

Lab Report

A Reggio Inspired/Project -Based Learning Community

Learning and teaching should not stand on opposite banks and just watch the river flow by; instead, they should embark together in a journey down the water. Through an active, reciprocal exchange, teaching can strengthen learning how to learn.

-Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the Reggio Emilia approach



A Dream Realized By Dr. Ena Shelley

Dean of the Butler University College of Education

For almost two decades I have dreamed of creating a laboratory school based upon the Reggio Emilia approach for the College of Education at Butler University and now the dream is becoming a reality. I respectfully thank Dr. Eugene White, Superintendent of Indianapolis Public Schools and Dr. Bobby Fong, President of Butler University for their visionary leadership in providing this opportunity to create a new model of education for the Indianapolis community.

I believe that a university has an obligation to enrich and support the community and as Malaguzzi stated, the exchange is reciprocal. Our involvement in the community enriches the university and influences and informs our thinking and educational practices. The children in the community are ALL our children and the laboratory school provides an exciting way to “journey down the water” together!

Continued on page 4

What is the Value of Preschool?

“It’s cognitive language development, social skills, emotional development, as well as arts, music, all of that... everything that encompasses being a human being is addressed at the early childhood level.”

Connie Sherman, Executive Director of St. Mary’s Child Center



Do You Have a Preschooler?

Would you like to send him/her to preschool at the IPS/Butler University Laboratory School? We are pleased to announce that the Butler University College of Education and IPS have made arrangements to bring St. Mary’s Child Center to the Lab School. St. Mary’s has a long tradition of offering high quality preschool and wraparound childcare in a Reggio inspired, project-based learning context. St. Mary’s is a founding member of the Indianapolis Reggio Collaborative and the program is nationally recognized for excellence! To enroll your child in our preschool, contact St. Mary’s Executive Director Connie Sherman at (317)361-4868.



Do You Need Wraparound Childcare?

We are trying to anticipate your every need as a family and we are happy to announce that St. Mary’s plans to offer childcare, before and after school, for your kindergarten or first grade child for the reasonable fee of \$65.00/week/child. The service would provide childcare before school beginning at 7:00 am and would provide after school care until 5:30 pm on days children attend school. If having all your school and childcare services at the Lab School sounds convenient to you, contact St. Mary’s Executive Director Connie Sherman for more details at (317)361-4868. Space is limited, so please call quickly!



On the Cover

The photograph on the cover of this newsletter was taken during a photo shoot for our school advertising brochure. It is an interesting challenge creating a brochure for a school that does not yet exist. In an effort to make sure the brochure was as authentic as possible, the children who participated in the photo shoot came from families that had declared their intention to send their children to the IPS/Butler University Laboratory School. We photographed them participating in activities that were reflective of our plans for how project work would look in our school next year. Each of the children in the photograph also attended the Reggio inspired Warren Early Childhood Center for preschool!



Mark Your Calendars!

Parents, please mark your calendars for our School 60 **Spring Open House**. The Open House will take place on **Thursday, March 10th from 5:00-6:30 pm**. This event will be an opportunity for you and your child to tour the school. When you visit, keep in mind that the current School 60 Math and Science Magnet School staff is working in School 60. The environment may look different by the time school begins in August.

Have You Ever Wondered, Who is William A. Bell?

“Who is William A. Bell” is probably a question that never entered your mind until you began to consider having your child attend the IPS/Butler University Laboratory School. Our school is also called William A. Bell School 60, and on the Northeast corner of our school property you will find a monument to William A. Bell pictured to the right of this article.

Our current School 60 used to be a junior high school situated between Shortridge High School and School 60 elementary school. The idea at the time was that a child could begin at School 60, move next door to what is our current building for Jr. High School, then move across the street to Shortridge for High School. This allowed students to spend their entire school career on the same campus of neighborhood schools.

During the 1880s, William A. Bell was the Superintendent of Indianapolis Public Schools. He also worked very closely with the Indiana State Teacher’s Association. The State Teacher’s Association journal titled the Indiana School Journal was owned and edited by Bell from 1871 through 1899. Bell is a towering figure in the history of education in Indiana and our school community should be proud to be located in his namesake school. In future editions look for more references to the history of our school.



