

October 24, 2017

Supporting Student Learning

Yesterday we had a special visit at the Bresnahan School. As a culminating activity to their farm unit the preschoolers had an opportunity to engage with a traveling farm of baby animals. They (both the kids and animals) were too cute for words. We had baby chicks, ducklings, piglets, goats and bunnies. The children were able to feed them, pet them and even snuggle with them.



All the children were actively engaged- even those who chose to observe from a distance. The teachers were able to discuss the facts that they had learned about the animals which brought their learning literally to life as they were able to have a hands-on experience.

Snuggling with animals reminds us of the importance of therapeutic activities and strategies that are commonplace in our school today. Did you know that the Bresnahan has two motor rooms with hanging swings, trampolines, and other gross and fine motor activities that students can use? Some students may visit the motor room as part of their occupational or physical therapy, but the room is open to any student who may just need to take a break, find some balance, calm their bodies, or even take a moment to have some fun as the two kindergarten students- Zachary and D.J.- modeled for us in the picture.

We also employ mindfulness throughout the day. Students may participate in meditation activities such as yoga or deep breathing. Alternatively, we structure motor breaks



throughout the day so that students have a chance to move their bodies and get much needed input. Have you heard your child talking about [Go Noodle](#)? This is a site that many of our teachers use to incorporate developmentally appropriate movement breaks- dance combinations, activities that have the children cross the mid-line of their bodies (a hard concept for little ones), and playful songs.

As a matter of fact, the theme of Safe and Supportive Schools is not only the topic of our upcoming teacher professional development day on November 7th (reminder- no school for students that day) but it is also one of our strategies in the District's Strategic Plan- *We will provide supports so all students are ready and able to learn*. As a part of this strategy we focus on social emotional learning at all grade levels, a safe and supportive school environment, and reducing student stress.

Mindfully and Therapeutically Yours,
Kristina Davis, Karina Mascia and Amy Sullivan