

From: [OnPoint Community Credit Union](#)
To: [Onpoint Prize](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] OnPoint Prize - Educator of the Year Nomination Submission
Date: Monday, April 8, 2024 9:24:47 AM

Your Name

Rachael Schuetz

Relationship to the Nominee

This is a joint nomination with Jillian Wendt. The nominee is our children's teacher. The nominee also is a mentor teacher with Oregon State University, supporting new teachers, where we are both faculty members in the College of Education.

Your Phone Number

[REDACTED]

Your Email Address

[REDACTED]

Please confirm that you have shared this nomination with the nominee. We encourage this as a first step since many of the required attachments moving forward will involve the nominee.

Yes

Award Category

K-5

Nominee's Name

Rachel Hertz

Nominee's Email

[REDACTED]

Nominee's Phone Number

[REDACTED]

Grade(s) Taught

K, 1

Subject(s) Taught

Elementary: Multiple Subjects

Is the Nominee Licensed/Accredited?

Yes

School Name

North Star Elementary

School District

Bend LaPine Schools

County in Which School Resides

Deschutes
School Address
63567 NW Brownrigg Lane Bend, Oregon 97703 United States Map It
School Type
Public
School Principal or Administrator
Tim Burdsall
How long has the nominee been in their current position?
5 years
How many years of teaching experience does the nominee have?
20 years
Does the nominee have other responsibilities (coach, advisor, etc.)?
Mrs. Hertz leads school committees, district-wide professional development as a teacher leader, and she is a Tier III School District Liaison with SeeSaw: Parent Communication Application
Is the nominee a job-share applicant?
No
Please describe in 1-2 paragraphs why you are nominating this educator.
Our nomination letter details the extraordinary contributions of Mrs. Rachel Hertz to her classroom, school, district, and the entire Central Oregon community. We have summarized her skills into these categories; (a) Research-Based Instructional Practices, (b) Learning Environments: Social Emotional Learning & Culturally-Responsive Teaching, (c) Building Community through Parent Communication and School Partnership, (d) STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics), (e) Service to the Profession, and (f) Personal Stories of Impact.



Rachael Schuetz, Doctor of Education & National Board Certified Teacher
Associate Professor of Practice, Oregon State College of Education

Jillian Wendt, Master of Education & Lead University Supervisor
Associate Faculty Member, Oregon State College of Education

March 29, 2024

Dear Selection Committee Members for the OnPoint's Educator of the Year (K-5) award,

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." We couldn't imagine a better way to describe Mrs. Rachel Hertz, our children's first grade teacher at North Star Elementary School in Bend, Oregon. We have the distinct honor of nominating Rachel Hertz for the OnPoint's Educator of the Year (K-5) award. This honor also comes with the challenge of presenting her dynamic strengths and impact of a thriving 20+ year career in just one letter. We bring two important lenses to this nomination. First, and most importantly, we bring our experience as parents of children in Mrs. Hertz's incredible first grade classroom. Next, as educators ourselves, we have first hand experience as teachers and collectively bring well over 20 years in the elementary classroom; in addition to this, we also bring professional experience as OSU faculty in the College of Education teaching student teachers the nuances of both effective and ethical teaching. As OSU faculty, we've worked with Mrs. Hertz for over five years and have observed how Rachel Hertz invests in the future of education as a Mentor Teacher, hosting teacher candidates in her classroom, we've had the fortune of working with her. Finally, it's not just our exceptional experience with Rachel Hertz that we'd like to highlight in this nomination letter as we've also collected feedback from parents, colleagues, and student teachers, and have included their words of support in our nomination and included them in the portfolio. As committed members of the teaching profession, we are honored to recognize the extraordinary work of Rachel Hertz.

Forgive the elementary analogy, but Mrs. Hertz is like a light to a prism, illuminating her students' unique rainbow of potential. Children in her class thrive academically and emotionally, and are better equipped to navigate life's storm clouds and brightest days. Using this metaphor, we enthusiastically share the multifaceted dimensions of her craft.

Research-Based Instructional Practices

From the lens of being teacher educators, it is unique to see a practicing teacher embed current research and theory into their classroom. Maintaining currency in best practices while managing the day-to-day running of a classroom is a time consuming task. This is one of the foundational reasons that Mrs. Hertz is such an impactful educator to her first graders and also to the teacher candidates she hosts yearly in her classroom.

Mrs. Hertz starts any topic of study with assessment of her students' prior knowledge. During this time she makes a personal connection with each child, where they see how invested she is in their growth. Utilizing this data, Mrs. Hertz plans her lessons with differentiated supports for each student's academic, linguistic, and emotional needs. In her classroom you will see carefully and thoughtfully designed lessons being delivered to the whole group, small group, and individually. Her learning targets are posted in student friendly language, facilitating student investment in their learning. Her masterful lessons open in

an exciting and catchy way to engage all learners. She keeps most teacher directed lessons short, in honor of her first graders' developmental levels, employing the I do, we do, you do model of teaching. Students then work with the topic in supportive small groups or individually, allowing Mrs. Hertz to confer with students one-on-one, best meeting the needs of her diverse learners. She uses in-time student feedback to make data-driven decisions to modify her well-planned lessons. Throughout the lesson, Mrs. Hertz utilizes formative checks for understanding to determine which students have mastered the learning target, and to identify the students that could benefit from reengagement with the learning target in a small group or individually. Seeing a teacher who has mastered the science of the effective teaching cycle AND who shares these techniques with our student teachers, is a true joy!

