

Prekindergarten News

Rochester City School District

Volume VII, Issue 8

April, 2012

An Opportunity for Reflection as We Celebrate the Month of the Young Child in Rochester *submitted by Dr. Robin Hooper*

What would life be if we had no courage to attempt anything?
-Vincent van Gogh



As we celebrate The Month of the Young Child in Rochester we have an opportunity to reflect on the status of our Universal Prekindergarten program. The program enrollment has grown each year as increasing numbers of parents of four-year-olds choose to enroll their children in the program. The parents of our students have always been our strongest supporters and partners in providing preschool education to children in Rochester. This is evident in the consistent results of our survey data indicating half of our parents learn about the program from other parents. We celebrate this month with our parents in honor of our prekindergarten students, our future.

On April 9th at 6:30 pm and April 11th at 8:00 pm on RCTV (cable channel 15) our Rochester Universal Prekindergarten Program will be featured on the broadcast, "Spotlight on Our Schools" hosted by Jim Strauss. The broadcast includes video from one of our classrooms and provides information on the current status of our program.

Our iPad assessment pilot was launched last month with the distribution of ipads and provision of training for ten prekindergarten teachers from our IM& T Department. Teachers learned how to use an iPad and how to access the COMET assessment database during training. They will begin using iPads during April and conclude the pilot in June. Teacher feedback and assessment completion data will be used to assess the pilot. The pilot will begin again in September 2012.

Next year we will begin using a new screening tool, the Brigance Early Childhood Screen, to screen our preschool students as they enter school. The selection of a screening tool for our new entrants (as required by Part 117 of the Commissioner's

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Save the Dates!
District-Wide sessions on avatar
April 4, 18, 25

NYSAEYC Annual Conference in Buffalo
April 19-21, 2012

April 20—UPK School Lottery

Transition to Kindergarten
May 19

Parents Are Teachers Too! *submitted by Liz Eng, Parent Group Leader*



Members of the School #10 parent group delved into their creative side when making "Touch Books" for their children. Supplied with tools and materials, parents and grandparents filled pages with various fabrics as well as sandpaper. They listed the name of the material, added other personal touches, and books were decorated in unique ways with markers, pastels, ribbons and stickers. One of the liveliest groups all year, this gathering of adults revealed the joy we find in making objects to share with our children! They left that day with not just books, but keepsakes.

Bringing Art Outdoors *submitted by Suzie Carney and Mary DeGennaro*



The afternoon class, at #6 School, took advantage of some nice March weather to get messy outside! They painted on the sidewalk and the fence with all kinds of tools such as sponges, rollers, toothbrushes, paint brushes big and small, potato mashers and of course our hands and feet. We also brought out our sensory tub filled with corn starch and water for some early spring fun.

Reflections—continued from page 1

Regulations) was accomplished through the collaborative efforts of our District-wide Screening Committee, the UPK Professional Development Committee, UPK Special Needs Committee, the Partner's Forum of agency directors and the RECAP Assessment Team. The selection of the Brigrance as our screening tool was approved by our district Office of Accountability. Training in the use of the new screening tool will be provided for teachers.

A prekindergarten classroom will be relocating in a new location next year as a result of the reconfiguration of one of our elementary schools to a prek –grade 8 building. A prekindergarten classroom will be opening at Charles Carroll School No. 46 located at 250 Newcastle Road, 14610. We welcome the opportunity to provide our program at School No. 46.

As we reflect back, we are also looking forward to many exciting opportunities in our future. On that note, I would like to invite our PreK families to participate in our Transition to Kindergarten event on Saturday, May 19th from 10 AM – 2 PM at School No. 33/Ryan Center located at 500 Webster Avenue. There will be learning activities, workshops, light refreshments and each child will receive free items to support summer learning at home. We hope you can join us!

Please Note: Deadline on April 20 for Prekindergarten Lottery at RCSD locations

Kudos to our UPK Staff!

The Early Childhood Department is proud to announce that we will be well represented at the New York State Association for the Education of Young Children (NYSAEYC) conference in Buffalo, with a presentation by **Karen Spawton**, Administrative Specialist, CPSE Chair; **Sheila Murphy**, Special Education Teacher, #33 School, Integrated Class and **Betsy Wing-Schroeder**, UPK Teacher, #57 School, Integrated Class.

Their presentation, **Successful Preschool Experiences for Children with Special Needs**, will be offered first thing Saturday morning, April 21. They will share strategies and information that will support knowledge of the process and successful use of the IEP in the classrooms and centers/schools. They will discuss and demonstrate how family, CPSE and school staff can work collaboratively to provide successful preschool experiences for children with special needs.

