



# Palouse Prairie School

*of expeditionary learning*

# Tuesday Times

## Our Weekly Newsletter

***Palouse Prairie School will engage children and the community of the Palouse in an inspiring and collaborative education of the highest standards by following the educational design principles of Expeditionary Learning.***

What an incredible learning experience the Odyssey Site Seminar was for the teachers and me. If you remember from last week's newsletter, there were 3 learning targets that were guiding our visit:

- I can identify assessment practices when I see them in action
- I can consider the role of assessment in student engagement and achievement
- I can examine scaffolding plans for intentional sequencing and inclusion of assessment practices

But why all the emphasis on assessment? In our recent No Child Left Behind environment, we've become all too familiar with the surge in student testing as an accountability tool. Because of this added emphasis and the stress that it has put on

students and teachers, the word ***assessment*** has become a bit of a "four letter word."

Our focus is not on assessment for accountability, though that type of assessment does have its place at PPSEL. Instead, we are committed to using assessment as a way to diagnose student needs, plan our next steps in instruction, provide students with feedback they can use to improve the quality of their work, and help students see and feel in control of their journey to success. Assessment used in this way yields large achievement gains for all students and is highly linked to student motivation.

The practices that we learned about at Odyssey will help us to better use Assessment *For* Learning. We will be working to incorporate these into our own practice:

- Providing a clear and

understandable version of the learning target

- Using examples of strong and weak work
- Offering regular descriptive feedback
- Teaching students to self-assess
- Teaching students focused revision
- Designing lessons that focus on one aspect of quality at a time
- Engaging students in self-reflection and letting them keep track of and share their learning

We are excited about the direction that we are moving in and hope that this might answer some of your questions about the practices you are beginning to see at PPSEL. We welcome your feedback! We are all learners in this process.

# Design Principles & Spotlights

The Having of  
Wonderful  
Ideas

Responsibility  
for Learning

Diversity &  
Inclusion

Success &  
Failure

The Primacy  
of Self-  
Discovery

Service &  
Compassion

Empathy &  
Caring

Solitude &  
Reflection

Collaboration  
& Competition

The Natural  
World

## This week's spotlights are on:

The 4th grade CREW and Emily Ball for playing a get-to-know-each other game and for making efforts to work together in math.

Diversity &  
Inclusion

Our differences make us stronger. Differences increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and acceptance of others.

Sam Eaton for giving her fellow CREW members compliments for a job well done.

Empathy &  
Caring

We take care of all those in our community and learn best when there is trust, sustained caring, and mutual respect

Jack DeRosier for working hard during choice time by using the hundreds chart independently; Jordan Wisdom for working and reworking a story during Writing Workshop; Theo Dicus for working diligently on his handwriting and never giving up

Responsibility  
for Learning

Each of us learns within and for ourselves and as a part of a group in a specific process of discovery.

## Haiti Fund

Two of our students, Emma Seckington in 3rd grade, and Aurora Pierzchanowski in 4th grade, have started a campaign at school to raise money for Haiti. The girls have already been speaking passionately to their respective classes about the situation in Haiti, bringing in money and containers, and making signs to encourage others to contribute.

Ms. Bonzo, our 4/5 teacher, and parent Krista Kramer, have also been in contact with Nancy Casey. Nancy is a community member who is very connected to the Haitian people and has spent a great deal of time there. We're hoping that Ms. Casey might be able to help our students to better connect with the place so that there is a context for their fundraising. Research shows that introducing doom and gloom topics at too early an age may cause apathy rather than engagement in later years, so we are being careful of how we approach this work. Our students are internalizing the Service & Compassion design principle, however, and we want to be responsive to that.

A Moscow fundraiser is set for Sunday, February 21. Breakfast at the 1912 Center. This may be another place to involve PPSEL students and families. Contact Louise-Marie Dandurand 882-0209.

# Upcoming Events

The Parent Action Team (PAT) will hold its monthly meeting **tonight Tuesday, January 26th at 6:30 pm**. Meetings are held in the PPSEL café.

**This Wednesday, January 27th at 7pm**, the PAT will host an informal get together at the Eagan Youth Center. We hope that all PPSEL families will be able to come out and join us for an evening of community building. The evening will be informal and dessert will be provided. Please come out so that we can know each other better!

## Board Corner

On Saturday, Feb. 6, there will be three different workshops about Expeditionary Learning and Palouse Prairie. Please consider attending one or more. All sessions are free of charge and take place at Palouse Prairie School, 1500 Levick St.

### EL 101 – 10AM-11:30

**This is a session for a general audience.** It will provide an orientation to the Expeditionary Learning comprehensive model and is intended for new families, as well as current families looking for an introduction. Participants will experience a variety of instructional practices common in EL schools like Palouse Prairie.

### EL 201 – 1:30-3:00PM

**This session is for current families** and prospective new members of the school's leadership team. This fall, families have experienced practices that reflect Expeditionary Learning strategies and school structures. For example, spotlighting students exemplifying a Design Principle or the Student-led conferences. This session will tie things that families have experienced into a bigger picture of EL practice.

### EL Leadership Session – 3:30-5:00PM

**This session is for anyone interested in joining any of the leadership roles in the school:** School Committees, Governing Board, Advisory Board. Participation in EL 101 or EL 201 is recommended. The PPSEL leadership structures will be described in the context of adaptive leadership challenges, specific roles and responsibilities within the different structures and the importance of developing and nurturing a positive, trustful PPSEL community culture.

## Folks Needed

Should PPSEL follow the UI school calendar next year instead of Moscow School District's? Can parents supply their own transportation instead of using busing? Are half-day planning days once a week feasible for PPSEL parents? If you are interested in the above topics and are committed to ensuring that PPSEL adopts a school calendar that has the strongest impact on student learning while also meeting the needs of PPSEL families, then **serve on the PPSEL calendar committee**. Contact Summer so that we can begin this important work!

**Are you artsy? Are you into design, be it fashion, graphics, flower beds, web layout, etc?** Are you looking for a way to connect with your child's teacher and learn more about the ins and outs of Expeditionary Learning? Summer is looking for parents who would be willing to work with each teacher to help them document student learning in their classrooms. **The Documentation Committee** would create panels for our school that provide a specific focus for discourse, enhance inquiry, builds community, integrate learning with our physical environment, and celebrate children! Email Summer if you'd like to learn more.

## Thank You!