

## 1) Fireside chat: Peirce Inclusion Program

Principal Karen Hartley, 1st grade inclusion classroom teachers Mrs. Epps and Mrs. Wall

### Introduction (Karen Hartley)

- Principal Hartley read a quotation about the philosophy of inclusion, which is an approach to education.
- Inclusion is a new approach in Arlington.
- Peirce is the only elementary school using this model, except the 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Ottoson, where the fifth graders who graduated from Peirce last year have gone.
- This is our second year.
- Expanded to kindergarten this year.
- At our school, we use a co-teaching model: students receiving general education and students formerly in a separate classroom are together in one room with a general education teacher, a special education teacher, and an assistant.
- Previously, it was typical for children with cognitive learning disabilities to be in a smaller setting or to be pulled out of the classroom. Here they are in a regular classroom all day long and have the support to be successful, where success means growing and learning and making progress.

### Teachers' presentation (Mrs. Epps and Mrs. Wall)

- There are different ways to do co-teaching. (For more, see poster image at the end of this document. Mrs. Epps and Mrs. Wall developed it while attending professional development training, based on a book by Marilyn Friend).
- Approaches can be described *one teach/ one observe, station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, teaming, and one teach/one assist*. In their classroom, they use several of these, most often teaming and one teach/one assist.
- Mrs. Wall commented that based on her 11 years of experience, this program is better at allowing children with special education needs to feel like part of the classroom.
- Kids don't know which teacher is general ed and which is special ed. Both teachers work in small groups. Both teachers take kids out of the room for some teaching.
- First grade reading groups are already happening across both first-grade classrooms and math centers will be the same way.
- Inclusion makes kids more tolerant of each other.
- Inclusion is helpful and positive for kids getting special education, socially and emotionally.
- Mrs. Epps commented that she worked in a "substantially separate" classroom and this is much better. This allows kids of many different levels to be in the same room. Can work on same skill -- for example, addition -- but at different levels.

### Parent/Teacher Q&A

**"Consequences" in specials:** A parent asked whether children in specials are penalized as a group if any child has a behavior issue, and it was suggested that she check with the teacher(s).

**Students receiving general education:** A parent asked if the kids in the inclusion classroom would be at the same level at the end of the year as the non-inclusion classroom, and learned that in assessing last year's first graders at the beginning of this year, that was the case. Teachers remarked that in the inclusion classroom, they can give more support to all kids because of extra set of hands. "With three people in the room you can help that person who needs extra help in math. Also, because child has disability doesn't mean they're not really smart."

Another parent asked whether kids getting a general education receive the same amount of knowledge and attention. Principal Hartley remarked that staff work really hard to be sure that every kid is working at the level that's appropriate, and looking at the success of last year through assessments at the beginning of this year, there is the mix of levels you would expect.

**Teacher training:** A parent asked if all teachers got training in co-teaching, and learned that all teachers in inclusion classrooms got training.

**Different ages:** A parent about whether inclusion looks different for kids of different ages, and learned that it does depend on the kids' ages and also on the teachers. For example, now that all first graders have the same time scheduled for specials, they can do more, including groups across classrooms. This allows for enrichment for kids who need more challenges.

**New approaches:** A parent asked whether any new approaches were tried this year based on parent feedback at the end of last year. She learned that teachers would like to get feedback throughout the year so that they can take action. Teachers got training and did reading over the summer.

**Classroom placement:** A parent asked how staff decide which kids go into which classrooms, and Principal Hartley said it is always done the same way, based on kids' compatibility, or combinations of children who learn well together. For the inclusion classroom, they start with the kids who need the services in the inclusion classroom and then do it based on kids' compatibility.

**Parent connection:** A parent asked how she could feel more connected to the classroom and learned that emailing the teacher and volunteering are both good ways.

**Parent/child communication:** A parent asked how noticeable differences in the way some kids speak and behave is discussed in the classroom so parents can continue the discussion at home. She learned that Open Circle, the social/emotional curriculum, provides the framework for talking about differences and respect. A teacher also remarked that there are little conversations about related things every day. The parent also learned that if something is bothering their child, they should contact the teacher.

*Note: In general, if your child is in the inclusion classroom and you have a message for a teacher, email both teachers.*

**Administration support:** A parent asked if Arlington has been supportive of Peirce given changes in the administration of special ed. Principal Hartley remarked that the new administrator Kathy Lockyer is very supportive of inclusion and has worked on it for years. She came from Watertown where there is inclusion at every single school. She is pro-inclusion and very supportive.

#### **Final remarks by Principal Hartley:**

- First week of December is National Inclusion Week, and at that time or another she would like to have a night to focus on inclusion as we did last year. Would like to have another night to talk about goals and hopes.
- Don't hesitate to ask questions or mention any concerns.

#### **2) Co-presidents' remarks (Susan Goetcheus)**

- Thanks to volunteers for the very successful Town Day booth and Movie Night (Hospitality Committee).
- Inclusion conference November 4 – Marilyn Friend presenting – contact Susan Goetcheus (susang@bostonpog.org) if you are interested in attending.

