

Silver Linings

Submitted by RI and RP Principal John Hokenson

As most of you have heard, we are currently living with a pandemic. I would imagine there has been no business unaffected by this, so education is not alone in trying to figure out how we get this done. We finished last year going virtual and spent the summer planning to come back, but also planning on how we could do virtual better should we need to go that route. Happily, after four weeks we are still in session with much of the credit for that going to our students, their parents, and our staff.

Our students have, for the most part, done a wonderful job. From kindergarten through grade twelve, they have accepted the new normal of masks and cohort groups and gotten on with their education. We have shared pictures of the classrooms and the recesses so anyone reading this has seen what the kids are up against. But rather than wallow in self pity and bemoan the unfairness of a global pandemic ruining their year, these kids have found a way to make this work. The silver linings I referred to in the title are students making the best of a tough situation.

At the elementary level, boys and girls have traditionally played with each other. There are far fewer social barriers when you are young. If you want to play in the sandbox with shovels, dolls and trucks, you play in the sand box. If you want to play football or soccer or tag games, you do that, and it simply does not matter if it is with boys or girls. It is an unfortunate fact of life that for some reason we lose that ability to see people as possible partners in friendships and game opportunities, regardless of whether they are boys or girls. Elementary thrives on that.

The silver linings I am seeing is that those social pressures that seem to cause the boys and girls to diverge is being overcome with the loss of old social groupings. With only the 20-28 students in each middle school cohort, boys need girls to play and girls need boys. Foursquare, football, basketball, kickball, tag have all morphed from boys or girls only, to everyone! And because of the inclusiveness of it all, we are seeing less time spent on phones. The kids are actually talking to each other and playing with each other. The phones, so prevalent at recess in the past, have disappeared. It is a joy to watch.

Like all of you, I want this to end as soon as possible, but I also want the good that came from this to linger and continue. Families that do more together than driving separately from one sporting event to another. Families that camp, fish and eat dinners together is a real thing again. Children finding new friends, or rediscovering old friends is a way to enhance our bonds and our sense of community in the schools. I hope we can take some measure of ourselves and what was important during these hard times and hang on to the good and maybe let some of those old patterns go away and be replaced with more family time and non-supervised play time. Best of luck to all of us.

Air Time

Submitted by Physics Teacher Beth Jensen



Kelsy Laudolff and Katy Radavich watch as Colton Lovejoy takes his turn jumping for the “Hang Time” lab in Mrs. Jensen’s Physics class.

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