

“Success means having the courage, the determination, and the will to become the person you believe you were meant to be”. George Sheehan

Dear Armatage families,

Happy October; it has been beautiful!

Laptop Mice

Over the summer, the district provided Armatage with 35 new MacBook Air laptop computers for the media center. They then repurposed the media center desktops, using them to replace aging classroom computers that could no longer support necessary software updates. One result has been that we have newer / faster / more reliable machines in our classrooms (though some classrooms have fewer computers than they previously had.) In addition, student computer lessons and work in the media center will be completed on laptops this year, which is very exciting for students. A downside, however, is that instead of mice, our laptops have trackpads. Some students -- especially some of our younger learners -- find trackpads difficult to maneuver. We want these students to have access to external mice to use with the laptops. This is where we need your help. We do not currently have a complete set of mice. We hope that there are a few Armatage families who have unused USB mice that they would be willing to donate to the school for this purpose. If you have one to donate, please send it to school with your child, or bring it to Kristen or Heidi in the media center. Thank you!

Family Fun Walk

What an incredible day and event this was for Armatage! I was so impressed with the number of families that attended the breakfast at the crack of dawn on a Saturday morning (I guess 8:00 a.m. isn't that early for most folks, but it definitely required an extra cup of coffee for me ☺). Like all events, the success of this fund raiser required a lot of preparation and behind the scenes work. Thanks you so much to Lesa Hudak who chaired the Pancake Breakfast and Becky Dosse who chaired the Fun Walk. They were supported by a committee including: Mary Mckinley, Sarah Poindexter, Avina Singh, Emily Hiranaga, Jennifer Somers and Kai Gudmestad.

On a side note, the last tally I heard indicated the Family Fun Walk raised over \$28,000.00. Unbelievably, phenomenally, outstandingly WONDERFUL!!! Thank you to everyone who supported / or participated in this event! This will allow us to continue with the many extra activities and educational supports we have in place for the kids.

Conferences

Conferences will be taking place Tuesday, October 18th and Wednesday, October 19th. If you have not signed up for a conference yet, you can do so on Signup Genius or contact your child's teacher. This is a great way to connect with your child/rens teacher and do some co-planning to ensure your child stays on track.

Visit Our Schools

This year, MPS has changed the K-12 Information Fair model at the Convention Center to having schools open their doors to our families and encouraging them to see the buildings and get a sense of the school culture.

Last Saturday, Armatage held an Open House from 9:30 - 12:00 p.m. Margo Borth who coordinated this event along with Staci Owens, Jane Campbell, Anita Webster, Kelly Alexander, Nancy Dobbratz, Ashley Tomechko, Susie King and parents Paula Luxenberg, Meghan Eliason, Crystal Weatherly and I welcomed perspective families to the building. They had an opportunity to tour the building, ask questions and get a sense of what makes Armatage Montessori School special.

In addition to our regular tour schedule, we have five additional Open Houses, they are:

- Tuesday, October 18th - 10:30 - 12:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 25th - 10:30 - 12:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, November 1st - 10:30 - 12:00 p.m.
- **Tuesday, November 1st - 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.**
- Tuesday, November 7th - 10:30 - 12:00 p.m.

Please encourage your family and friends who may be looking for a school to attend next year to come to one of these Open Houses or contact the school at 612-668-3180 to schedule a parent lead tour.

Referendum

Sept. 6-20

On Nov. 8, Minneapolis voters will be asked to renew the school district's current operating referendum authorization, which expires after the 2016-17 school year. If passed, funding would help Minneapolis Public Schools manage class sizes and provide supportive services and activities for students. The request would authorize the referendum for nine years and be annually adjusted for inflation. Property taxes are not projected to increase if the referendum renewal passes. Learn more here: www.mpls.k12.mn.us/referendum2016.

Oct. 3-17

It's election season! Here's the information you need related to your ballot and Minneapolis Public Schools. Minneapolis voters will be asked to renew the school district's current operating referendum authorization, which expires after the 2016-17 school year. If passed, funding would help Minneapolis Public Schools manage class sizes and provide supportive services and activities for students. Property taxes are not projected to increase if the referendum renewal passes. Learn more here: www.mpls.k12.mn.us/referendum2016.