Learning Environments: Social Emotional Learning & Culturally Responsive Teaching

Stepping into Mrs. Hertz's classroom, you can immediately feel the difference from other classrooms- you know you are in the presence of greatness. You will see kids smiling, and students working together. Mrs. Hertz teaches from a culturally responsive background, engaging students from all different backgrounds. There are diverse representations in lessons, throughout her self-funded classroom library, along with accommodations in the physical setup of the classroom to ensure accessibility for all. Her teaching practice has prioritized diversity, equity, and inclusion of all students long before it was acknowledged as best practice. Her compassion for her students shines, fostering a thriving, safe learning environment for the children. Rachel creates a classroom environment in which learning is the focus, along with pure acceptance. We often say that she is a unicorn of teaching- rare and special.

As educators we know that the most important part of a classroom is the rapport you build with each individual student. Rachel is a master at this element of teaching, the relationships that she builds with her students are truly unmatched. From the first open house of the year, to the last day of school she is building strong relationships with her students that last a lifetime. She helps students feel seen and heard by including their family photos and their favorite music in her classroom.

When in the classroom it is evident that there is a mutual respect and love amongst Rachel and the students. She goes above and beyond, utilizing her personal connection to reach every student, whether they are struggling or just needing a little extra support that day. A final example of her nurturing classroom environment is the way she celebrates birthdays. On the student's birthday (or half birthday) she decorates their desk and chair, they wear a crown and get to pick a book for her to read aloud. Then, she has all students gather in a circle with the birthday student sitting in a chair, she then has each student state why they love the birthday child. They all go around the circle stating their love for them and then at the end, the birthday student states what they love about themselves. It is a circle of love.

She lives and breathes the goals of inclusivity and equity that are at the heart of the teaching profession, and she is out there making a difference.

Building Community through Parent Communication and School Partnership

Rachel Hertz has exceptional communication and organizational skills, which allow her to tackle the everyday challenges and tasks that a teacher faces with a fantastic attitude. Not only does Rachel care and build the rapport with the students that are lucky enough to have her, she also builds relationships with school and district personnel, colleagues, community members, and most importantly, parents. Rachel brings her amazing skill of making connections to the school level as well, she is the Staff Culture Committee Chair. She spends time creating and planning fun, informational, and bonding activities for

the staff throughout the year. For example, she has a community art project, similar to what she does in her classroom in September. The staff created a canvas painted by all members with a phrase that fit with the school's theme and cultural beliefs. Also, at the end of the year, she plans a school-wide scavenger hunt, the staff breaks off into teams and they all meet for happy hour when done. It is a highlight of the year for the staff.

When thinking of Rachel's classroom, the word open door comes to mind. She is always welcome to have past students come to visit or help, she is happy to have any community member or district administrator or board member come in and help or observe, she also has a strong rotation of parent volunteers. From the very first day of school to the very last day of school she welcomes people in her room with open arms. Her classroom is truly a community in itself. She is modeling acceptance and how it is okay to accept help from others.

If you are lucky enough to get to visit Rachel's classroom, you will feel the presence of connection and love. She is a strong rapport builder, who values connection over correction, and allows all students to be themselves. In turn, she then allows all adults to be themselves too. She has masterfully curated her room and presence to be one of safety and total acceptance for all.

Once Rachel steps out of the classroom and into the community, she continues to impact her students by connecting them to community resources (i.e. FAN (Family Access Network), Bethlehem Inn (transitional housing for homeless/ in need families), Food Bank, The Giving Plate, etc.). She never stops advocating for her students and their families.

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics)

One of the greatest challenges as an elementary classroom teacher is to find the time to embed STEAM topics (science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics) into the literacy heavy curriculum. She does this masterfully, embedding STEAM topics into her literacy instruction. Mrs. Hertz students learn about impactful historical figures, including those from historically underrepresented cultural backgrounds. She led students through an inquiry-based engineering project to create their own games for a kindness carnival (complete with moving parts and all)! This also created a much more inclusive classroom celebration for Valentine's Day than classically seen. In addition to the fun engineering projects, the spring is when the classroom turns into a mini science lab. Every spring, the class gets to experience hatching ducklings. It is a great hands-on project that the whole class and school enjoys. It is one of the many ways that Rachel brings animal life into the classroom. She is known to have a class pet or two. Currently, she has a hamster named Dingo. Dingo is a class favorite, he gets in on the learning by having a writing journal, a car to cruise around the classroom, and he helps the students with their classwork. The class pet also helps teach responsibility, caring, and basic care needs to the students of the classroom. Dingo helps with their social-emotional learning and teamwork skills.

