

February 2010

Dear Side Creek Parents/Guardians,

Please find attached a copy of our latest climate survey. You may be surprised to see so many areas with a decrease from the previous year, but I am not. Side Creek is a school that is known for its high expectations for its students and staff. I have very high expectations for myself, my staff and for all of my students. With those high expectations come high demands and this last year has been filled with those demands.

As a school, we are working on making our students more responsible for their own learning and helping them to understand “student success criteria”. This is how students can measure what they know against what is expected, to demonstrate proficiency in relation to the state standards. In the process of teaching our students about student success criteria, we as a staff are solidifying our understandings. Teachers are being asked to reexamine the types of learning objectives they are writing and sharing with the students. Teachers are being supported through professional development and professional conversations. We are always trying to keep our students engaged in their learning, but now we are digging deeper into finding ways to get and keep our students intrinsically motivated and engaged in the learning process. We are not only working to move our struggling students, keep our proficient students proficient but many of our teachers have taken on the next challenge of pushing our proficient students towards being advanced. These are monumental tasks in this day and age, as we are confronting the inevitable budget cuts and shortages. Time is also a challenge. Teachers are trying to find the time to implement all the new information they have gained, into daily practice. We are all working with less, but expecting more. Positive morale is challenging at these times.

We are engaged in very hard work and often it is difficult to see gains when you are immersed **in** the work. We, as a staff, are committed to meet the challenges that have been set before us. My job is to guide my staff through these challenging times, to the best of my ability, with grace and the courage to make these things happen with our students’ achievement always in mind. We thank you for your continued support of all the work that we have done at Side Creek and we thank you for your support as we continue to meet new challenges.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Morris-Sherer
Principal
Side Creek Elementary