



Sayre Public Schools

“The greatest gift you can give another is the purity of your attention.”

-Richard Moss

Connecting with Kids through Paired Intervention

The world of education is one full of busy days, booked schedules, classes, bells, meetings and more. In fact, days and weeks become so eventful that we must fight not to lose sight of our overarching goal for this school year: *connecting with kids*. This fall we decided to implement a pilot program we are calling *Paired Intervention*. The goal of this program is to pair an adult with students to work on specific



High school principal, Danny Crabb, works with two students on multiplication facts.

skills (i.e., multiplication facts, division, academic vocabulary, etc.). Instead of asking teachers to fit one more activity into their already hectic days, we decided it would be great for our administrators, counselors, librarians, administrative assistants, and speech pathologist to step in for some individualized time with students. We feel this process benefits both the student and the adult involved in the activity. Students receive individualized attention and the

adults get to establish a connection with kids that is sometimes lost when an educator moves out of the classroom into another role.

This first rotation consists of a 3-week cycle focused on grades 3-5. The initial skill that we are reviewing and practicing is multiplication facts. Students are pulled from non-instructional times and are worked with for approximately 20 minutes a day. Each adult is consistently paired with the same students from each grade level so that there is a chance to create an authentic relationship. Students seem excited that



Middle school principal Danny Clifton and administrative assistant Jenni Easter work with students in the elementary library.

their principals, counselors and others that they see up and down the hallways every day have taken a special interest in helping them succeed. For the adults, there is something comforting in putting away their phones and schedules for a portion of the day to set across from a child and start by simply smiling

"The relationships we are building with the students at Sayre Elementary will have a positive and lasting effect." ~Danny Clifton, MS Principal

and asking how their day has been. We get to encourage them if their answer is incorrect and celebrate small victories along the way. There is no doubt that computer software and educational games hold a place in helping children practice skills and achieve, but we truly believe that it must be balanced with human connection. Technology can do so many amazing things for our children, but it cannot replace a smiling face, a hug, or human interaction and attention. We want to invest in our students in perhaps the most basic way—in person.

This pilot program may have just as big of impact on the adults as it does the students. Middle school principal Danny Clifton reflects on his experience with *Paired Intervention*, "The relationships we are building with the students at Sayre Elementary will have a positive and lasting effect. These students see adults that truly care about their education and are willing to take the time to spend a few minutes out of the day to ensure the students are getting the best education they can." We all realize that a strong foundation in elementary and fundamental skills are vital to a student's educational journey. Our speech pathologist, Lori Kennemer, is also a very willing participant in this pilot program—"It has been a pleasure to work with these students one on one and see their excitement about this new program. Anytime students are excited for learning results will be evidenced."

Our counselors are also taking an active role in working with these students. The elementary counselor and school psychometrist, Krista Holland, expresses her thoughts on the program—"Paired Intervention has allowed me as counselor to be directly involved in improving students' academic learning. I am able to support and build upon Reading & Math skills being taught in the classroom, as well as reteach necessary skills to improve their proficiency. Most importantly, paired intervention provides students with a small group setting, and opportunity to receive added encouragement from somebody outside of teacher role." Cody Huckaby, the elementary principal, is excited that his students are having such a positive reaction to the *Paired Intervention*—"This has been a great experience for

our students so far. They look forward to getting the extra attention from the other administrators and staff members within the district."

Self-esteem and self-confidence also play a part in this pilot program. Children that develop higher confidence levels are better equipped to learn and succeed. We hope that students learn that they can be proud and resilient even when they make a mistake—and become comfortable with forming healthy relationships. Our hopes are to show these children that they are important and worthy of individualized time and attention—to express that we care about their day, their progress, and their life. A huge thank you to all of the Sayre employees that take time out of their schedule to invest in these



Superintendent, Todd Winn, quizzes two 3rd graders using flashcards

children: Charlene Carter, Krista Holland, Lori Kennemer, Otilia Chavez, Rhonda Mendez, Jenni Easter, Cody Huckaby, Danny Clifton, Brad Coffman, Danny Crabb, Todd Winn, and Andrea Dickson. An even bigger thank you to all of our teachers at Sayre Public Schools that work with these students day in and day out—you are always the true hero of the story. Thank you for sharing your students with us!

-Andrea Dickson
Director of Curriculum and School Improvement