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Northview elementary school

Go to content They don't have a big budget or charge tuition fees. However, each of these ten primary schools goes beyond traditional expectations. Learn how to bring your innovative ideas to your child's classroom. Suppose you had classes to classic your child's elementary school. Would you give him a B? In an exclusive survey with market research firm Quester, parents found that while most mothers tend to be satisfied with their child's education, a third have concerns about the pace of the curriculum and a quarter don't think it encourages creativity and independent thinking. How can you take your student to the next level? To find out, parents asked state education departments, charter-school associations, teacher groups and our Facebook fans to nominate innovative public elementary schools. More than 500 offers poured in, and of these, we chose ten for the feature. Each trailblazer took a different approach to perfection, but they all have buzz-worthy ideas that could make your child's school all you wanted it to be. Take notes! Just a decade ago, less than 15 percent of third-graders at Broad Acres passed state reading and math tests. The traditional approach to education hasn't worked because almost all of our students live in poverty, and families are constantly moving in and out of our neighborhood, says Michael Bavitz, who was principal from 2007 to August last year. To improve learning, the school focused on taking care of problems outside its walls. Staff worked with the local government to open a school health clinic so sick children could get the help they needed and return to class more quickly. Volunteers sought donations for food and clothing to keep children alive and warm. And teachers even made home visits to meet with parents, as many do not have a phone. He sent a message to parents, many of whom were initially uncomfortable participating in school activities, that we invest in their children and we care about their success, says Baywitz. Inside the classroom, teachers pledged to stay up late once a week for group meetings to brainstorm ways to help combat students, eventually developing interventions for each subject and class level. As a result of these efforts, 95 percent of Broad Acres students currently own math and 89 percent in reading. Says Bavitz: People tell me that our turn was nothing short of a miracle. But frankly, it's not a miracle. Our students are as smart as any other kids – we just had to find a way to get to them. Copy its success If not many parents participate in your child's school, try figuring out what keeps them away so you can solve the problem. Moms and dads have played a huge role in the return of Broad Acres, and the involvement of parents makes each school better, Baywitz says. For example, when we switched our parent meeting to which was more convenient, our attendance doubled. You can also talk to your child's director about schedule of volunteer parents for all classes, if it is not yet in place. Teachers don't just need help at special times, like on halloween party day; they can benefit from having parents in the classroom who can read with small groups of students or help them practice writing the alphabet, he says. This extra attention that students receive makes a huge difference to achievement. Art take center stage here. Through partnership with the local arts centre, dancing, drama, poetry and drawing are seamlessly woven into all subjects, making lessons more memorable and fun. We act regularly with word problems, says third-grade math teacher Claire Mathis. When it's time for a test, my students tell me they're able to visualize what's being asked. In a social studies class, children create tables (art groups) to illustrate complex concepts like the civil rights movement. And studying science, students study dance based on the life cycles of creatures or rocks and minerals. This dramatic approach helps the information stick with children, says Patricia Relph, Ph.D., arts training specialist at the nearby Walton Arts Center, which provides staffing and teacher enrichment for Sonora. In fact, one landmark study found that children who engage in art for nine hours a week are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement. Sonora teachers also rely on theater-based techniques to improve behavior; for example, children play concentration games every day and learn how to adapt their voice level to what is right for the situation. Copy its success Many schools recognize the benefits of integrating art into the curriculum, but they don't have the money to do so. Make your child's school aware of funding sources. Just as Walton and Sonora did, local arts organizations and schools can jointly apply for the Partners in Education program from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (kennedy-center.org), which provides access to learning and materials for their 100-plus partners. Schools can also seek grants from the National Nea.org Foundation and the Dan Foundation (dana.org). Even if you can't get a full-fledged program at your child's school in the near future, ask the principal if you can contact local arts organizations to see if they're willing to hold workshops with students. Dr. Relph suggests. Thanks to grants, some local arts centres such as ours can even offer free admission and bus subsidies for schoolchildren to see the play. Three times a week, Talbot Hill students report on their jobs - like postal workers, bankers, store managers, commasters, judges, lawyers, farmers and reporters, among many other professions. Children put their academic lessons to use immediately under work in our mini-community, says Sally Bony, program coordinator called MicroSociety Inc. For example, they are studying multiplication in in the morning, and after a few hours they balance the checkbook or calculate the size of the areas necessary for growing plants. Third-graders from the third to fifth-graders at the beginning of the school year are hired, creating r? sum???s and working on interview skills while younger children participate in classroom businesses. Of course, this real-world approach takes time away from structured lessons, but a four-year study found that the program improved standardized math test scores by 12 percent and in reading by 14 percent. Copy your success Talbot Hill MicroSociety Inc. is part of a network of 200-plus schools in 40 states; Learn how to bring a program to your child's school microsocociety.org. Because