAGE 3



“At first, when they hear ‘five paragraphs,’ they hate it. But then they learn that we’re not doing it to punish them, that we are actually trying to help them and that it gets them a good paper at the end. So, they eventually enjoy it.”

*– Jenny Sheets
East Elementary School teacher*

Incentive Program



‘The tutor thing was a surprise. The kids find out that they get to assign somebody homework. They actually do the work and learn from it. It’s pretty cool because they are actually helping each other a lot more than we thought they would. And they feel proud that they are being like a teacher.’

– Eric Selzer
East Elementary School teacher

From Page 2

We’ve been working on this plan for two years, putting it all together. This year, we started in September with all the materials that we created.”

Sheets said the goal is for at least 57 percent of all fourth-graders to pass the state writing test or the year-end writing assessment given in the spring.

The writing curriculum they created consists of writing trait lessons covering such topics as paragraph development; persuasive, expository and narrative writing styles, and writing engagement activities. The teachers lead biweekly journal writing, give weekly homework and practice scoring writing samples with their classes. At the end, if the entire fourth grade makes goal, the classes will get a field trip as a reward.

“The kids really enjoy it,” Sheets said. “At first, when they hear ‘five paragraphs,’ they hate it. But then they learn that we’re not doing it to punish them, that we are actually trying to help them and that it gets them a good paper at the end. So they eventually enjoy it.”

East’s fifth-graders, on the other hand, are focusing on math ... specifically, multiplication facts. The goal is to get 80 percent of all fifth-graders to pass level three in the school

multiplication fact program.

“We continue to see students struggle with basic facts, which makes the conceptual understanding more difficult for them,” said the Incentive Program grant application. “With many of our standards focused on division, decimals, fractions and measurement, knowing multiplication facts is crucial for success.”

The fifth grade program includes sending letters home to parents explaining the program, teaching students how to figure out problems without the aid of wall charts and giving monthly assessments.

“We decided to focus on multiplication facts because they are supposed to know them by fifth grade, but we have noticed that they did not seem to know them very well,” explained fifth grade team teacher Eric Selzer.

“We give them plenty of chances throughout the year to pass the tests. We also do special things in the classroom, such as super-speed math working with a partner. It’s done in a fun way. All the teachers have also taken kids who passed and made them tutors for kids who haven’t passed yet.”

At the end of the year, the students who pass will be taken on a field trip to the aquatic center in Lincoln City, while those who don’t must stay behind and practice their facts. Selzer said the trip is a powerful incentive.

“The kids are doing really well. Sixty to 70 percent of my class has already passed all three levels, so now we’re giving them division facts to memorize.”

Selzer said even the teachers have been surprised by some of the results.

“The tutor thing was a surprise. The kids find out that they get to assign somebody homework. And the kid is not complaining about that. They actually do the work and learn from it. It’s pretty cool because they are actually helping each other a lot more than we thought they would because they want their friends to go with them. And they feel proud that they are being like a teacher.”

Tillamook Options Program

Educators face special challenges when it comes to motivating and engaging young adults involved in Tillamook’s alternative education program. Rachel Sip, program director for Tillamook Options Program School (TOPS) has become part of the CLASS Project Incentive Program this year with a writing program that was launched at the school a couple of years ago.

“We started the program for a couple of different reasons,” she explained. “One reason was the test scores of our students were below the state average, so we saw that as a concern. Also, writing is a lifelong skill that students will need when they graduate. And



‘Our kids have a lot to say and sometimes they just need that little push to get it out. Then they feel really good about themselves.’

– Rachel Sip
TOPS program director

writing not only helps them in English, but also in science and social studies. It helps them think.”

Under the TOPS program, writing samples are collected from students monthly. Then the TOPS writing data team meets to score the papers, review the data and plan the next round of instruction. Students chart and graph their own progress and set their own writing goals. At the end of the year, \$200 of the incentive funds will be used for a school-wide field trip to the beach and the remaining \$300 will be divided among the four TOPS teachers to fund individual classroom celebrations.

“The goal for our school is that 90 percent of the students will score a passing grade or higher on their writing samples,” Sip said. “We are not there yet, but we have seen improvement in the scores.”

She said some results have been unexpected.

“One part of it that blew me away, some of the kids, even with these incentives, they still don’t want to participate. So I’ll gather up those kids and they’ll come and sit here with me and we’ll work on our writing for an hour, until they get it finished. For those kids who did not want to do it, it’s amazing. If you just put a little pressure on them, they’ll come up with these amazing writing samples. Our kids have a lot to say and sometimes they just need that little push to get it out. Then they feel really good about themselves. They’re proud of it. They want to type it up. So, I think it’s been a good thing for them.”

