

Progress and growth: A day in a Peshtigo kindergarten classroom

Special to the EagleHerald
EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was submitted by the Peshtigo School District.

PESHTIGO—Tammy Behnke has been teaching kindergarten for 23 years and she enjoys watching the children blossom.

She said kindergarten class is tough for 5-year-olds. "This is their first year attending school all day, for all five days, while eating lunch at school and attending specials," Behnke said. "We spend the first month building relationships, routines and expectations."

What's a typical day like in kindergarten?

Behnke greets students as they approach her in the hallway. "They tell me about swim lessons, a sister's birthday, or about losing a tooth," she said.

After welcoming her students, they start the daily calendar routine. Students review the alphabet, select numbers, sight words, a character trait and reminders for the day. Then comes announcements, the Bulldog Promise and the Pledge of Allegiance followed by breakfast.

English Language Arts (ELA) is next. This consists of reading and discussion of a story, as well as a lesson on the letter and sound of the week. Word games come next to teach students language skills including word segmenting, rhyme and phonics. Phonics lessons consist of blending, deleting and substituting phonemes often using nursery rhymes to help students learn sounds.

Students also play games to help them learn to read and spell. Games are also used to help learn math concepts. "Students learn many foundational math skills in kindergarten," Behnke said.

Students learn groups of five and 10, as well as teen numbers, besides adding and subtracting. They also learn partner numbers, and two and three dimensional shapes. Students use a variety of hand-held manipulatives to learn these concepts.

Behnke also holds "Math Talks," where she reviews daily math questions on the BenQ Board for students to answer. Students also learn math concepts through songs related to daily topics and computer based math programs, like Seesaw, Reading Eggs and Math Seeds.

After recess and lunch, the Kindergarten get to experience "specials" and intervention. Depending on the day, students may go to physical education, music, or art class, referred to as specials.

Intervention consists of students getting more individual instruction to help them, depending on their ability levels.

"Some need extra practice learning letters/sounds while others need to be challenged on a higher level," Behnke said.

After intervention time, students work on social studies and science.

In social studies, kindergarten students have been reading "Being a Good

Citizen" and "Jobs" magazines. Students have also been learning about Martin Luther King, Jr. from reading a magazine called "Let's Find Out.. The students have their science lesson in the afternoon and use a program called "Mystery Science" as part of their science curriculum. One recent unit was about force, called Force Olympics.

In addition to the core learning, another area of focus in kindergarten is teaching social skills and emotional awareness. Teachers use a program called Second Step, which is a social and emotional learning program consisting of 25 lessons. These activities teach skills like listening and cooperation as well as problem solving and brain building.

Four-year-old kindergarten plays a big role in the success of students in 5-year-old kindergarten.

"Our 4K(four year old kindergarten) teachers, Michelle Campbell and Justin Wouff, do such a good job in getting kids ready for kindergarten," she said. "It's hard to imagine kindergarten before 4K."

Behnke explains that the social and emotional skills learned in 4K, as well as fine motor learning like holding pencils and using scissors, makes a big difference. Behnke said that this year has been particularly challenging. She has a class of 18 kindergarten students. Six of her students are totally new to school, while 12 of her students were in four-year kindergarten last year. This makes teaching more challenging, trying to adjust teaching to the different learning and experience ranges of students.

Behnke is proud of the progress her students have



Peshtigo kindergarten students Landon Raygo, Addisyn Janssen, Bennett Jones and Jaeda Sanford listen to story. Special to the EagleHerald



Peshtigo students Harley Milbach, Bennett Jones and Brooklyn Konyn sort shapes by size and color. Special to the EagleHerald

made. Her goal is to have the kids ready for first grade. As the year goes on, students have been developing friendships, and "act very caring and helpful towards one another. They have learned to spell some CVC(consonant vowel consonant) words and write simple sentences. Their fine motor skills and drawing skills have improved."

Behnke adds that math assessments have shown improvement in foundational skills.

There's a lot of thought, planning, work and execution that goes into Behnke's teaching. "They come in knowing some letters and by the end of the year they can spell and write sentences," she said of the students. "I love to see their progress and growth."

The M&M Area Community Foundation is seeking bids for the construction of the M&M Plaza Stormwater Improvements Project that includes the following major items of work:

HMA surface removal, paving, stormwater detention pond construction, lighting and restoration.

The Contract Documents may be examined at the following locations:

Coleman Engineering Company
635 Circle Drive
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

M&M Area Community Foundation
1110 10th Avenue, Suite L-1
Menominee, MI 49858

The contract documents may be viewed and downloaded at www.coleman-engineering.com by selecting "Bid Information".

Interested parties may view the contract documents at no cost on the website prior to becoming a plan holder. Downloading and printing the contract documents will require registering with QuestCDN online (www.questcdn.com).

Sealed bids marked the M&M Plaza Stormwater Improvements Project are to be submitted to the office of:

Ms. Paula Gruszynski
Executive Director
M&M Area Community Foundation
1110 10th Avenue, Suite L-1
Menominee, MI 49858

Bids must be received by 2:00 p.m. (local time) on February 14, 2022. If hand delivered, to the space to the east of Flagstar Bank, 1335 8th Avenue, Menominee, Michigan or via mail or courier service delivered to 1110 10th Avenue, Suite L-1, Menominee, Michigan. Bids will be publicly opened and read out loud at this time.

M&M Area Community Foundation reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids at its discretion.

No bid shall be accepted unless accompanied by a bid security payable to M&M Area Community Foundation in an amount not less than 5% of the base bid.

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