of the additional staff, training and supplies needed, Bony estimates it costs \$75,000 to \$100,000 to implement the program and about \$25,000 to \$30,000 a year to support it at a school with 500 students. The Talbot Hill Education Trust (a nonprofit) and our PTO are going to most of the money to keep it going, she says. But schools can test the program on a smaller scale. We tried it in the same class for a year and then expanded it the next year before we took it to school, Bony says. At the same time, you and like-minded parents can meet with teachers to discuss ways to simulate real business in the classroom. For example, groups of third-graders could sell the products they made, such as friendship bracelets or bookmarks with duct tape, an art fair or a parent's open house. Creating a business plan - which includes budget proposals, price points and sales analysis - will be part of the learning experience. This school is set up for technology. Fifth-graders write, film and produce a daily news show that airs in every classroom. The show features a weather person interviewing guests, and reports from a cafeteria about choosing a lunch of the day, says media specialist Lizzie Padgett. After several weeks of training, the children independently process cameras and sound equipment. Each class has a SMART Board and uses an interactive SMART Response system, with wireless remote controls for all students. Students use them to answer questions on the SMART Board, and this gives me an instant subconsciousness of how students responded, says teacher Marian Scullion. This technology has helped teachers assess whether we are moving too fast or too slowly in our lessons. Students also use modeling software, make PowerPoint presentations and contribute to blogs a couple of times a week to chronicle what they learned in the classroom. Copy your success Forest Lake has set up a nonprofit education fund to help fund its technology purchases. Thanks to donations from the area's business to silent auction and ticket sales from school activities, we were able to raise about \$8,000, it says Kappy Steck. Parents played an important role in reaching out to local businesses for us. Forest Lake has also received technology grants from several Go to eschoolnews.com list of available grants. In addition, your child's school may apply to participate in the Microsoft Pathfinder Innovation School (pil-network.com); teacher training, hardware and software. Planting seeds while having a reading class at Tiki Hata near the butterfly garden, and monitoring energy use is only part of a typical day at Pine Jog, which recently won the Green Ribbon award from the U.S. Department of Education. It wasn't enough for us to have an eco-friendly school building, says principal Fred Bartsch. Weave environmental education throughout the curriculum. For example, all students help take care of the school's 4,000-plant hydroponic garden without pesticides, and they gain a lot of maths, science and marketing experience in the process. Children sold \$4,000 worth of products last year to parents and staff at the school, Bartsch says. They investigated what local grocery stores charged to help them set prices, and at the end of the season they calculated which crops were most profitable. Pine Jog also has an open science laboratory for experimentation and GPS mapping. Moreover, the design of the school itself is a learning tool. There are numerous touchscreen devices in the corridors that display real-time information about the school's energy consumption so pupils can monitor the energy use and energy savings of the building. Says Bartsch: Children like to check how much water we've used in a month and how much we've saved. Copy your success All Pine Jog teachers received training from Project Wild (projectwild.org), the council's free environmental education program. The group offers workshops for teachers in each state, as well as curricula and activity manuals. His scientific program is out of this world! Appointed as a school of researchers by NASA, C. W. Barrett challenged his fifth-graders last year to come up with a sports game, using three laws of motion, for astronauts aboard the International Space Station. The game they made, called Save the Earth, was modeled after Quiditch - a sport in the Harry Potter series - and won first place in the NASA competition, says Allison Green, a science enrichment teacher in Barrett. All the students watched the video feed of astronauts playing the game. As part of NASA's partnership, astronauts also visited the school - and teachers traveled to NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory to teach robotics. But space connection is just the tip of the iceberg: All students go to the school's Project Discovery lab and participate in science enrichment classes two to three times a week, where they conduct experiments and join projects like tracking the migration of hoof taps. We're also integrating science into the rest of the curriculum, says Laurie Sullivan, who heads the Project Discovery science program at Barrett. For example, locals created a Crane Word Wall based on the vocabulary they were exposed to study of birds. Copy its success You can offer your child's school curriculum a glimpse into NASA Explorer's school curriculum. Any teacher can sign up for free lesson plans and monthly video chats between NASA scientists and students. They can also apply for the opportunity to conduct experiments on an aircraft, such as in NASA's vomit comet. Get the details explorerschools.nasa.gov. Some of Barrett's research projects are funded through grants, such as Toyota TAPESTRY, and are supported by partners such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We set up a grant writing committee and gave teachers time of help to apply for awards, says principal Teresa Breit. If your nursery school doesn't have a team to do, see if that's something the principal would like you and other parents to organize. She teaches a foreign language - with a twist. Not only do all students learn Greek from instructors originally from the country, but they also demonstrate their speaking and hearing skills in the math class. It is part of a movement spread in Europe called content-based foreign language instructions in which one or two subjects are taught in another language. Our students, only 6 percent of whom have a Greek background, are more likely to pick up language skills in this way, says George Chambers, president of the Odyssey board. In addition, it is better