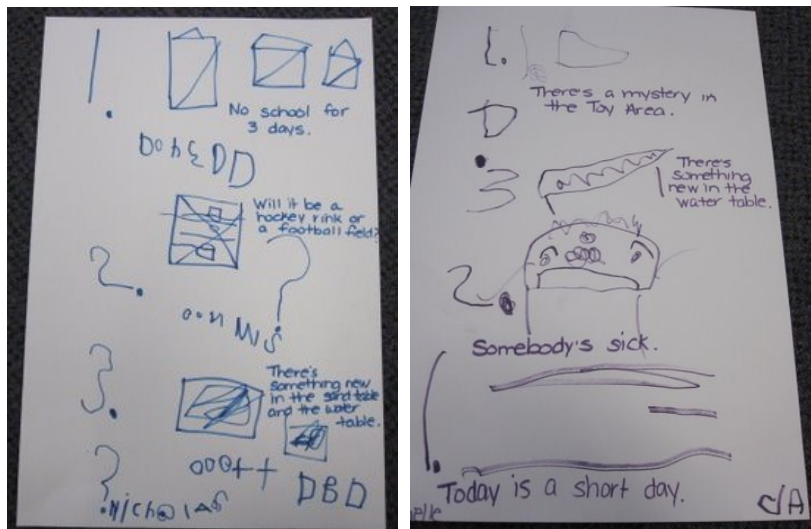
Daily Writing in the Pre-K Classroom *submitted by Patty Pitts (#52 School)*

Every day since September we read the Message Board during Greeting and Large Group Time. This process supports children's language and literacy development and early math skills in ways that are meaningful to children's daily lives.

Reading the Message Board is also a social time when the children and adults discuss and discover what is going to happen in class each day. We use simple drawings, letters and words, in order to benefit children at all developmental levels. Reading the message board provides opportunities for exploring math concepts, when children read the numbers on the board or count how many classmates are absent that day.

We read the message board as a class and engage in a shared reading experience that leads to conversation. Since day one we have used pictures, symbols, letters, words and numerals. Through daily exposure of reading the message board, students begin to understand how these symbols, pictures and words have meaning.

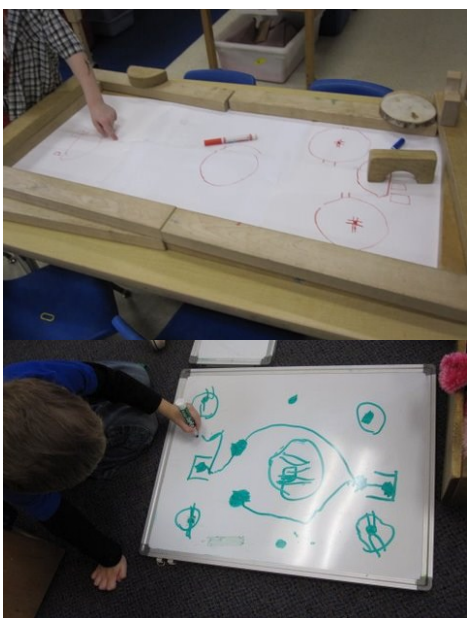
After several months of modeling the message board for students, they are now writing their own messages using symbols, letters and numbers. One child brought a bandana to school for the house area, she added the number 4 to the message board, taped the bandana on the board along with the symbol for the House Area and a question mark.



Children add to or edit the Message Board

Message Board Tips

- Write and read messages every day
- Writing needs to be big and use dark ink
- Use simple symbols (High Scope Area Card Signs, Art Area drawn, words next to drawing)
- Number each message
- Let children write the message
- Use small white boards and dry erase markers during small group (For message writing, drawing daily plan or drawing for recall time)
- Write the message with the children
- The message board needs to be accessible to children all the time; they will write messages



The photos to the left illustrate the symbolic drawing that children are doing on a regular basis. At Work Time, some of the boys drew the hockey rink and football field games which they played with classmates.

The photos above show examples of writing during planning and recall.

The HighScope book *From Message to Meaning, Using a Daily Message Board in the Preschool Classroom* by Suzanne Gainsley is a valuable resource.



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Transition to Kindergarten—*Let your families know they should save the date!*



Transition to Kindergarten Family Event

Saturday, May 19, 2011
10:00 a.m.— 2:00 p.m.

33 School and Ryan Center
500 Webster Avenue

The Rochester City School District Early Childhood Department conducts this event to support families in getting their child(ren) ready for Kindergarten. All participating families of our current Prekindergarten students who will be attending Kindergarten this fall will receive:

Registration available for
Kindergarten or Prekindergarten

Please bring:

- Birth certificate
- Picture ID
- Proof of Address
- Immunization record
- Guardianship and/or IEP (if applicable)

- Hands-on learning activities
- Mini-workshops for parents
- Free learning materials (see picture to left for sample)
- School bus safety tips
- Light refreshments

Plan to spend an hour or two engaging in fun activities!