Student Engagement / FUN

Columbus Elementary
Neal Fox - Principal
Liza Smith- 3rd Grade Teacher
November 12th, 2026

Engagement Matters

- Students are more motivated when they enjoy what they are learning.
- Hands-on activities create meaningful learning experiences.
- Fun and engaging lessons encourage creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving.
- Positive learning experiences help students build connections with peers and teachers.
- Students are more likely to take ownership of their learning when they are actively involved.

FOREST LAKE AREA SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

OUR BELIEFS:

We believe that in Forest Lake Area Schools:

- Educational equity is the foundation for everything we do
- All students deserve highly qualified, high performing educators
- Each student can learn and excel in an environment developed to meet their individual needs
- Each individual has value for their diverse talents, background and cultures
- Collaboration between school, home and community has a positive impact on all stakeholders
- Transparency and open communication are the hallmarks of an educational community that builds trust and strong partnerships
- The best interest of each student guides all decisions

OUR VISION:

Excellence for Every Student Every Day

OUR MISSION:

Prepare and empower every student to thrive in and contribute to an ever-changing world

OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS:

Excellence in High Quality Instruction

GOAL 1: Achieve the goals of the World's Best Workforce for all students in the school district.

GOAL 2: Attract, develop and retain highly qualified, high-performing educators.

Excellence in Equitable Learning Opportunities

GOAL 3: Identify and transform systems that contribute to inequities.

Excellence in Career, College and Future Preparedness

GOAL 4: Develop and enhance each student's academic, technical, and professional skills to equip them in identifying and preparing for their career path.

GOAL 5: Engage students in learning systems that foster life skills both in and out of the classroom.

Excellence in Fostering Personal Well-Being in a Safe and Respectful Environment

GOAL 6: Create a safe, inclusive learning environment that fosters personal well-being.

Excellence in Collaboration with Families Partners, and the Community

GOAL 7: Provide communication that enhances collaboration between our schools and families.

GOAL 8: Seek out, enhance and build family and community partnerships to meet the needs of each student.

Excellence in Communication and Outreach

GOAL 9: Create a community of communities.

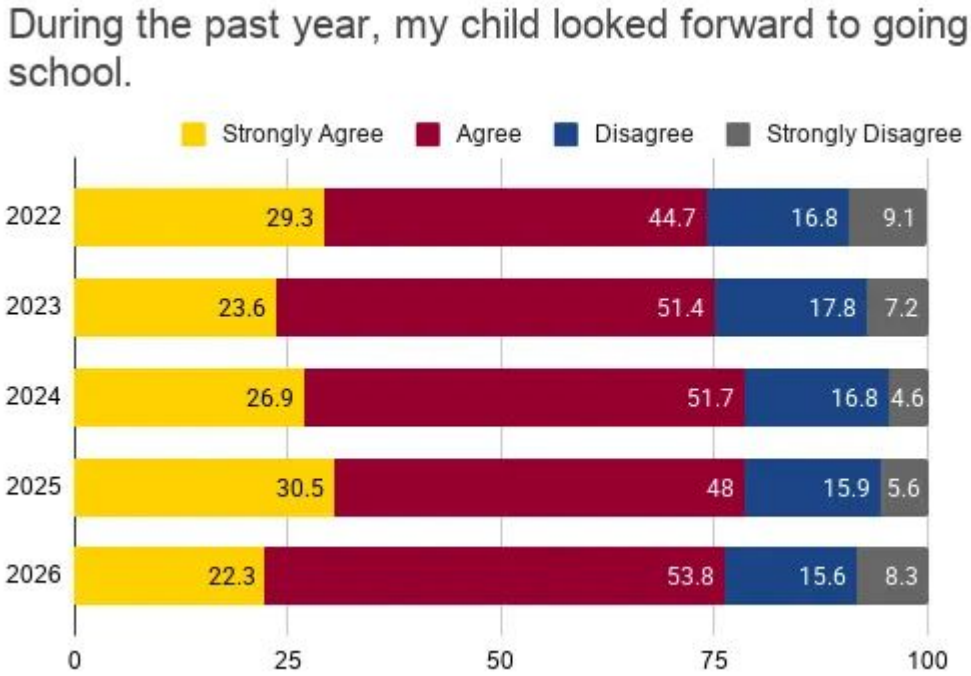
GOAL 10: Promote and celebrate the opportunities that make the Forest Lake Area School District an education leader.

Student Engagement Data

Columbus met our attendance goal for last year!

The percentage of students who are chronically absent (missed 10%) or more days of school excused or unexcused will decrease from 11.4% to 9.4% in 24-25 to 25-26.

