

1-16-19

Dear CKS Families,

I hope you all had a fabulous first full week of school! We have been off to a busy start to the 2019 year. As we return to school routines, we take time to reacquaint ourselves with our school and classroom procedures. Teachers are continuing to review expectations in classrooms and common areas with their students. Consistently reviewing and practicing expectations is important to make our days run smoothly.

We are also focusing this month on engaging students in learning. Student engagement is an important component within the classroom. The goal is to create lessons that encourage active participation rather than passive learning. We want to implement hands-on, real-world activities that inspire students to do, create, and think. They are participating, not just listening.

To help gain total student participation, teachers use a variety of strategies. For example, they may use small flexible groups, movement, collaboration, and questioning. Teachers use assessment data to gauge students' understanding and then group them in order to differentiate instruction. They find that some students need more time working with the teacher; some may benefit from working independently or with a partner to continue practicing the skill; and others may have mastered the skill and can move on to a more challenging or creative project that utilizes the skill or concept.

Here is an example of what engagement through differentiated instruction with might look like in a classroom: One small group is instructed by the teacher, reviewing a lesson on square footage. Simultaneously, another group is playing a game with partners to provide more practice on that subject. Yet another group is working together to determine the square footage of the classroom. All students are working on the same concept, but at different levels. The goal for all is to understand how to calculate square footage -- everyone is engaged and focused on the learning target.

Student engagement is essential to learning, and I hope this gave you some insight into ways teachers encourage our students to become active learners.

God bless,
Paula Smith, Ed.S.
Principal