

# 4th Get To Know Your Teacher - SAC Notes

February 26, 2019

**Attendees: Monica Meador, Kristen Kubin, Charla Schwartz, Miles Groth, Jessie Black, Jacob Sampson.**

3rd Grade - putting the CKLA readers on the website. Using reminder apps. Making the learning accessible outside the school day and exciting.

Review of summer work - expanding the literature.

Why do you think kids are successful in this class? I have high expectations are really high. Holding kids accountable is critical for good learning in a fun, fun environment. The goal is for them to push themselves.

I've toyed with incentives - sometimes its a productive work habits chart. This year we do group points. It helps the kids learn to work as a team.

Jessie - making sure we have the balance between screen time and paper to pencil is so important. We want to conserve paper and we want to encourage penmanship.

Monica - do every kid have an ipad? Answer: Yes.

Jacob - we have them - we don't use them much. We want to find the right apps too extend the learning or learn to organize, or learn to scaffold.

Discussion of the balance between screens, learning, and screen time at home. 11 years ago, we had no idea of the massive proliferation of mini screens in many children's hands outside of school. This has ramifications for how we approve the very good things we use technology for during school hours. The conversation has started.

More and more, we are encouraging "stepping away" outside of school hours.

At school, we've taken steps in this direction as well - for example: indoor recesses are technology free.

Louisa: We want to prepare them for the future while giving them those great basics.

CKLA now offers PDFs online. Kids can read them in ibooks. Some of these free resources are totally aligned with Colorado State Standards. We are looking into the Science Standards through CKLA as well since we have to make adjustments for the new Science Standards.

If money wasn't an issue in 3rd and 4th Grade:

- I'd love to have technology roll up with the kids through the years.
- Supply kits throughout the years at UPE.
- Classroom sets of headphones, etc.
- To take CKLA even further, have the funds to get even more novels. Love to have age-appropriate novels about, Rome, for example. Sets of novels.
- We could use more time for Social Emotional Health with our counselor. Our district-wide counselor is stretched very thin and we really need more of her time. Wellness has been talking about this. Conflict protocols, being more proactive - teaching kids learn how to take more and more responsibility for practicing these important skills.
- Funds for bigger science kits. I'd love to spend the summer developing these kits.
- Having the resources and time for each skill. When is it bullying, when is it just a small conflict. We need more time to really engage in these briefly each day. The key is to have access to the professional counselors.
- Every kid has Mindfulness Journals. Start each day with an intention. Second grade does this all day, it really helps in third grade. It is really effective for helping kids know what they need that particular day. It grounds kids. Giving them that opportunity to reflect throughout the day on one thing. Making in ALL grades would be great.
- We could have five mindfulness prompts per week for the staff to use across the building.

Charla: Do you still get the Science kits that have live things? Answer: when the Standards changed, we had to move to other things.

Miles: The move to the Next Generation Science Standards.

Jessie: CKLA is already making the shift to new Science Standards. There is a need to align how we teach Science standards. We are finding the opportunity to really shift more into Science.

Monica: Can you put the cost of some of these things on parents?

Kristen: If parents were given a really long heads up for supplies, it would be really helpful.

Jacob: We use setting intentions every day to recalibrate. A lot of work up front but it really pays off.

Kristen: I taught a college course on how to use a hard-core mindfulness journal. It was amazing the range of difficulty in doing this well even with college kids.

Jessie: Yes, adults might not be used to doing.

Louisa: We could come up with five prompts to share for the week.

Fourth Grade: Jessie Black

Overview: What to Expect. Main focuses. I try to do a lot of project based learning and then evaluation.

What does assessment look like in your classroom. We have to deal with the reality of State Required assessments. They are ACT aligned. We always have district and state alignments that we value and have to address. There are things on these assessments we want kids to learn how to do - aside from the other things that might make people not like them.

Some of our goal setting is always around these types of academic goals. We want this learnign clearly in front of children. For example, Colorado History & Science. The culminating projects really help us know if the students are meeting these standards. Since kids are doing these stardardized-tests, it's important that these projects are meaningful.

The standardized assessments don't always reflect how a child is assessment day-to-day. But it's important to use the Standardized test scores for and with the students. "What does this say about a learning in light of all the other things we do throughout the school year?"