Incentive Program

East creates 'Super' badge for sixth graders

Super 6 program preps kids for junior high

“**S**ixth grade is such a difficult age. Sixth-graders are too big to be little and too little to be big,” explained Erin Warbington, a sixth grade teacher at East Elementary School.

That’s why the Incentive Program for sixth-graders at East is focusing on helping students make the transition between elementary school and junior high.

“There is a huge transition between fifth grade and seventh grade where the students need to learn more mature behavior,” Warbington explained.

“We had a group of students who had figured that out, but a larger group who had not. We were spending a lot of our time trying to accommodate the students who had not figured out personal management, getting their homework turned in, being able to walk down the halls without acting like a monkey. Just really basic skills that they need to know in seventh grade. We decided that, rather than having to continually discipline these kids, we would start a reward program for students who had figured it out and were ready to move on to seventh grade.”

Their solution is a “Super 6 Pass” that allows students privileges and rewards based on behavior and academics.

“Students can earn the privileges that are



An East Elementary School 'Super 6' badge

going to be common to them in seventh grade,” Warbington explained. “Things such as walking down the hall without having to walk in line, being able to go to the bathroom without having to take a partner or sign out. Basically, the pass shows that they’ve proven they can be responsible and safe and respectful without us having to watch over them.”

She explained that students must apply to receive a Super 6 Pass.

“We consider this almost like getting a scholarship to college. So, the students have to explain in essay format why they’re safe, why they’re responsible and why they’re respectful. They also have to get signatures from any teacher they come in contact with on a daily basis. Then we decide from that if they’re ready for it.”

Warbington said the Super 6 kids will be rewarded with a party at the

end of the year, supported by the CLASS Project Incentive Program grant. But, for the students, the real reward is the program, itself.

“The rewards for our Super 6 kids are things like getting to go to recess early, or to band or choir without having to wait or walk in line. We do little Super 6 surprises where we might give a treat on Friday to our Super 6 kids.”

And what if a youngster slips back into unacceptable behavior?

“They can have the pass taken away from them and, if it’s taken away, it takes a month to earn it back,” Warbington noted.

She said the program is meant to bring everyone up to a level that will help them transition more smoothly into junior high and, therefore, give them the best possibility of success in the future.

“Our goal is for every student to earn a Super 6 pass before they’re ready to move on to seventh grade,” Warbington explained. “Not every student will get it. But we really want to reward those kids who have stepped up their maturity level, their personal responsibility and have started to take their education seriously.”

Warbington said the results have been excellent.

“It’s going really well,” she said. “I use my Super 6 students in my class as life coaches and there are other students they are mentoring, teaching them how to get organized and how to get ready for seventh grade. Also, all the teachers have T-shirts with the Superman design and the number 6 on them. We wear them every Friday as a reminder to the kids that it takes all of us to be Super 6 and that our behavior in school also reflects on them, as well.”

‘Students earn the privileges that are going to be common to them in seventh grade.’

– Erin Warbington
East Elementary School sixth grade teacher



Incentive Program

Reconnecting

Trask River High School teacher tries new techniques to reach students

For the first time this year, one teacher at Trask River High School, which provides instruction to teens incarcerated at the Oregon Youth Authority facility at the Port of Tillamook Bay, is participating in the CLASS Project Incentive Program.

Denise (Dee) Davis, teaches math at the school.

“One of the concerns that we’ve had is that the boys were not getting consistent math education that would help them on the state test and other things that they would be doing in the future. So, I took on the project of re-designing the way math is delivered at this facility,” Davis explained.

“My goal was to see if I could improve their scores on the state tests, as well as give them skills that they could use the rest of their lives.”

“One of the things I found is that engagement of students is critical. At this facility we have boys who have come from all over the state who have varied backgrounds in math, often missed gaps in their math and often

were not engaged in the classroom at all. So I changed some of my teaching strategies, including finding a different way to take notes, a different way to allow them to participate daily in what we are doing. My purpose was to help them retain more information and make them feel that they were part of the class.”

Davis said working with young men who often have fallen through the cracks or been alienated from the educational process has special challenges, but also special rewards.

“I try to make contact with each student each day. Our whole idea is to get students more engaged in their learning. I’ve seen a tremendous difference in the engagement of my guys since I have begun this program.

“I set a goal that is not just that they would pass the state tests, but, if they don’t pass, that they at least show progress of four points a year. It’s an incentive for them because we have a lot of boys who probably won’t pass the state test the first time. But if I can help them to see that I’m looking for some type of progress, they can feel successful even by

just improving a little. I have had tremendous success with it. I’ve seen real progress with the boys.”

