

## **Mountlake Terrace Elementary School**

Date: December 16, 2003

To: Doug Pierce

From: David A. Winkeljohn

Re: The State of the Library

This memo is to highlight the accomplishments and goals of the library at Mountlake Terrace Elementary. The students at our school have benefited this year from a few changes in the library program: a change in the schedule, improvements in the collection, and a different focus of instruction.

### **New Schedule Leads to Greater Learning Opportunities**

This year, I am fortunate enough to have classes for a full 30 minutes of instruction plus 15 minutes of checkout time. While this takes away a great deal of time needed for planning and operation of the library program, the benefits for students make it worthwhile. First, a longer instructional period opens up more opportunities to expose students to books and skills. Second, with the essential teacher assistance during checkout, the teacher and the librarian can assist students in finding appropriate materials. Having two adults in the library at check-out time greatly reduces the chaos of this period, a phenomenon universal to school libraries, and provides another opportunity to work with students on an individual basis.

### **Improved Library Collection Leads to Enthusiastic Readers**

The library collection of books has increased greatly in both quality and quantity. Thanks to the money from the spring book fair, we have at least 6 copies of each of the Best Books titles, early enough in the year that more students can vote in the state and regional book awards competitions. Due to the early availability of a sufficient quantity of books and the strong showing of last year's teams, enthusiasm for this year's Battle of the Books contest is growing rapidly. More students are reading and talking about what they read, forming teams, and preparing for the contest.

Last summer I attended the Peggy Sharp class on the best new books of the year. That, combined with the enormous time spent buried in book review magazines, and an increased budget, has helped me to amass an impressive list of books purchased. The students have noticed. Laughter is up at story time and the list of reserves for many titles is staggering. Students enjoy hugging a new book but the quality of the new book in their arms is guaranteed to be top notch.

Title V money has helped me to purchase many non-fiction books and to continue updating country books. Most notable is the purchase of a beautiful set of state books, purchased with building funds. One sixth grader lamented that these were not purchased last year for his state report, but many current fifth graders will get to make use of them. These sets and other purchases help to update and compliment the library, making it a better research tool.

### **Instructional Focus Leads to Advancing Skills and Higher Order Thinking**

The focus during the instructional period continues to be 'love of literature' but has expanded to include emphasis on research skills, conventions, writing for an audience, and critical thinking activities. Intermediate students now can read Library of Congress Cataloging-in-publication data, analyze the OPAC data, write book

reviews, and accurately format a bibliographic reference. Primary students enjoy retelling story elements, comparing different books, and analyzing illustrations of a battery of work. Most students write something at every library class and, with the teacher's support, their product is graded and held to a high, but achievable, standard. Students work hard in the library class to learn research skills.

### **The Result? Students Love the Library**

The decrease in management time has been offset, to some degree, by having teachers helping during checkout time and by the use of the Student Librarian group. These students have been assigned to maintain a bookshelf and their name is affixed to the top of the bookcase. Student librarians are trained to accurately shelve books and make the library look neat and orderly.

The Student Librarians are not, however, the only students who like being in the library. Our students come to the library for more than just work. A group of students visits the library during recess to plan a student newspaper. Others come regularly to use the computer, while yet others come to read or to finish homework. Our library is a welcoming place and our students respond to that.

### **Goals For the Next 10 Weeks**

- Complete Title V application
- Display student book reviews
- Plan for more student-produced displays of literature
- Conduct a Reading Attitude Survey
- Procure more AR quizzes for new books
- Provide some incentive for taking LS tests
- Update Website

cc. MTE Staff