Hofer Happenings Article – September 2015

By Ann McCue

Welcome Back! My name is Ann McCue and I am the Instructional Coach at Troy-Hofer. The role of the instructional coach is to partner with classroom teachers, teacher associates, and building administrators, to assist and deepen the learning of all students through a variety of job-embedded professional development opportunities.

When thinking about good literacy instruction, we begin by finding each student’s reading level. We do this by administering reading benchmarks that help us determine those levels. Hofer teachers have been working hard benchmarking all our students in reading. These benchmarks serve multiple purposes and are so important to providing all students with targeted and differentiated instruction. You may be wondering what happens when students are benchmarked for reading. Teachers have kits that contain fiction and non-fiction texts from levels that are identified A through Z. Teachers sit with each student, one-on-one and listen to them read while noting any errors the student may make. Through the analysis of these readings, teachers are then able to determine a very specific reading level for each student.

Once a level is determined, teachers have a variety of instructional options available to provide your child with instruction geared directly to their level. They may choose to form small guided groups, they may confer one-on-one, or form literature circles, to list just a few options. Whichever option a teacher selects, you can be assured that your child has been matched with text that is specific to their instructional level and that instruction is focused on your child’s specific needs at that level.

Each level has characteristics that distinguish the text and the reader. If you would like to learn more about what readers can do and what texts may look like at each level you will want to check out the following link:  [Text Level Indicators](Text_Level_Indicators.pdf)

Teachers typically instruct at students’ **instructional** levels. This level is a bit more challenging and the student is supported by the teacher to successfully read the text. This level provides rich opportunities for learning. Students often self-select books at their **independent** level. This level is typically one to three levels below the instructional level. Books at this level help your child practice newly acquired skills on their own, and build continued fluency. You will see books come home with your child at both instructional and independent levels.

We are committed to reading instruction that seeks to deepen your child’s experience with text, and helps them to grow and accelerate as readers. You can assist and partner with us by reading with your child at home each day. Reading aloud to your child helps your child build their listening comprehension and grows their vocabulary. Listening to your child read the texts they bring home can build their fluency, and promote their accuracy and comprehension. If you have any questions or would like additional ideas, feel free to contact me or your child’s teacher at any time!