Davis said the progress is both quantitative and qualitative.

“Last year, not many boys passed the state test. This year, I had six boys out of 22 pass the state test. To me, that was huge. But even better than that, I had 12 of them who scored four points or higher than they did before. Three of them scored 10 or 11 points higher, so I was just thrilled. And in my conversation with them, they could cite different things I had done that had really helped them strengthen their knowledge base to be able to pass the state test.”

She said the experience has also changed teaching for her.

“Once I developed these techniques, it has been very freeing for me as a teacher. It’s helped me to really think about how I can capture a concept and give it back to the boys and help them be successful. It’s been a real positive for me.”



Dee Davis is finding new ways to teach her Oregon Youth Authority students at Trask River High School.

Professional Development

From Page 1

their own learning. Last spring, she worked with them to make sure engagement strategies were matching up with student assessments. This fall, she worked with administrators to teach them how to conduct truly effective evaluations.

Administrators are enthusiastic about the results.

“Jorie has been great,” remarked Liberty Elementary School Principal Jennifer Guarcello. “It started out with Jorie modeling for us, which was a great way to learn our new evaluation process. This year she followed up with more modeling and discussed guidelines to follow with teachers. It ensures that all our

administrators are being consistent so every teacher in the district is getting similar responses.

“On her last visit she watched me meet with my staff. That was a lot of fun, too, because often administrators don’t get feedback like a regular teacher receives. Getting that feedback was really helpful. I really appreciated that.”

Guarcello said the training taught her to be more specific with her staff, helping them work on individual pieces of their performance, one thing at a time.

“The teachers appreciated my being very specific,” she said. “We all want to be the best we can be. So, by my giving them some really specific feedback and some ideas that they can apply, they felt very encouraged. They also felt reinforced by the positives that I gave them. And that was something else key that Jorie encouraged. As teachers we often don’t hear what’s going well in our class-

rooms.”

Greg English, principal of East Elementary School, is an experienced administrator, but said he also found Ellis’ training valuable.

“I think teachers can expect that, across the district, they are all being treated equally and fairly; that there aren’t inconsistencies among principals; that we’re all basically working from the same playbook. I think that is really comforting to teachers,” he said.

Karen Thenell, dean of students at East, is a former teacher whose goal is to become an administrator.

“I think that Jorie’s training will offer big things to me in my career,” she said. “I also think that Tillamook has become a very respected school district across the state and people look to us and see all these things we are doing through the CLASS Project and all these opportunities that are afforded to teachers.”

Thenell said the training is having a profound impact on the teaching process and students, as well.

“Jorie has become like a fixture in our district and the language is becoming just what we use. It’s how we talk about our careers and our profession. Now it feels more professional. And, when teachers go back to their classrooms, they’re using differentiated instruction, which we (at East) have now been trained on extensively,” Thenell said.

“We are talking about things like our learning objectives and the goals for our students. And this is even becoming language now that our students are using. They talk about what are the goals that we have at the end of the day. What do we need to know when we are done with this math lesson? When teachers and principals and students and assistants are all using that language, it is very powerful.”



Peer Leaders

From Page 1

and it was very well received.”

Other schools also are being touched by the Peer Leader program, Shuford said. One important example involves the ActiveBoards that are used in district classrooms. These computerized display boards operate on software provided by the ActiveBoard manufacturer. That software will be updated next year to provide even more functionality. However, Shuford noted, that will require some retraining of the teachers to learn how to use the new functions.

This year, the school district sent staff from each school to learn the new software.

Two of them will become trainers for the entire district to bring all the other teachers up to speed.

“We believe training the trainer is a very cost-effective approach,” Shuford explained.

At South Prairie, the Peer Leader project helped in the school’s reading program. Principal Donna Minard’s staff benefitted from the expertise of Title I teacher Cathie Fetzter.

Fetzter had been a Reading First coach at Liberty Elementary for the past five years, coaching teachers in Reading First techniques. When she and other teachers moved to South Prairie as part of the district’s school reorganization, she was called upon to do the same there.

The Reading First program focuses on

phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency and accuracy, she noted.

“No matter how long you have been teaching, you can always learn something new,” noted Fetzter.

She said she works with her colleagues in a three-step process.

“I model it, then we do it together, then the teacher does it on her own,” she explained. It’s the ‘I do it, we do it, you do it’ method. It’s working very well.”

Minard agrees.

“I have seen improvement in student reading as a result of Cathie’s coaching,” she said. “Seventy-eight percent passed the first round of testing, which I feel really good about. So I think we’re doing pretty well.”