

THE RIVEREDGE SCHOOL INQUIRER

The Official Newsletter of The Riveredge School



Nature Journaling at the Vernal Pond

December Updates

by Jessica Tipkemper

With only three weeks of school this month, we don't have many big updates. We have been, busy, as always, though! Here are some details on our new staff, professional development taking place and policies being developed.

Our staff has increased by two in the last month: Katie Popp and Sarah Fisk have joined the school community, giving each classroom the support of one paraprofessional. Look for more details about these important members of our school community later in the newsletter!

The entire staff has engaged in professional development opportunities in the last month, from First Aid/CPR to "A Deep Dive" into behavior to "Illuminating Inquiry." We are fortunate that The Riveredge School has prioritized the education of both students and staff, allowing all of the members of our school community to continue to grow our understandings, skills and abilities.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

WINTER BREAK

12/23-1/01

RETURN TO SCHOOL

1/02

PTO MEETING

1/02, 6PM- **CONNIE'S CLASSROOM**

FAMILY FRIDAY

1/31, 2:30PM



Now we know why they are called "red cedars."



Tree climbing is a careful balance!

Meet Ms. Popp and Ms. Fisk

by Jessica Tipkemper

The Riveredge School community has continued to grow, adding two new paraprofessionals in the last few weeks. We often call paraprofessionals "aides" in schools, but our paras do so much more than aid!

Para means "side by side" and that is exactly how you will see the paraprofessionals here at The Riveredge School. They help with anything you can imagine each and every day. We could not be more fortunate to have one para per class, but even more fortuitous is the fact that we appear to have hired folks who are such a great fit for our unique learning environment.

Meet our two newest community members:

Katie Popp is working mostly with the 2nd grade students and Ms. Gauger. Another trained teacher, Ms. Popp's initial experience and training is with 4th, 5th and 6th grade. Most recently, she has worked with 4K students. She is a parent to one of our kindergarten students and has two older daughters as well. Ms. Popp is a runner, hiker and an explorer of the outdoors, making her a great fit for The Riveredge School!

Sarah Fisk has joined the K/1 students. She grew up in central Wisconsin, spending most of her time on her grandparents' farm. Her family went camping every summer. Catching fire flies, climbing trees and swimming in the lakes were always favorites. Ms. Fisk has worked as a special education paraprofessional at a local school district for the last 2 ½ years. She has worked with children for the past 21 years.

You'll see Ms. Fisk and Ms. Popp at pick up/drop off and out and about with our students. We're so glad to have them with us!

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Our Governance Council, staff and NOSD have continued to work together to develop school policies that are compliant with state and federal law while also supporting the mission and vision of The Riveredge School. Our revised discipline policy was just shared with families via email, with more to follow.

You can always ask for a copy or find them on The Riveredge School webpage for your reference.

*Have a lovely winter break,
we'll see you next year!*

"If a child is to keep his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in."

- Rachel Carson



Exploring the headwaters of the Riveredge Creek



Working together to carry a cedar branch back to the yurt

Happenings in class"rooms"

Schoolwide:

K/1 students enjoyed experiencing the beginning of winter. Students especially loved exploring ice! They experimented with friction by sliding across the ice, used teamwork to break holes in the ice, and discussed ice safety. K/1 students also practiced making appropriate clothing choices for staying warm in the cold weather. They held lively conversations regarding what treasures were hidden in the ice and hypothesized as to where some of their favorite critters (including frogs and salamanders) were hiding.

2nd grade: Second graders put their measurement skills to work this month making curtains for Coneflower Yurt. Students planned, tested, sanded and sewed. Now the yurt has four wonderful, student-made curtains! The second graders had even more to be proud of, as they created final drafts of their fantasy stories. They've been working all year on the difficult skills of giving and using quality feedback; the successful editing process is a testament to all of that hard work!

3/4: Our class has been pushing ourselves with math and writing this month, using additional tools, like ALEKS and fluency games to allow students to stretch themselves as learners. We have had many wonders and noticings about the different states of water during the variable weather at this time of year. Crystals are on our minds. We even were able to observe some snowflakes using a microscope! We're exploring genres of literature with an emphasis on fairy tales. Students will be creating their own in January!

MULTIAGE CLASSROOMS AT ROLES

One of the many unique aspects of The Riveredge School is the fact that we have multiage classrooms for kindergarten and first grade as well as third and fourth grade. Though this was once the norm, multiage classrooms are not commonly seen in this area these days.

What are the pros and cons to this approach?

Cons

- Scheduling and planning can be more complex due to diverse student needs.
- Requires "out of the box" thinking to work in the current educational system that is driven by grade level standards, rather than growth on a continuum.

Pros

- More emphasis on the learning styles and growth of each student.
- Natural development of skills because of diversity in the learning community
- Provides natural environment for prosocial behaviors such as helping, sharing, and taking turns.

With such a small school community, our approach may change over time, but having the flexibility to group students based on criteria other than date of birth allows us to be more nimble in meeting students where they are!

December Faces & Places



Exploring the wonders of frozen water



How thick is this ice?



Sanding curtain rods for new curtains in the 2nd grade yurt



More icy treasures