Service to the Profession

Mrs. Hertz is a master teacher who commits to ongoing professional development to improve her already strong craft. She is a true life-long learner. This act of service supports her students, her student teachers, her colleagues, and her district, as she frequently leads professional development. She is a certified educator (third tier liaison) for Seesaw, a parent communication tool and classroom resource application. She leads trainings for all teachers and administrators in our district and provides feedback to improve the app for smoother parent communication, classroom management, and student assessment. The use of SeeSaw in the classroom has a lasting impact on families and is huge with connecting those to

the classroom in a daily way. With the use of SeeSaw, parents have real time knowledge of what is happening in the classroom and it gives a jumping off point for parents to ask about their learners day. It is a powerful tool for parent communication and a way to tie people to the learning community. We love to get daily videos, pictures, or student posted activities on SeeSaw. It is a highlight of our day.

Within the district and school Rachel is frequently on hiring committees for new staff members and most recently on the committee for a new principal. Her knowledge about teaching and the school itself, and prior administrative experience makes her a valuable resource for hiring. As we've previously mentioned she invests countless unpaid hours in mentoring the next generation of teachers through her work with our teacher candidates. There is no better way to make a lasting impact in education than how she shares her knowledge with future teachers.

Rachel Hertz: Daughter, Wife, Mother, Teacher, Mentor, and Friend

Any nomination would be incomplete without mention of the fact that Rachel Hertz is simply an exceptional human being. We have learned so much from her ability to balance a high level of success in her career with her dedication to her own family.

The Hertz family has undergone numerous medical challenges since January 2020, including a shared diagnosis of hypermobile Ehlers Danlos Syndrome which resulted in the near loss of her daughter, multiple surgeries, procedures, trips to OHSU and Eugene, and medical expenses that annually meet the out-of-pocket maximum. Despite having wonderful health insurance, managing those ongoing expenses is a true challenge and has had an impact on their family beyond the clear emotional challenges of navigating life-altering medical conditions. However, you would never see the magnitude of this emotional and financial weight, as Rachel Hertz shines above it all. We aren't quite sure how she supports her children's medical needs seamlessly while completely supporting her first graders and the education profession as a whole.

Having Mrs. Hertz as a teacher for first grade, is also having a friend for life. We are both going to share special and powerful experiences we have had with Mrs. Hertz first hand and how she as a person has impacted our lives and the lives of our children.

Rachel Schuetz: Mrs. Hertz has supported our family during the most difficult year of our lives, as our son is in her first grade classroom. Her partnership, expertise and support has helped us navigate the lengthy testing and diagnostic process to determine our son's unique needs based on additional supports around focus, anxiety, and perhaps autism spectrum. During the same year, both my husband and myself had serious surgeries where the recovery process lasted for months. Throughout all of this, Rachel Hertz has been the one to keep our family afloat. She has made herself available to our family as a listener, friend, and all around support system. Our son has flourished academically and socially during a year that could have been a complete loss. He has become so confident in her classroom, even to the point that past teachers and parents have applauded his growth. As a so-called expert in elementary education, I am quick to let everyone know that it is all due to Mrs. Rachel Hertz. We are indebted to her. Quite frankly, knowing that she is navigating her family's own serious medical (and therefore financial challenges), I have no idea how she does it. Hearing from others during this nomination process, our family just represents one small success story in a sea of her impact. Her love for children, education, and her genuine desire to help others supersedes all else.

Jillian Wendt: During the pandemic, my son who was in kindergarten at the start of the pandemic, developed some pretty strong separation anxieties. He was not in school for the second half of kindergarten and for the first half of first grade. Mrs. Hertz was amazing as a distance learning teacher,

she would include and welcome all siblings in her instruction and story times. She also held Lego Club on Webex after school hours to help build community and rapport with her students, again all siblings were welcome and parents too! Once it was announced that school was reopening for in person learning, my son's anxiety peaked. He was really struggling. I reached out to Mrs. Hertz to let her know the transition was going to be rough. She immediately made a connection with me and with my son because she also has a child with anxiety. She was able to share her story and empathize with both me as a parent of a child with anxiety and empathize with my son. She came up with a plan to have my son come to school the week before the reopening and help her in the classroom to help him get more comfortable in the classroom and being back at school and away from home. Even now, writing this three years later, I still get choked up. This one single act of kindness completely changed the course of my son's school experience. It meant the world to me to finally see my son take a deep breath and feel comfortable and confident to return to school. It meant so much. Even to this day, my son still calls her his "school mom," someone he can trust and rely on while at school. It is also worth mentioning that Mrs. Hertz has my daughter this year and the transition to her room was seamless due to the fact that my daughter, who was three at the time, was included in her lessons, read aloud story times, and Lego Clubs during the pandemic's distance learning. My daughter has blossomed and really come into her own in her classroom.

It is stories like these that are just a drop in a bucket of other stories and connections just like ours. We feel like our stories are unique and one of a kind, but now we know that is not the case. There are hundreds of these stories that have made the same impact throughout her 20+ year career. But, if you were to go and ask each family or student from all of her classes, they would say that their story is unique because that is how she makes you feel, like you are her number one priority and her only concern, she is truly present when with you. She makes you feel seen, loved, valued, and heard.

Many people search for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, and as a parent and educator, we have found it in Rachel Hertz. It is a rare thing to see someone who is fully utilizing their gifts and living out their higher calling. Rachel Hertz makes the world a better place, one child, student teacher, parent, colleague, or school at a time.