We ended up at 8.3%!

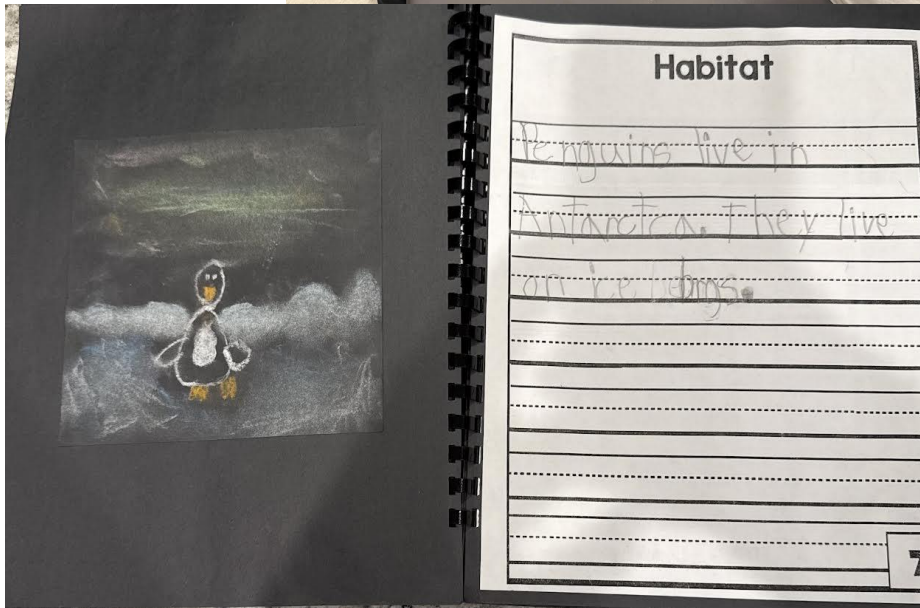


Kindergarten



Writing research project!

Each class votes on an animal. We research the animal's physical appearance, habitat, diet, and interesting facts. We write a rough draft, edit, and then write a final draft. We practice reading it and on the final day, we invite our families in for a presentation.



1st Grade



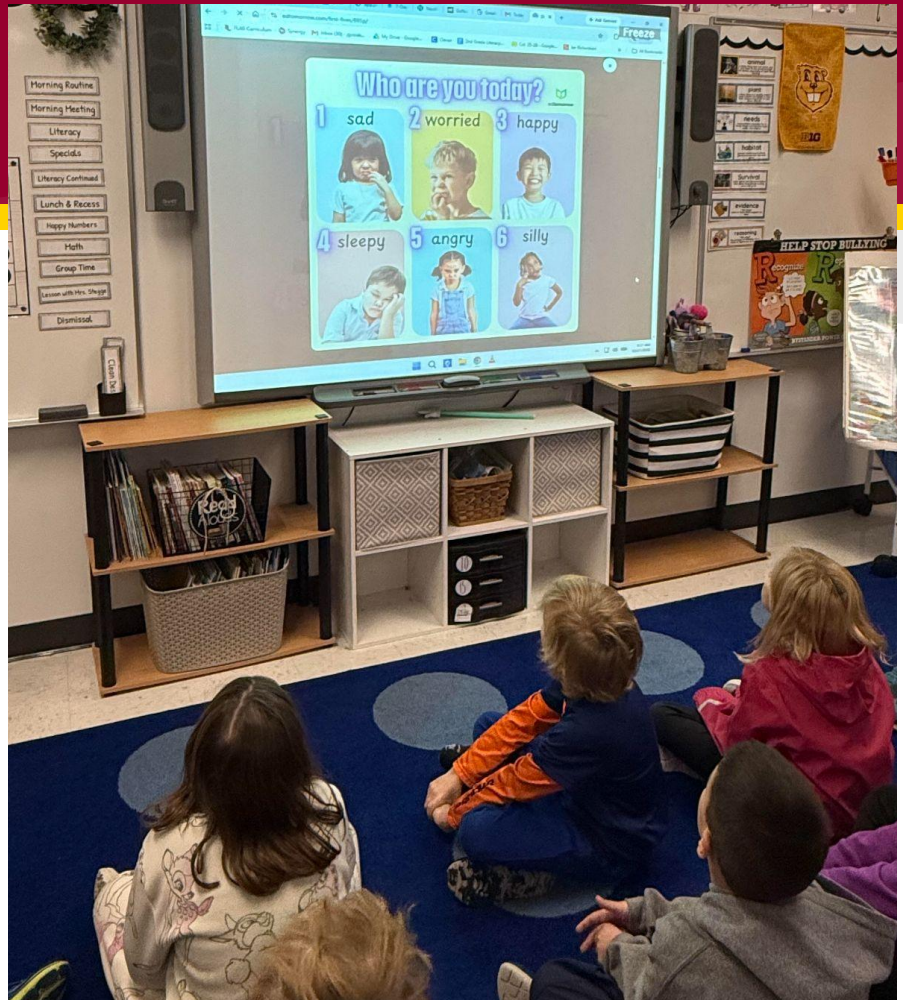
Hands-on learning in science!

