



School Improvement Newsletter
April 2013

India Hook Elementary is located in Rock Hill, South Carolina, 20 miles south of Charlotte, North Carolina. Our school was established in 2007, beginning with 450 students. We have grown to 610 students as of April 2013. During the 2007-2008 school year, we received an absolute rating in test performance of good with a below average growth rating. Over the past five years, we have improved our test scores to an absolute rating of excellent as well as a growth rating of excellent.

This year, for the fourth year in a row, we have been recognized by our state as a Palmetto Gold recipient. We are extremely proud of this honor because it is the highest honor possible in South Carolina. For our staff, this award signifies the level of our commitment and our belief that every child can and will learn.

When our school opened in 2007, our demographics were quite different than now. At that point, we served a population with 28% qualifying for free or reduced meals. This is based on household income. Currently, we serve a population with 44% qualifying for free or reduced meals. We accept and support every child where they are academically, but we also challenge and support children with many unique needs. Included in our population are 7 kindergarten special needs students in a developmentally delayed classroom. We also serve 66 children with IEPs related to learning disabilities, 9 students with 504 Plans, and 75 ESOL students. As you can see, we are quite diverse.

Professional development is crucial for teachers to continue to learn and to continually evolve to meet the changing needs of students. This year we have studied the development of PLCs (Professional Learning

Communities). Our teachers participated in a book study of Building a Professional Learning Community At Work. The study began last summer with topics around committing to a common purpose. The study moved through creating trust, supporting team development, weathering challenges, and connecting data analysis and instructional improvement.

Our four year partnership with Winthrop University has proven to be beneficial for both interns and teachers. Over the past four years, we have hired four teachers from the interns that we hosted in our building. All four are excellent teachers and have raised the bar with use of technology in the classroom and have embraced the power of collaboration. Last year we hosted 17 interns at India Hook. This year, we have hosted 12. The energy these young professionals bring to our building challenges all of us to continue our evolution as educators as we strive to meet the needs of digital natives.



Through our partnership with Winthrop, we have also been given an unbelievable opportunity to participate in an international conference this summer in China. Mrs. Guyton will be traveling with two teachers, Mrs. Rollings and Ms. Bunchman, to Beijing and Heifi to replicate a typical India Hook classroom and will have two days to teach the students in these classrooms.

We are excited to be one of only four schools in the United States to be selected for this international conference and cannot wait to learn from our China partner schools, Cuiwei Primary in Beijing and Anhui

Primary in Heifi. Our hope is to gain a global view of education and to share this experience with our students in Rock Hill.

While our staff and families agree that academic success is important, we also encourage and support physical health and fitness. Healthy students think better, have better attendance, and perform at higher levels than unhealthy peers.

Because our parents and staff feel so strongly about physical health, we have modified our fund raising efforts to include a spring fun run. This run is a culminating event celebrating months of emphasis on exercise and healthy eating. This team begins working together in the fall to make this possible. Over 2,000 hours of volunteer time is given by this group to coordinate and plan meaningful events for our school around Fun Run. So far we have raised over 28,000 with our Fun Run this year.



Volunteers challenge students to make healthy choices



Smell and taste go together.

During these months, our parents, students, and teachers get involved through lunch and learns, spotlights on healthy living, activities that promote physical activity, and discussions with food service providers about healthy food choices.

Our staff is extremely forward thinking and enjoys being ahead of the curve. Last year we realized that the needs of our students included the use of different



technology than previously available.

Teachers began exploring the use of iPads in the classroom both for instruction and for student use. We asked teachers to present brief written proposals addressing how they would use an iPad in their classroom. 22 teachers presented us with proposals requiring administrators to reallocate existing funding to grant these requests.

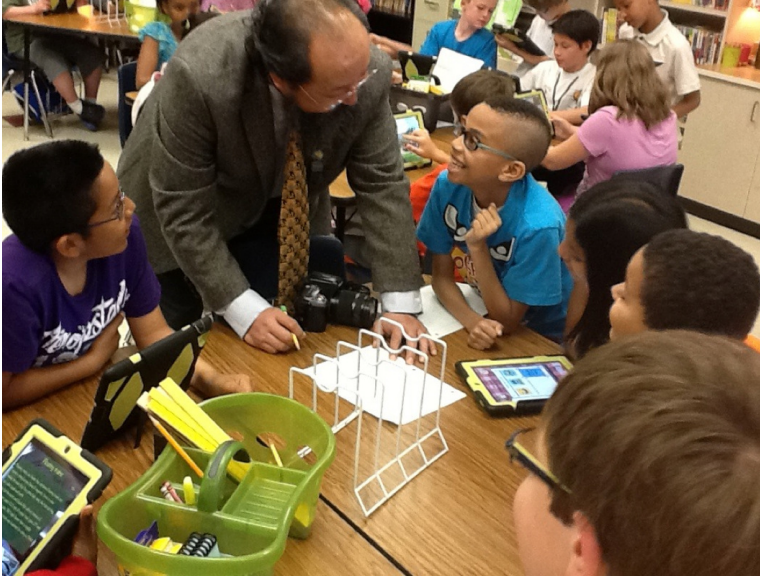
This year, our district provided every teacher with an iPad with an agreement to participate in staff

development leading towards one-to-one technology in the classrooms. We have one classroom that has already made the leap to challenge-based learning with iPads for every child. Next year, all of our 4th and 5th grade classrooms will have one-to-one technology in the form of iPads.

Technology is crucial to our staff for communication with parents, teachers, and students. The teachers send weekly updates to parent groups via computer. Our assistant principal keeps staff informed through our weekly online S'More Treasure Map, and our media



specialist uses Constant Contact, Facebook and Twitter to keep all school stakeholders informed of school news and happenings. Students in many classrooms communicate through Edmodo.



Dr. Laing visits India Hook in preparation for China experience.





Ending another amazing year at IHES, May 2013