Thank you for your time and consideration as we recognize the impact of Mrs. Rachel Hertz.

Sincerely,

 
Rachael Schuetz & Jillian Wendt



63567 NW Brownrigg Ln., Bend, OR 97703

BEND LAPINE
SCHOOLS

Tim Burdsall, Principal | Vanessa Tobolski, Assistant Principal

April 3, 2024

Dear OnPoint Educator Prize Panel:

I am writing to highly recommend Rachel Hertz, a first-grade teacher at North Star Elementary School, for the OnPoint Prize for Excellence in Education for the year 2024. Rachel has consistently demonstrated exceptional dedication to fostering equity and a sense of belonging in her classroom since I have known her over the past five years..

Rachel excels in assessing her students to tailor her instructional approach, both in large and small group settings. Her commitment to understanding the individual needs of each student ensures that every child receives the support they require to thrive academically and emotionally.

Moreover, Rachel's proactive communication with her students' families is exemplary. She goes above and beyond to engage with parents and caregivers, keeping them informed about their child's progress and involving them in the learning process. This dedication has resulted in incredibly high levels of engagement from both students and their families.

One of Rachel's most outstanding qualities is her unwavering commitment to diversity and inclusion. She ensures that all students in her classroom feel represented and valued, fostering a learning environment where every voice is heard and respected.

I wholeheartedly offer my highest and most qualified recommendation for Rachel Hertz to receive the OnPoint Prize for Excellence in Education. Her passion for teaching, coupled with her ability to create an inclusive and supportive classroom environment, truly sets her apart as an exceptional educator and is absolutely worthy of this award.

Sincerely,

Tim Burdsall, Principal



Jefferson County School District 509J

UNITE. ENGAGE. SOAR.

To Whom This May Concern,

I am writing to wholeheartedly endorse Rachel Hertz for the OnPoint Credit Union Educator of the Year Award (K-5), which recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to their community, demonstrated a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, inspired creativity and enthusiasm, and exhibited exemplary teaching methods and style.

Having had the privilege of working closely with Rachel Hertz over the past four, I can attest to her remarkable dedication and profound impact on students, parents, peers, and the broader community. She embodies the essence of an educator who goes above and beyond in every aspect of her work.

In terms of community impact, Rachel has consistently demonstrated a genuine concern for the well-being and growth of not only her students but also the community at large. Through various initiatives she has fostered a sense of belonging and unity among students, parents, and fellow educators, leaving an indelible mark on the community. Moreover, Rachel is a shining example of promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the classroom and school environment. She actively strives to create a safe and inclusive space where every student feels valued, respected, and empowered to embrace their unique identities and perspectives. Her commitment to fostering cultural competence and understanding among students and colleagues alike is truly commendable.

In terms of creativity and enthusiasm, Rachel stands out as an educator who consistently inspires and ignites a passion for learning in her students. Whether it's through innovative lesson plans, hands-on activities, or engaging discussions, she has a knack for bringing subjects to life and sparking curiosity and excitement among learners.

Lastly, Rachel excels in her teaching methods and style, employing a diverse range of strategies to meet the needs of all learners. From differentiated instruction to personalized feedback, she prioritizes individualized learning experiences that cater to the strengths and interests of each student, resulting in meaningful academic growth and development.

In conclusion, Rachel Hertz is undeniably deserving of the OnPoint Credit Union Educator of the Year Award (K-5), for her exceptional contributions to the educational field and the broader community. She embodies the core values of this award through her unwavering dedication, passion, and commitment to excellence. I wholeheartedly recommend Rachel Hertz for this prestigious honor.

Sincerely,

Kevin Gehrig, Director of Student Services



63567 NW Brownrigg Ln., Bend, OR 97703

B E N D L A P I N E
S c h o o l s

Tim Burdsall, Principal | Vanessa Tobolski, Assistant Principal

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my absolute pleasure to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Rachel Hertz and it is without reservation that I recommend her for the OnPoint Educator of the Year Award.

I have had the incredible opportunity to work with Rachel as her teammate teaching first grade for the past four years at North Star Elementary School. In addition to teaming with Rachel as an educator, I have cherished hearing what life is like in her classroom through the eyes of my son who is blessed to be a member of her classroom community this year. It is Rachel's enthusiasm and passion for teaching that ignites curiosity in her students and builds a foundation to being lifelong learners.

Rachel's innovative and engaging lessons allow students to shine at their highest potential. Rachel maintains high expectations for her students and believes all students can be successful. Rachel is thoughtful in her planning and delivery of instruction to be inclusive of the needs of all learners. Each day it is evident that learning is occurring in her classroom as her students engage with hands-on practice to refine their skills and cultivate an understanding of new concepts. It is always her goal to provide meaningful lessons with a high level of engagement. What amazes me most is Rachel's ability to be reflective. She takes the time to modify and refine her practice before, after, and even in the middle of lessons. Her growth mindset is emulated in her students as they strive to improve their skills.

