



Director's Digest

January 23, 2009

"I believe that writing is derivative. I think that good writing comes from good reading." - Charles Kuralt

The Grinning Reader Provides Valuable Resources and Supports to Engage Students in Reading

Stephanie Brady, our Reading Specialist new to the school this year, has contributed significantly to improvements in curriculum and instruction in such a short amount of time. Recently, she has also created a website called *The Grinning Reader* on Edline. The goal of this site is to engage a greater number of FRCS students in the joy of reading.

This site is easily accessible for parents and students and can be used on a regular basis. Hopefully, many students will come to use it as a resource for fun games and activities related to reading. Its primary audience is 5th-8th graders, but it is available for all students.

The Grinning Reader basic features include:

- Multiple websites related to reading
- 2 Blogs – 1 book blog, 1 post your writing blog
- RSS feed of newly released young adult fiction
- FRCS Survey about reading attitudes/ reading habits
- [Call of the Wild](#) resources and a link to [GoogleLitTrips](#) for the 7th grade unit

Three primary objectives have been developed:

1. Students who use *The Grinning Reader* will increase the amount of books they read for pleasure, a positive attitude toward reading, and the scope of their genre selections.
2. Students who use *The Grinning Reader* will engage in more reading, both with printed materials and online, and will demonstrate an improvement in their reading fluency.
3. Students will demonstrate an increased level of interest in the assigned Jack London novel, [The Call of the Wild](#), due to use of *The Grinning Reader's* resources.

Ms. Brady strongly believes this tool will contribute directly to student engagement and learning. "The technology used in this project has a strong potential to enhance student learning. I predict that the blog, survey, and ability to publish writing will be a draw for students to keep revisiting *The Grinning Reader*. Also, the numerous sites will engage students in the act and celebration of reading."

Researched-based Tips and Strategies Help Children Learn to Read at Home and School

Continuing with the reading theme, lower school parents with children in grades K-3 will find a booklet in next week's Friday Folders which provides researched-based tools to help children read at home. We were fortunate to request and receive over 600 of these helpful guides at no cost to the school.

Developed and published by the National Institute for Literacy and The Partnership for Reading, *A Child Becomes a Reader* booklets include proven tips and strategies to help parents work with their children as they learn to read and to help them develop a love for reading. Additional guides including strategies to assist in other areas of literacy can be found on the Institute's website at www.nifl.gov.

Students Embrace and Present Core Values

At the beginning of this year, we started a school-wide project to "go back to some basics", review our Core Beliefs, and design some classroom and student projects around them. These Core Beliefs include: Do Your Best; Cooperate and Actively Help Others; Always Try; Respect the Properties and Rights of Others; and Manage Yourself.

Lower school students worked on posters and/or projects to display in their rooms. Upper and lower school students selected one of the Values and wrote age-appropriate paragraphs, essays, poems, or skits on what the selected Value meant to them, the school, their community, etc. Some upper school students also elaborated on the "simple" terms of the Values and developed more detailed descriptions and age-relevant meanings.

At the January board meeting, the following students shared their wonderful projects:

Kindergarten

Caleb Williams
Lindsey Powers
Bhairavi Jayaraman
Griffin Morris

Grade 1

Mary Patriarca
Chiara Tetreault
Evan Coyne
Briar Marini

Grade 2

Isaiah Decas
Aneka Boone
Jeffrey Kohlman
Geanelle Nevil

Grade 3

Matthew Reilly
Hannah Gershman
Elie Israel
Wildens Leveque
Emily Lewis
Morgan Nicholson

Grade 4

Caroline Rudd
Olivia Valdez
Robert Lyle
Matthew Gately

Grade 5

Sumedha Sahay
Danielle Akinyemi
Chris Elsner
Keith Blais, Jr.
Patricia Murphy

Friday, January 30th — No Student Attendance

As a reminder, next Friday, January 30th, there will be no school for students, so that we can continue with our professional development program for all faculty and staff.

- Mark Logan