How have I evolved as an educator? I've tried to use this project based approach and make the outcomes really visible. Rather than just handing them a grade, I try to involve kids more and more. Portfolios are a big part of that.

(Jessie shows and example of a portfolio). It's important for me to show them why they moved past that goal. They are better than I am in saying "Here is how I'm going to show you I've learned it." They can argue that they have met the standard. A lot of times they are harder on themselves than I would be.

It will be a conversation between us. For example, "Do this mean you have or haven't learned this." They are the ones who tell me right where they are at.

What are the challenges to assessing this way?

Jessie: Time. One challenge: there needs to be a rubric for just about everything. Or you have to have time to have the kids come up with one or analyze an existing one.

I might ask, "What's a good inbetween that shows a reasonable outcome?"

Also, finding the way to meet with individual students.

I've found myself doing a lot of small heterogeneous or homogeneous groups. Getting kids to feel comfortable to goal set is a challenge. Small groups help.

Jacob - I start goal setting in 2nd grade but it's structured differently because of the developmental level of the children.

These questions from our Meet our Teacher nights has really helped me see the vision and how it is connecting across the school.

Jessie: Here's an algebra example: We are teaching small, but important concepts for kids when kids are ready for that.

Monica: Do you have kids who can move around the building to get higher skills?

Jessie: I do smaller groups. We try to move away from whole group instruction. When kids own the outcome, it's much easier to be flexible. "Come show me that you've mastered it" is a powerful statement and frees kids up to seek out the knowledge anywhere in the building.

Monica: Do you have PIT time in 3, 4, 5, and 6th?

All: Not yet. But we're considering ways to break down the walls in ways that make sense.

Jessie: it's tough when the scores feel like they reflect on you.

Miles: A big change: math. Low floor, high ceiling. I could, in theory, give them millions of two step algebra problems. But, it won't encourage deep thinking. You might get a short-term gain and maybe not a long term gain.

Miles: We have to maintain the mindset that "we do hard things at UPE everyday."

Kristen: When we started these conversations, we wanted parents to really understand that Standardized tests are not the end-all look at how their kids are doing. They are important, but don't freak out.

Miles: Each year, I see more and more parents not look at the Standardized test scores.

Wellness Report: What is it? What Does it Do?

Miles: A year and a half ago, the district won the highest award for this in the State - the Governor's Platinum Award. The umbrella is Partners for Healthy Choices.

We meet quarterly as a district and monthly as a building.

We have funding to promote wellness in its many forms in each building, focused on measurable outcomes called "SHIPS." The Sandbox and Outdoor Classroom are examples of this. Our upcoming CaveSim is another example of activities that help us meet our goals.

The community lunch is another activity that furthers our students' learning toward our Wellness Goals.

I've been a co-leader for one year, Louisa two.

We examine the State of Colorado Smart Source and Best Practices. We take the survey to see what we are doing well and what we are not. For example: last year's came up with the perception that lunch should happen after playing outside. As a staff, we are working on a new schedule flipflop this to better meet what the research underpinning the survey is telling us.

Some of the questions are, for example, "what is the average amount of PE time?" We've used a lot more data and data collection to guide our programming decisions.

We've made goals around Health Education. There are challenges with this because the staff who handles this is only half-time. One potential solution might be two, shorter PE classes per week. Our goal is to provide more flexibility and consistently. One hour one week, maybe and two hours the next week. Ideas are being explored.

If money wasn't an Option:

- Finding more play options
- Bringing in Recess Lab - encouraging creative play. This is likely something we have to approach step-by-step.
- More support and education around healthy snacks, nutrition, and healthy eating.

Monica: I'm in MOPs. The concept of healthy restaurants for kids with pictures for the kids so they can learn about healthy options. I've done this with my son at home. Could we get this type of experience for the school.

Discussion of how we might to do this. Classes on how to make a healthy meal on a budget.

Monica: An example from her work: Treat Trolley - Push it around the classroom. It has all healthy treats - fruit, etc.

Kristen: Weird Food Night at UPES: Create a dish with a Vegetable they've never heard of.

Monica: How do you encourage water drinking.

Miles: We purchased a filtered water fountain in the gym. Each teachers procedures are a little different. MAAS bought water bottles for the school through a grant.