Rachel leads each moment of each day with heart. She strives to know her students to the core. She aspires to know what brings them joy, what makes them upset or sad, what drives their curiosity or what barriers they may have. These carefully nurtured relationships create a community of belonging within her classroom. The joy a student feels when their favorite song plays during journal time or when they have the opportunity to teach their classmates about something meaningful to them is priceless. Rachel's relationships often reach beyond the four walls of her classroom as she spends countless hours supporting families of many different socioeconomic status and cultural backgrounds by finding the resources for stable housing, clothing and counseling support. Rachel has a true heart of gold.

Rachel's love for her students is exemplified through her teaching of the whole child. It is without hesitation that I recommend Rachel Hertz for the OnPoint Educator of the Year Award.

Allison Harris
First Grade Teacher
North Star Elementary School
Bend-La Pine School District

Rachel Hertz Teaching Philosophy

Values, beliefs, and goals

"I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyful. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides if a child is humanized or dehumanized."

These words written by educator Haim Ginott epitomize my philosophy as a primary teacher. They also ring true to me in regard to the support I provide to future teachers. I am honored to have the opportunity to support future teachers as they enter our profession and as they grasp the inherent responsibility of their position.

My teaching philosophy centers around three main beliefs:

First, foundational to my work as an educator is the importance of creating and sustaining positive relationships with my students and families. I believe in creating an environment where students feel connected, where learning is relevant, and where students are celebrated for who they are. This includes a commitment to knowing my students as human beings, understanding their cultures and backgrounds, taking an interest in their personal lives, and supporting them socially and emotionally. It means designing creative solutions for individualized needs and advocating for students on more than just an academic level. The school where I teach is full of a wonderful mix of students from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. We are a fully inclusive school district, which means that my students who require one-on-one support are in the

classroom with me and a teacher's aide. I work with all our educational assistants to ensure my students who require support have access to learning. I also ensure that there are adequate modifications and adaptive materials necessary in the classroom so that all students can be successful.

I prioritize the voices of my students by frequently holding family meetings and ensuring restorative practices in order to create a safe and guided learning environment and establish collaborative classroom norms. I believe that parents should feel safe sending their child to my classroom and that children should feel seen, heard, and understood. We are truly a team built on connection and collaboration, a team on which every person is treated with humanity and given the support they need to be successful.

Second, I am passionate about using and modeling equitable practices. Teachers have the unique opportunity and responsibility to teach students who have a variety of learning needs, strengths, and assets.

As an educator who consistently works with student teachers, I feel compelled to examine, teach, and implement critical practices. This means examining systemic injustice and disrupting systems that are not equitable for all students. It means examining policies and practices – especially my own and those within my division – to ensure that I am helping to create pathways for all my students. It also requires an emphasis on culturally responsive teaching practices that affirm the identities and

cultures of all students. Below I will explain further how diversity, equity, and inclusion are focuses and priorities within my classroom.

My goal as a teacher is to always remember that my journey as an educator will never be over. There is always something new to learn, to experience, and to understand, and there is always new research that can better inform my instruction. When we stop learning, we stop growing. This philosophy inspires me to continually examine my own biases, practices, and policies to ensure that my teaching methods positively impact the students I have the opportunity to teach. I have a responsibility as an educator to model this approach, to continually stay current on processes and practices used in K-12 schools, and to advocate for my students in every way possible. When I was in kindergarten, my teacher, Mrs. Rose, was a person who made me feel safe and seen. At a time where I was going through the trauma of my father leaving. She gave me a sense of belonging and I felt truly connected to her. This is my goal. To ensure I am always being “Mrs. Rose” for my students. That they feel they belong in our classroom. That they feel seen and understood.

Teaching Methods Applied in the Classroom

Building foundational skills for literacy is an imperative part of primary grades and a teaching strategy I prioritize in my classroom. A balance of explicit instruction and gradual release of responsibility is imperative for students to be able to access the material and engage in learning. Explicit instruction is given to the whole-class, in small groups, and in one-on-one sessions, depending on students’ needs. During literacy

lessons, you will see an “I do, we do, you do” approach as I demonstrate how to segment the phonemes in a word, then ask the children to do it with me. Finally, they are given the opportunity to do this on their own and apply what they have just learned. This approach in conjunction with development of comprehension and fluency supports a balanced approach to literacy instruction.

Incorporating social-emotional learning (SEL) into my teaching methods is not only essential but transformative in fostering holistic student development. By integrating SEL practices, educators can create a nurturing and inclusive learning environment where students feel valued, supported, and empowered to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially. Through SEL, students develop crucial skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-making. These skills not only enhance academic performance but also equip students with the tools needed to navigate challenges in their personal and professional lives. By prioritizing SEL in teaching methods, educators can cultivate a positive classroom culture that promotes empathy, resilience, and overall well-being, laying the foundation for lifelong success and fulfillment.

Finally, I utilize restorative practices to build connection and learning in my classroom. Each morning we begin by sitting in a circle where we make time to greet one another and share in a safe and respectful space. It is a routine the children know well and look forward to. It begins with a song, then I project a morning message, review our schedule for the day, do a fun greeting, then share and connect. We regularly solve conflicts

together in family meetings and use this method to implement positive behavior interventions and provide support for students who need it. This fosters a community of collaboration built on trust and mutual respect.

