



Mrs. Williams challenged her students to crowd her out of her office with food donations for the needy.

Imagine students collect over 2,500 food items, help 29 families

Students at Imagine Clay Avenue Community School and Imagine Madison Avenue School of Arts collected over 2,500 food items in November. The schools assembled Thanksgiving baskets that teachers and students delivered to 29 local families and they donated the remainder of the food to local food banks. The Thanksgiving baskets also included turkeys and fresh foods.

Julie McLaughlin, school leader at Clay Avenue said it is a standing tradition at the school to help those in need.

School leader Daphne Williams at Madison Av-

enue challenged her students to “can” her out of her office by collecting enough canned goods to crowd her out of her office. After three weeks, Mrs. Williams was down to just a path from the door to her desk.

Mrs. Williams’ church, Amazing Grace Baptist Church in Bedford, Michigan, also helped support the students’ efforts.

“This allowed students an important opportunity to think about others and put into practice what we learn about in the Imagine Schools character education program, especially caring and kindness,” Mrs. Williams said.

New art gallery to feature local artists and student talent

Imagine Gallery, a unique, new teaching gallery for fine arts, opened this month at Imagine Madison Avenue School of Arts that will be part of the educational experience at the school as well as a public gallery that will showcase local artists.

The first artist to be featured in the Imagine Gallery will be local abstract artist Matt Gomez during the Winter Art Show in December.

“The arts are such a vital part of our school and this new gallery will give our students another great way to connect with the community while continuing to develop their talents and learning to be both consumers and producers of the arts,” said Mrs. Daphne Williams, school leader of Imagine Madison Avenue School of Arts.

The gallery will be open to the public during exhibitions. One highlight will be a student show at the end of the year.

“The rest of the year will be reserved for local artists who would like to show their work. We will host reception nights

where our students can meet the local artists and learn about their work. During the summer, I hope to open the Gallery for the Art Walks,” said Jodie Peace, Madison Avenue art teacher.

Mrs. Peace oversees the art instruction at the school as well as the 120-member Honors Art program and the after school Art Club, with both programs growing in numbers. Mrs. Peace breaks the students into smaller groups for more individualized instruction and has a team of high school student volunteers who will begin assisting in December.

Students in both Honors Art and Art Club are working on a giant mural and a smaller one for the school. They are currently in the drafting and planning stage.

“I can’t wait to see their ideas and sketches,” said Mrs. Williams. “I love their enthusiasm and how they creatively express themselves. This new gallery will bring the art that we have the pleasure of seeing everyday to the rest of the community to enjoy,” she said.

A Higher Standard: How two local schools are teaching students to take ownership of their learning

How do you get students to take responsibility for their education and instill a deep motivation to succeed along with an enthusiasm for learning?

Imagine Clay Avenue Community School and Imagine Madison Avenue School of Arts seem to have found the formula for success in Standards-Based Education.

The promise of focusing on standards to improve student achievement can be seen outside each classroom where students at the two schools are excited about the thematic displays their teachers have made to illustrate their mastery of specific standards.

“The students get really excited about seeing their progress displayed in a fun, anonymous way. The progress charts intrinsically motivate students. It shows them in simple terms where they are academically and where they should be,” Madison Avenue School Leader Daphne Williams said.

Mrs. Jessica Ely, second grade teacher at Madison Avenue, created a cookie jar graphic to chart her students’ progress. Every student gets a cookie to represent their progress, which starts off away from the cookie jar. As students progress, their cookie is moved closer to the cookie jar and goes into the jar upon mastery of the standard.

“The whole idea is to get kids involved in their learning and motivate them to want to grow and progress. It’s date-driven and student growth driven,” Mrs. Williams said.

The data Mrs. Williams refers to include Scantron test scores, a nationally normed, standards-based assessment given to Imagine students in the beginning and end of the year to measure individual learning gains, or how far each student progressed throughout the school year



Myrracle Washington and Dae’Quan Robinson, along with their second grade teacher, Jessica Ely, have fun with their class progress chart that illustrates how close the class is getting to a standards-based academic goal. Once students master a skill, their cookie goes into the cookie jar.

as compared to where they started.

Scantron scores are often a predictor of how a student will perform on the Ohio Achievement Assessment.

“On average, Imagine students have learning gains of over one year’s worth of learning growth in an academic year,” Mrs. Williams said.

Standards-based education is the process of teaching, learning, and assessment that focuses on statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do at specified grade levels.

For example, a second grade math standard may state, “Read, interpret and make comparisons and predictions from data represented in charts, line plots, picture graphs and bar graphs.”

Julie McLaughlin, school leader at Imagine Clay Avenue Community School, explained, “The success of any organization depends on clear, commonly defined goals. When we focus precisely on specific standards that our

“When we focus precisely on specific standards that our students need to know, it unleashes individual and collective energy and everyone gets excited about the progress our kids are making, from the teachers to the students to the parents.”

-- Julie McLaughlin, School Leader, Imagine Clay Avenue Community School

students need to know, it unleashes individual and collective energy and everyone gets excited about the progress our kids are making, from the teachers to the students to the parents,” she said.

Mrs. Williams agrees. “A common focus clarifies our goals, facilitates communication between teachers, parents and students and promotes a collective purpose and a clear pathway to success,” she said.

Mrs. Williams explained that a standards-based report card is much less subjective than a letter grade report card.

“Standards serve as beginning points for teachers when they make decisions about what to teach. They focus on concepts, skills, knowledge and behaviors necessary for students to succeed in the world today,” Mrs. Williams said.

Mrs. McLaughlin said that monitoring student progress on fun, visual displays that teachers create increases accountability because students have a clear picture what they should learn and can take responsibility in that effort.

“It is also an important way to identify and meet the needs of students who may be struggling,” she said.

Teachers at both Madi-

son Avenue and Clay Avenue schools use Direct Instruction, differentiating instruction to each individual learner. Teachers use assessment data to monitor student progress and target lessons to individual student needs.

In addition, both schools have extended the school year by offering a summer school program with free transportation to students who could benefit from extra help and an extended school day with free after school tutoring for those students who need it.

“As important as the curriculum and instructional methods are, one thing that we all make sure does not get overlooked is the human element of education. None of this matters much if school is not a fun, warm and welcoming place to come every day, and that is very important at Imagine schools” said Mrs. McLaughlin.

Imagine Clay Avenue Community School is located at 1030 Clay Avenue and can be reached at 419-727-9900. Imagine Madison Avenue School of Arts is located at 1511 Madison Avenue, and can be reached at 419-259-4000. Both schools have limited openings still available. Tuition and transportation are free.



Ms. Dawn Landrus uses a sailboat graphic to chart her third grade students’ progress.