Did you know you can vote before Election Day by absentee ballot for any reason? Early voting began on Sept. 23 and runs through Nov. 7. To locate early voting in-person sites or get information about voting by mail, visit vote.minneapolismn.gov.

Oct. 31- Nov. 4

Don't forget to vote on Nov. 8. For information on your polling place, visit vote.minneapolismn.gov. Minneapolis voters will be asked to renew the school district's current operating referendum authorization, which expires after the 2016-17 school year. If passed, funding would help Minneapolis Public Schools manage class sizes and provide supportive services and activities for students. Property taxes are not projected to increase if the referendum renewal passes. Learn more here: www.mpls.k12.mn.us/referendum2016

Construction



The construction meeting last week was cancelled, so there is no new information to share. However, above is a picture of what the front of the building is ***projected*** to look like upon completion. What appears to be steps will actually be the parking lot. Feel free to stop by my office and see the picture in living color ☺.

Standards of Effective Instruction

Now that the school year is underway and everyone is settled in, it is time to begin the evaluation process using a tool called Standards of Effective Instruction or better known in the district as SOEI's. This year Paul Scanlon, A.P.; Sarah Hassebroek, Instructional Specialist / Literacy Specialist; Sue Gonyea, Math Specialist and I will be conducting at least 3 observations of every certified staff member.

The SOEI process examines 4 Domains, they are:

- Domain 1: Planning and Preparation
- Domain 2: Classroom Environment
- Domain 3: Classroom Instruction

- Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

Within the Domains, there are Indicators that we will look for to assess the level of proficiency which falls into one of 4 categories:

- Requires Attention
- Developing
- Proficient
- Exemplary

Following the observation and assessment of a teacher's practice, the evaluator meets with the teacher to provide verbal feedback that is evidence based and to facilitate a discussion that allows the teacher to reflect and collaboratively develop a plan to help improve instructional practices.

Student Culture

I am currently reading a chapter on student culture from the book Leverage Leadership by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo. The core ideas from this chapter are:

- In schools with strong cultures, students receive a continual message that nothing is as important - or as engaging - as learning.
- Student culture is formed by repeated practice - using every minute of every day to build good habits.
- Student culture makes sure students build the habits of mind and heart that allow their learning to fly.
- Student culture systems are the foundation upon which students develop virtuous action.

One of the interesting examples the author cited was around the amount of instructional time that was garnered when a school made the decision to "make every second count." The gist of the example was that by involving students, carrying the message that, "time is a precious commodity" and modifying some procedures an equivalence of 12 days of instruction were added during the school year.

As you know, at Armatage we ask parents to drop off children in the lobby at either door #2 or #15 each morning. In addition, we have quiet and respectful hallways. Each of these "policies" supports two aspects of our culture i.e. safety and instruction.

#1 - Safety. As our students develop the skill to walk from one of the lobbies to their classroom, they are developing a critical Montessori skill, independence. They need to be able to navigate the building so if necessary they can get to their classroom or other learning space with total confidence; "Practice makes perfect". We also believe that teaching the kids how to be "quiet and respectful" in the hallways is a continual

reinforcement of a skill that will be used throughout life in a variety of circumstances i.e. places of worship, museums and if necessary emergency situations. We must give them the tools and opportunity to continually practice the skills we expect them to know.

#2 - Instruction. Several years ago we implemented the policies to support our safety goals in addition to creating an environment that is respectful of all learners. One of the outcomes of these procedures is that we have added approximately 2 additional weeks of instruction per year. It is very enticing when we hear noises to stop, look and listen. With the implementation of “quiet and respectful” hallways, we are able to keep learning focused in the classrooms, use the hallways as areas for instruction and ensure that children are not continually interrupted with unnecessary noise.

One of the major take a ways for me was the conclusion that, “Unless we make progress a priority, culture will not change.” I continually look at a variety of Armatage data that indicates our students are making academic gains. These gains that are tied to the implementation of our wide Positive School Wide Environment (PSWE) that focuses of respect, responsibility and safety.

I believe that creating and sustaining a learning environment that is purposeful, focused and consistent is the foundation to building independent, collaborative and hardworking students who will be college or career ready.

I look forward to seeing you at conferences. Enjoy the long week-end; make a memory with your children!

Sincerely,

Joan S Franks, Principal