Methods of Assessing Student's Learning and Their Teaching Success

I frequently use formative and observational assessments, especially through an application called Seesaw. I am able to record my students reading or participating in class discussions. They can also complete assignments or assessments that I create and assign. These are always aligned with our standards. This allows me to both reflect on their progress, as well as share with their families. It is a great way of connecting with families and providing them a window into their child's first grade experience. I am a Certified Seesaw Educator, so I work directly with the company to keep up-to-date on new features and provide feedback on what can be improved. I provide training to other educators in our district annually, supporting K-5 teachers as well as administrators in navigating Seesaw and learning new features as they become available.

Since I use a "workshop model," where students are independently working following a short, explicit mini-lesson for reading, I am able to confer individually with students during this time to assess their progress and strategize my next teaching move. I am also able to assess student performance while working in small groups during this time. We have families who do not have the resources to support their students at home, so I am frequently looking for ways to support my students beyond the classroom. I have

sent books home that are printed out, provided families with access to applications such as Epic!, Reading A-Z, Fly Leaf Publishing, etc.

I use data from both formal and informal assessments to design specific interventions for students who need them. For students who require another layer of support, I use “tier 2” interventions multiple times per week. Students work in small groups that are based on their specific literacy needs. I am then able to do intensive phonemic awareness practice to strengthen literacy skills such as Heggerty or Orton Gillingham.

Though academic assessments are a major focus of my work in schools, I also prioritize use of a variety of informal assessments and relational knowledge to support my students on a social/emotional level. I frequently make observational assessments while reading with a student, watching students interact with one another through play, and sitting with students during community connection. This is how I get to know each student and their interests, challenges, and strengths.

I frequently check in with students to determine their needs, help them regulate emotions, and support skill building beyond academics. A recent example includes a student I have this year who is a newcomer from Mexico and is a brand new emerging English learner. In order to make this student feel welcome I held a community connection time where we discussed as a family ways we could make them feel safe and welcome in our classroom. Our greeting was in a different language, and I read a picture book in Spanish and asked students to reflect on how they felt trying to

understand a language with which they're unfamiliar. We then learned a few greetings and phrases in the student's language.

On the student's second day of school, they fell on the playground and broke their wrist. Their family did not have a car and had never met me. I knew their parents would be afraid to send them back to school, entrusting their most precious person to someone they had never met. I called them and asked if I could visit them over the weekend. With their permission, I brought my student a stuffed animal and the paperwork to allow them pain medication at school. I helped them download the Seesaw application on their phones and connected them to me that way so they could communicate and reach me at any time. Since then, they have returned to school and their parents message me regularly with questions and updates in Spanish; they are able to translate any messages that go through Seesaw. They have been able to ask me to help them find an apartment to rent –they were in transitional housing – and ask questions about our class routines.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As mentioned in the values and beliefs section of this essay, promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion is incredibly important to me. Growing up one of the only children of color in the classroom impacted me in a way where I felt less than those who had lighter skin. I remember being told that I looked like a “monkey” by other kids or I looked “exotic” by adults. There may have been no harm in their intentions, but there was also no validation in the Bolivian or Mexican cultures that were my life, no recognition that

Spanish was an equally important and valued language. This fuels me to ensure that ALL of my students feel valued as they are and that they understand that the color of their skin, language, and culture, is appreciated and valued.

I prioritize the use of culturally responsive teaching methods in a variety of ways.

Through the school year, we build community by having students teach their classmates about their own cultures and traditions. I choose to display books that consistently reinforce what we are learning in the curriculum as well as reflect our students' lives. Each month, I carefully curate and display a classroom library of books that reflect a variety of cultures and celebrate national heritage and pride months, and teach about people in history that help my students see diversity and difference as beautiful things to be celebrated. My students love learning about Frida Kahlo, Sonia Sotomayor, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, George Washington Carver, and Serena and Venus Williams during Women's History, Hispanic Heritage History, and Black History Month, respectively.

Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion means that I integrate diversity into my curriculum every day and use my students' cultural assets to design relevant lessons. I regularly audit and diversify my classroom and the materials that I use. Finally, I continually educate myself about my community and best practices, and focus on eradication of inequity within my classroom and my school.

I am thankful for my 19 years in education. I have been fortunate to remain in contact with many former students and their families. My first group of kindergarten students have graduated college and I have been able to watch them give TED talks on curiosity,

move to Hollywood to become screenwriters, and become compassionate, courageous people. If I am able to be just one small part of their journey, I am thankful. I will always continue my learning and reflecting, looking for ways to support my students and be their “Mrs. Rose.”

Portfolio Items



Rachel Hertz
First Grade Teacher
North Star Elementary School
Bend La-Pine School District

Majority of photos used in the portfolio were taken from the Seesaw app used in the classroom.

Belonging



Collaborative Art Project at the beginning of the year.



A former student's sister came looking for Mrs. Hertz on her first day of kindergarten. She got to know Mrs. Hertz through distance learning, when she had one-on-one time with her family.



Student, Ana, who moved to Bend from Mexico in March. This was her third day of school (after she broke her wrist).