Students learn about the structure and function of different animal parts. In this lab we used models to help us understand how different bird beaks work better for different types of food. The kids were able to try out different “beaks” to catch different types of food.

2nd Grade

Morning Meeting!

We greet every student and do a different feelings check in. Next, we go over the visual schedule for the day (so students know what to expect for the day). It creates a kind, caring community. We practice speaking and listening and empathy (Literacy and Social Emotional Learning). This is a great way to start our day!



3rd Grade





Candyland Day!

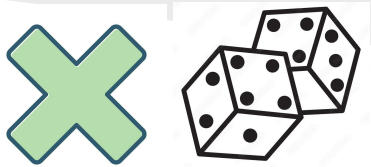
Each year, we turn our classrooms into a giant candyland game board. This is to get students excited to review for the MCA test and help them feel better prepared for a big test. We practice math and reading skills, while having fun!

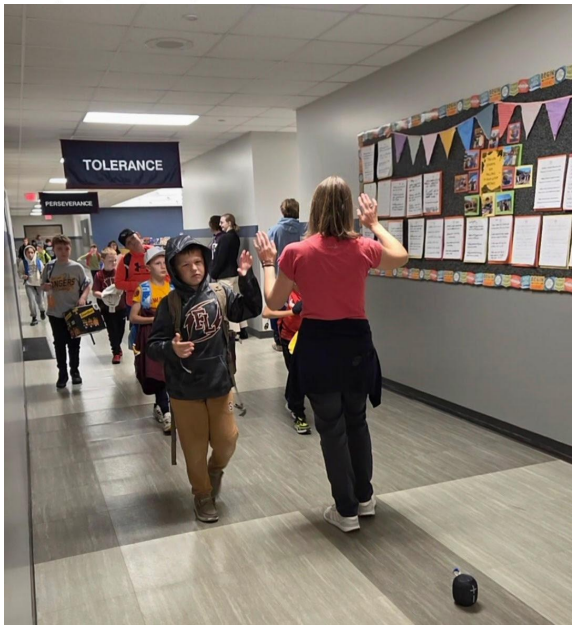
4th Grade

Music!

One teacher plays music as students enter the building to get students excited for the day.

Both teachers use songs as a timer for math games. When the music begins, the students roll their dice to solve multiplication problems until the music stops. Incorporating music is a fun way to engage learners throughout the day.





M	A	T	H	!

M	A	T	H	!
45/100	Write in word form 24.12	three thousand, fifty two	All Both Sides	6/100
Greater .564 or .6	Greater .7 or .71	six hundred thirty two and twenty five hundreths	7/12 + 5/6	4/7 + 2/5
Greater .56 or .8	5 3/4 + 7 3/6	No Rem Week	Greater 1.2 or .8	Greater .49 or .8
Free HW	Greater 5/8 or 3/9	333/1000	Greater 5/15 or 4/12	2/3 + 4/21
two hundred forty five and five hundred thirty one thousandths	No Rem Day	6 5/6 - 1 1/2	Greater .454 or .4	Odds or Evens

5th Grade

Math Bingo!

Each day for a warm up, we play a math bingo game to review previous skills. Students pick, then solve the problems independently on white boards. It creates independent accountability for using math skills but also engages the students.

Some Favorable Boxes: Free Homework for the Day, Pick Odds or Evens on the Homework, No Remembering side for the Day

Preschool





Gingerbread Party!

Our little learners love decorating gingerbread houses with their families. We work on: **Fine Motor Skills:** Squeezing frosting and placing candies. **Math Skills:** Counting, sorting, and creating patterns. **Language Skills:** Sharing and describing creations. **Social Skills:** Taking turns, sharing, and working together.

These moments are about more than frosting and candy—they're about learning through play, strengthening family connections, and making sweet memories together!

At Columbus, We Want..

- Students to come to school excited to learn
- To create memorable learning experiences
- To build positive relationships
- To celebrate creativity, individuality, and learning!





Adding FUN to learning creates the best educational experience possible.

~Tamara L. Chilver





One Last Thanks to Our Community!