IPS/Butler University Laboratory School Dress Code

Mr. Smith says, “School Colors Will be Featured Through the Dress Code at Lab School.”



As you may already know, all IPS Public Schools follow a dress code policy. I have attached a pdf of the IPS Dress Code Policy to the e-mail along with this newsletter. Earlier in my career as a school administrator, I brought a school uniform policy to the Wayne Township Elementary School where I worked. The policy had a positive effect on the behavior of the children attending the school and parents reported to me that they liked the policy because it was actually a more affordable way to cloth their children for school.

When school begins, you will notice that at the IPS/Butler University Laboratory School, the staff will follow the dress code along with the students. We believe it is important to lead by example, and if the policy is good for the children, it is good for us too!

We encourage families to support us in having children follow a slightly more restrictive dress code at the IPS/Butler University Laboratory School, than that at other IPS Schools. It is our desire that the dress code include white or navy blue shirts and blouses and khaki or navy blue pants, shorts or skirts. Our School colors will be navy blue and white, just like Butler University, so school colors will be featured through the dress code at the Lab School. You will notice on the Dress Code pdf that was e-mailed along with this newsletter, the other colors have been crossed out in red.

Continued from page 4

One of the key principles of the Reggio Emilia approach is a strong image of the child. That image means that ALL children are capable, competent, powerful learners who will thrive in a learning environment that is created to unleash their knowledge, nourish their curiosity and creativity, and value multiple ways of learning and being. Through in-depth studies of projects and using the arts as a way to express their interpretations of the world, children will develop necessary skills but more importantly be able to apply them in multiple ways and be able to think more deeply and abstractly. For children living in the 21st century, the ability to analyze, problem solve, and learn in multiple ways is a must!

The children in this new school will be surrounded with caring teachers, university faculty and students who will collaborate to create rich learning experiences that support each child. We look forward to working closely with the families and to truly creating a learning community that empowers everyone. Recently I was asked if I had any reservations about the quality of creating a school with so many unique aspects to it. I replied, "I'm sending my grandchildren to this school, need I say more?" I have the utmost respect for Mr. Ron Smith, principal of the school, and I know the high standards he has for his teaching staff. My Butler colleagues are amazing educators and the Butler students are exceptionally talented. I can only imagine the magnificent school that is about to unfold beginning the fall of 2011.



Ron Smith, Dr. Bobby Fong, Dr. Eugene White and Dr. Ena Shelley at the Lab School Signing Ceremony

Walt Disney said: "All of our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them." The opening of the IPS/Butler Laboratory School is evidence for me that he was correct! Together we will make the dreams for our children come true!

"To plan a school could be an event of great creativity not only in a pedagogical and architectural sense, but also in a wider social, cultural and political sense."

Carla Rinaldi, Reggio Children

Family Focus - Meet the Hunters! By Keri Hunter



This article is the first in a series of articles that will introduce readers to the families at our school. A big thanks goes out to Keri Hunter and her family for a willingness to contribute our first Family Focus article.

We are the Hunter family. Ben works for Butler University and serves as a city-county councilman for Indianapolis. Keri works for the Foundation for Educational Choice 2 days a week and stays home with 6 month old Libby. We live on the far east side and enjoy lots of outdoor activities, family game nights and bike rides. Emily is a Girl Scout Daisy and enjoys taking gymnastics and other classes through Indy Parks.

Potential... how will you ever know your child's real potential? That is a question I have struggled with for the short 5 years of my daughter's life. Would she be an average student, above average? How would we know if she weren't challenged?

When she was 4 we made the decision to enroll her in a preschool program that used the Reggio approach. We believed this model of teaching would challenge her and it was the best method of pushing her to her full potential.

We were thrilled with the level of learning that was happening in her preschool classroom. She came home with critical thinking skills, a great vocabulary and love of learning. She was making conclusions and analyzing things way beyond her age!

When we heard that Butler University and IPS would partner for a school based on the principles and practices of Reggio Emilia, we were so relieved. We wanted her to continue her education with that model. She will be entering 1st grade in the fall and we are happy that she will be a student at School 60. We know her potential is endless and that she will be at the best place to nurture her education!