Continuous improvement makes student progress visible and tangible

Show & Tell

By John C. Cary, Superintendent

What is CCI?

Continuous Classroom Improvement (CCI) is a process in which students are engaged and responsible for learning. The idea is to shift classrooms from “teaching” environments to “learning” environments.

Over the past few years, SSD has adopted a philosophy of continuous improvement that covers all aspects of the organization with the ultimate goal of increased student success. In the classroom, students and teachers work together to set learning goals, develop classroom and student action plans, track progress and evaluate what works and plan improvements where needed.

What would you see in a CCI classroom?

• A belief system that everyone in the system can and will learn
• Clearly defined, understood and practiced procedures
• Students providing feedback and reflecting on what classroom procedures are helping them learn
• Students participating in learning strategies that are aligned with their learning goals
• Students who know what they are to learn and why

As I've traveled throughout the district, I've witnessed continuous improvement at work in the classroom. It's exciting to see. When you walk into a classroom and see students more engaged in their learning and more in control of their own education.

The end result is the students are doing their best and can clearly see a visual representation of their efforts. But behind all the charts and graphs, something even greater is taking place. It's a change in focus. It's a change in the way the classroom works. It's a dramatic shift from being a “teaching” environment to a “learning” environment. That's what is truly amazing.

John C. Cary, Superintendent
Ackerman Gives Patriotic Tribute

On April 28, the students of Ackerman presented numerous veterans, active military service members and community members with a patriotic tribute filled with music, artwork, a speech from a veteran and staff member, and even a (virtual) fireworks display.

“We wanted to focus on our character education program,” said music teacher Anthony Volkman, who organized the tribute. “Pride is part of the program, and there’s no better way to show pride than showing pride in our country.”

Students from 25 classes participated in the tribute, which took two months of preparation.

One of the highlights of the event was the emotional speech given by Dean Wiley. A veteran of the Air Force and also an interpreter at Ackerman, Wiley described his memories of a childhood friend who grew up with him in Florissant. He recounted reuniting with his friend overseas, only to then lose him in battle shortly thereafter.

Wiley’s speech highlighted the themes of honor, integrity and dedication.

“Those three things are around us every day,” Wiley said. “But sometimes they go unseen. Soldiers have all of those things. But there are others that share those qualities as well. I see teachers that show great dedication every day. And there are others among us that have a ‘silent integrity’ that is so important in our society.”

Summer Literacy Activities and Tips for Families

Summer will be here before you know it. Reading and writing are skills used throughout life, and as with any skill, practice is key, even during the summer months.

Regarding other activities, the best predictor of summer loss or summer gain is whether or not a child reads during the summer (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003). The good news? By reading four or more books during the summer, children (younger and older) can avoid the “summer slide” (Kim, 2004). Below are some suggestions for summer activities you can do with your children as well as tips to help your children actively engage with print.

• Set aside special reading time. Read to and with your child each day. This can make for great “together time” with your younger child. If you have an older child, set aside a special time where the family members who are home read something they have chosen. Everyone is reading at the same time. After reading, check in on your child and pose questions such as, “What did you like best about what you just read?” “What do you think is going to happen next?” “Was there anything you read that you didn’t quite understand?”

• Make connections to real life whenever possible. Use phrases like, “This part reminds me of…” to model making connections.

• Don’t be afraid to repeat favorite stories even over the short summer months. Young children feel a sense of security when they hear the same story over and over. It also helps them become storytellers and readers.

• Respect restlessness. If your child is restless, choose another story (91 percent of children are more likely to finish books they choose themselves) or a different time to read. It is not necessary to finish every book you start.

• Set a good example by letting your child see you reading, check in on your child and pose questions such as, “What do you think is going to happen next?” “Was there anything you read that you didn’t quite understand?”

• Record or video your child reading a book and replay it so that they can listen to themselves. Repeat this activity so that your children can listen to themselves improve.

• Create a “Family Reading Night.” Pick a theme such as “western,” “multicultural” or “decades” like the ’60s. Have dinner and dress-up to go with your theme. Select books that are appropriate. Invite friends and neighbors.

SOUTH TECH STUDENTS LEAD THE WAY

Students from South Technical High School brought back several top awards from the 2011 Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) state competition. Missouri boasts the second largest FBLA chapter in the nation, with a membership of more than 15,000 high school students.

Congratulations to the following South Tech students:

• Desktop Application Programming: Bradd Krafft, first place
• Network Concepts: Eric Bright, first place; Lauren Kroenung, fifth place
• Computer Problem Solving: Austin Ehrhardt, fourth place; Kameron Bueckendorf, sixth place
• Network Design: Team of Eric Bright, Lauren Kroenung & Kevin Smith, first place
• Cyber Security: Justin Wiedemann, sixth place

•  Middle grades high interest lower readability books
mgrn.evansville.edu/2005fall.htm

Check out the following reading websites this summer:

• Reading Rockets www.readingrockets.org/calendar/summer
• Scholastic booklists www.scholastic.com/summerreading/PDFs/Booklist.pdf
• Reading is fundamental: 10 weeks of fun www.rif.org/assets/Documents/parents/Summer.pdf
• Middle grades high interest lower readability books www.rif.org/assets/Documents/parents/Summer.pdf