- Tech committee has been meeting and assessing needs of school, working with townwide tech committee. Will be coming to PTO meeting in November. If interested contact Johanna Meyer (meyer.jwm@gmail.com).

### **3) Principal's report on School Council and other activities**

#### School Council

- At first school council meeting, they got through half of agenda. There are good things to work on this year.
- Responsible for setting goals for the year and submitting to DOE.
- Will be pitching a Strive to Shine (Peirce motto) poster contest.
- Will be coming out with updated handbook this week and will have table during open house so that people can ask questions.

#### Other activities

- Alton Jones Science Camp for fifth graders was successful. PTO has budgeted \$600 for scholarships. Principal Hartley may request some funds from the PTO as requests exceeded it. Camp is \$355 per student. Covers four days. Discussed fund-raising earlier -- if anyone wants to take it on Karen is fully supportive.

### **4) Committee reports**

#### **• Community Outreach**

Chair is running the Book Fair, and will report in November.

#### **• Enrichment (Carl Elder)**

Have more than 12 enrichment events scheduled -- more than any other year. Bottle Rockets will be Saturday after the walkathon. Amelia Earhart program 10/26. Almost everything is planned. Could still use a lot of volunteers for hosting events at school.

#### **• Fundraising (Sarah Forney)**

- Saturday is the Unfun Run and Walkathon around the school. Coffee and snacks.
- Friday Nov 4 is the first family dance. 7-9 pm in the gym. Parent volunteer for DJ, punch and cookies. Need volunteers for that, too.
- Town Day made more than projected. Annual drive is doing very well.

#### **• Hospitality**

Busy movie night was great. Pumpkin decorating is a week from Friday in the cafeteria. Pumpkins are \$3 a piece and there will be many decorations.

#### **• Library Enrichment**

Library has been hosting the book fair.

#### **• Science Garden and Landscaping (Dorothy Schuette)**

Friday 2-4 is a cleanup of the grounds. As fall continues our grounds will need some additional cleanup.

#### **• Teacher representatives**

Mrs. DeRosa reading teacher said they need a new portable whiteboard. They are about \$700 to \$950. Motion approved to authorize PTO funds for this.

### **5) Other Business and announcements**

Next month will have nurse from Nitwits (lice removal service) at PTO meeting.

Meeting ended 7:30 pm.

Scroll down for co-teaching poster described above.

## Chapter 3: Co-Teaching Approaches

Marybeth Wall  
Alexis Epps

**Key:** ● Teacher ○ Student □ Desk/Table

<p><b>One teach, one observe</b></p> <p><b>Recommended Use:</b> Occasional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One teacher leads lesson while other teacher observes</li> <li>• Observation: to gain insight on what child does when he can't answer a question               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how long student works before getting distracted</li> <li>- who he asks for help (classmate, teacher)</li> <li>- used to observe behavior</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Teachers check in with each other after lesson</li> </ul>	<p><b>Station Teaching</b></p> <p><b>Recommended Use:</b> Frequent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Board/Math Centers</li> <li>• Some groups are heterogeneous, some are skills based</li> <li>• Highly interactive, instructional environment</li> <li>• More student participation</li> <li>• Teachers can keep a close eye on student learning</li> <li>• Each station is independent of each other. *Not good for Writers Workshop</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parallel Teaching</b></p> <p><b>Recommended Use:</b> Frequent</p> <p>*We feel that this is not a realistic approach for younger grades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divide students into 2 groups and lead same instruction w/ both groups.</li> <li>• Groups do not rotate</li> <li>• Maximizes student participation</li> <li>• Needs equivalent instruction from both teachers</li> <li>• Teachers need to take same amount of time with the lesson.</li> <li>• Examples given of this approach were for middle/high school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Alternative Teaching</b></p> <p><b>Recommended Use:</b> Occasional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One teacher manages large group while other teacher takes a small group for a specific instructional purpose               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- enrichment</li> <li>- remediation</li> <li>- pre-teaching</li> <li>- assessment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To be used for short periods of time, small group rejoins large group.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teaming</b></p> <p><b>Recommended Use:</b> Occasional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both teachers are in front of class sharing instruction</li> <li>• One teacher leads lesson, other may take notes, but both teachers are engaged in the lesson.</li> <li>• Allows for instructional conversations and question asking.</li> <li>• Drawbacks- teachers may not be aware of individual and subtle needs of students.</li> </ul>	<p><b>One teach, one assist</b></p> <p><b>Recommended Use:</b> Seldom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One teacher leads, other supports the class to monitor work, deal with behavior issues and answer student questions, distribute materials.</li> <li>• Can be overused/abused if general ed. teacher takes over and makes special ed. teacher the passive partner.</li> <li>• When a teacher stops to answer a question the students can lose focus.</li> </ul>