Students teaching students:
Students are proud to “show
what they know” and share with
the class, or teach a classmate.

One student
teaching
another how
to draw a
rocket.



Two students spent their
“choice time” writing a
book together and decided
to read it to their
classmates

Former students attending the Kindness Carnival. Mrs. Hertz began this school-wide tradition the first year the school opened in 2019.



Parents and families are always welcome in her classroom, in whatever capacity they feel comfortable. Some choose to work directly with students while others prefer to prepare materials.

Mrs. Hertz visiting with the kindergartners to help them prepare for the transition to first grade.



When it is Prefrontal Cortex some students wanted to play hair salon! Having fun in a low-stakes situation with students who are struggling with self-regulation and behavior helps Mrs. Hertz build a better connection and trust.



Mrs. Hertz has community connection time each morning. These were the slides before the class welcomed a new spanish speaking student arrived. The class learned some phrases and greetings in Spanish to make her feel more comfortable. Mrs. Hertz also had the students listen to a story all in Spanish and discuss how it made them feel not knowing the language to build compassion.

GOOD MORNING FRIENDS!

2/28/24

HAPPY WEDNESDAY, SQUISHIES!

TOMORROW IS THE DAY OUR NEW FRIEND JOINS US! LET'S PRACTICE GREETING HER IN SPANISH!

LOVE,
MRS. HERTZ

GOOD MORNING FRIENDS!

LET'S
HAPPY WEDNESDAY! TOMORROW IS THE DAY OUR NEW FRIEND JOINS US! LET'S PRACTICE GREETING HER IN SPANISH!

GREETING

Greet 5 friends with a fist bump and a smile!

SHARE

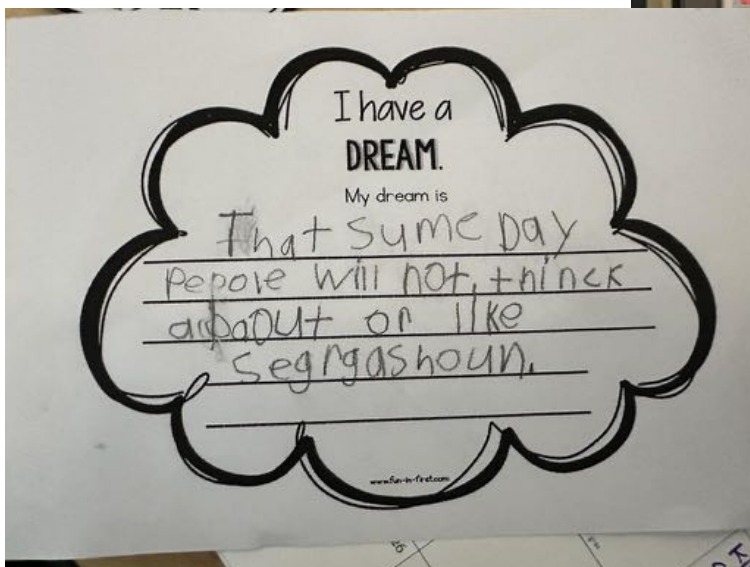
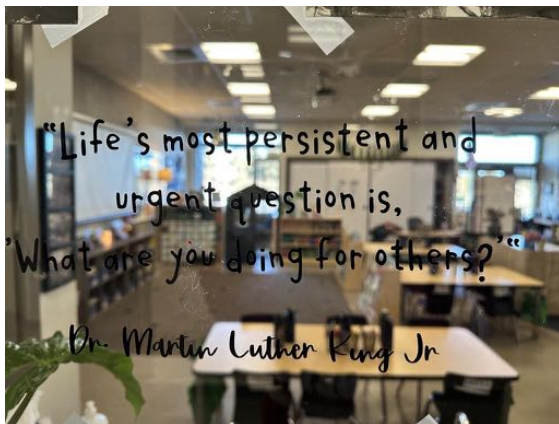
What is one way you can show kindness to someone at school? Share and share with your neighbor.

A photograph of two white rabbits sitting inside white disposable cups. The cups have blue and green wavy stripes. The rabbits are looking out from the cups. The background shows a classroom setting with a wooden table and a chair.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



Women's History, Black History, and Hispanic Heritage Months include art, discussions, STEAM, and writing!