suited for some children and parents than immersion, in which all subjects are taught in a second language. Maths and Greek make the perfect connection, Chambers explains. Mathematics has roots in Greek, he says. For example, all names for plane shapes in geometry come from Greek words. Once children know that pentá means five in Greek, it's easier to remember than a pentagon - a figure with five sides. Students receive five hours of math lessons each week in Greek and five more in English. As a result of this additional instruction, nearly 100 percent of second-graders met or exceeded state standards in mathematics. Says kindergarten teacher Mary Lou Strauss: It's amazing to watch students think and solve problems in two languages. Even if they don't keep up with their Greek after they leave Odessia, these children will certainly have an advantage in the global world. Copy its success Only 15 percent of public elementary schools nationwide offer a foreign-language program. If your child's school doesn't, join like-minded parents to start it. Let's emphasize the link between knowledge of a foreign language and strong test scores - the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (actfl.org) and the Center for Applied Linguistics (www.cal.org) have much of what you will need to do. There's always something cooking in this school. Students make meals twice a month, mostly using ingredients from the school garden. We collected squash tacos, Calais Caesar dinosaur salad, dipping beans, pancakes with berries and other recipes that loved,' says Caroline Orth, educational cooking cooker At the end of the year, students take home a cookbook with recipes they whipped up. Language arts and mathematics also mix with the cooking curriculum. For example, the citrus unit examined fractions in relation to oranges and grapefruits. Second-fifth-graders write in cooking magazines - entries can include anything from Venn's diagrams comparing and contrasting cabbage, collards and chards to imaginary alien tales that opens wintergreen leaves. Students also have a classroom in the garden once a week, doing activities such as measuring plants, adding yield or pretending to be dusty trees. Seasonal fruits and vegetables from the garden appear in the salad bar of the café. Says Ort: After a few months, the cleaned-up eds become impatient dehumans. Copy your Success John Muir basics of his gardener and cooking courses to a curriculum developed by the network for healthy California. If you live in the state, your nursery school can apply for a grant to fund the program in www.harvestofthemoonth.cdph.ca.gov. Otherwise, you can still load the activity sheets and materials. Garden grants are also available from other sources. Get news about the latest funding opportunities from schoolgardenweekly.com. If the garden is not for the foreseeable future of your school, cooking lessons are still an option. Some recipes could easily be made in the classroom with the help of parenting volunteers, Orth says. Children have never been called to the principal's office at this school because, well, there is no principal. Instead, teachers run the school, which was founded in 2009 by teachers and the head of the city's teachers' union, with the support of then-Superintendent Michael Bennett, who is now a U.S. senator. Many schools have their hands tied to teachers. The administration dictates almost every aspect of the curriculum - and how it is delivered, says Laurie Nazareno, one of the school's co-hosts of teachers, who reveals tasks usually reserved for the principal. However, instructors at the Leadership Academy in Mathematics and Science can adjust the curriculum. For example, when it was possible for first-graders to visit the blanket museum, one teacher made a blanket with her students before the trip, interacting facts about patterns and fractions. You typically have to go through three or four levels of approval for this deviation from the curriculum, Nazareno says. Teachers also watch each other's classes four times a year to offer suggestions on what can be improved and pick up ideas they can implement with their own students. Says Nazareno: Peer observation is virtually nonexistent in some schools. There is so much this is happening here and it benefits children. Copy this success approach to school administration with a proposal to fund together for teachers at your child's class level. Partner with several other families to defray the cost. It should not be complicated; Booking.com will use rooms with 24 reviews and language. On The Outwardly, Munford looks like a typical village school. But once you open the front door, you'll enter the cave with stalactites and stalagmites and sly water. You can follow a rock path to the gym or visit coolergarts and first-graders in a wing designed to resemble an enchanted forest. Science surrounds our students and they think it's cool,' says Kim Murray, a science resources teacher. Teachers often bring children to hallway screenings to teach their lessons - for example, a piece of bark from a hundred years of wood is the focal point for a first-class lesson about what tree rings can reveal about its age and health. Munford's principal, Rebecca Robinson, Ed.D., takes the school's high test scores to a hands-on approach; nearly 95 percent of fifth-graders own science, well above the state average. School is never boring here - there's always a new fish for kids to look at in an aquarium cafeteria or fossil to explore in one of our outdoor science classes. They are engaged and enthusiastic about what they are learning in the lesson, dr. Robinson explains. Copy its success Many museums and science centers have displays or historical objects that are in storage. With your principal's permission, you can approach museums to determine whether they would be willing to lend them as itinerant exhibits for your child's school, Murray suggests. Neighbouring businesses may also be willing to sponsor the costs of developing an exhibition - for example, a nearby energy company can rewrite the display for energy. Munford teamed up with Southern Custom Exhibits (www.sceexhibits.com) to create its interactive displays and received funding from U.S. Forest Services children in the Woods (www.fs.fed.us) program and local businesses. Originally published in the October 2012 issue of Parents magazine. © copyright . All rights reserved. Printed from link to an external site that may or may not comply with accessibility rules. Principles.

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