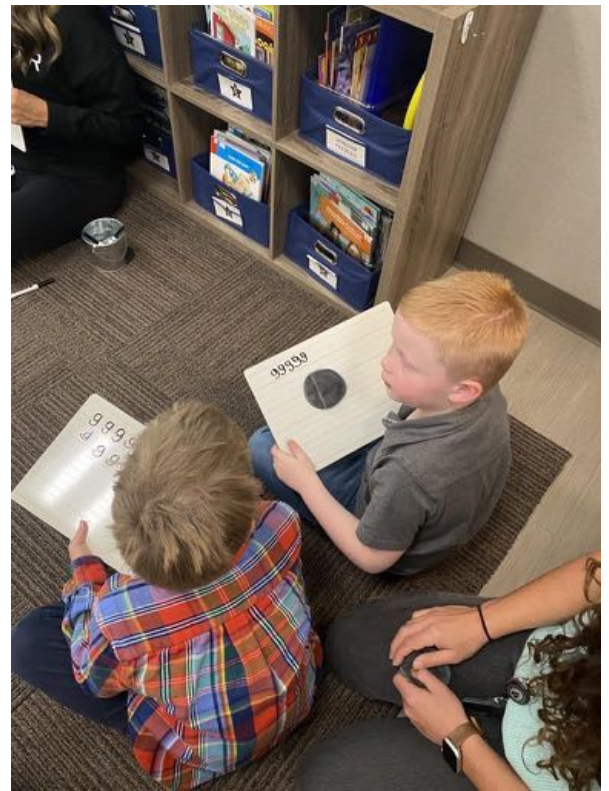




A current student helping to teach a lesson and lead an activity for Ramadan. Her favorite holiday!

Students who need one-on-one support are able to access curriculum and engage with modifications and an educational aide.

Flexible seating and accommodations are available for all students. We frequently discuss our differences and how we each may need different things.



Mrs. Hertz teaches el Día de Los Muertos each year and paints students' faces to celebrate.



Families come to the classroom to share and teach about special holidays they celebrate.

Lifelong Learning

Mrs. Hertz works closely with her team, both at grade level and with support staff. They meet regularly to plan.

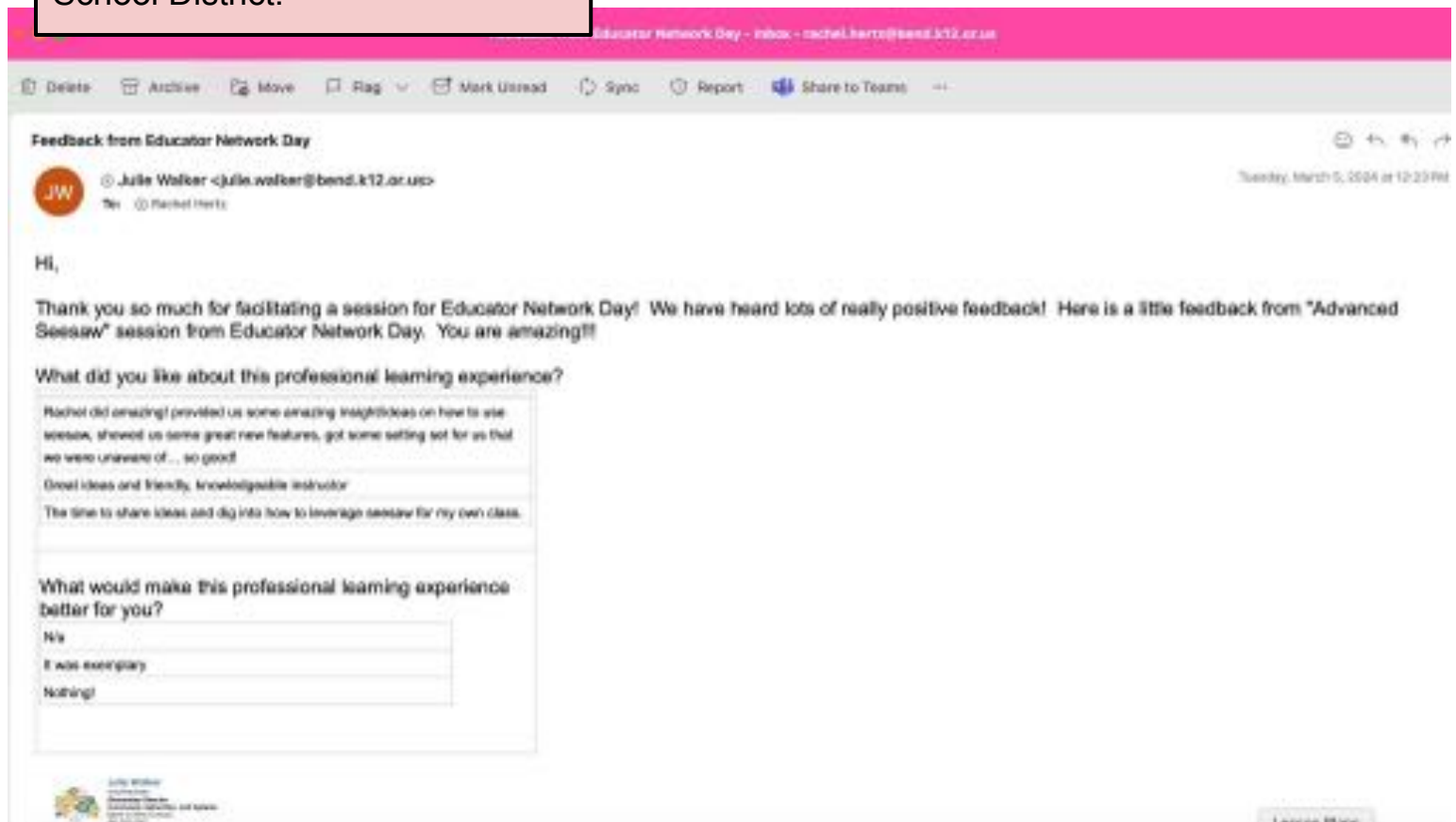


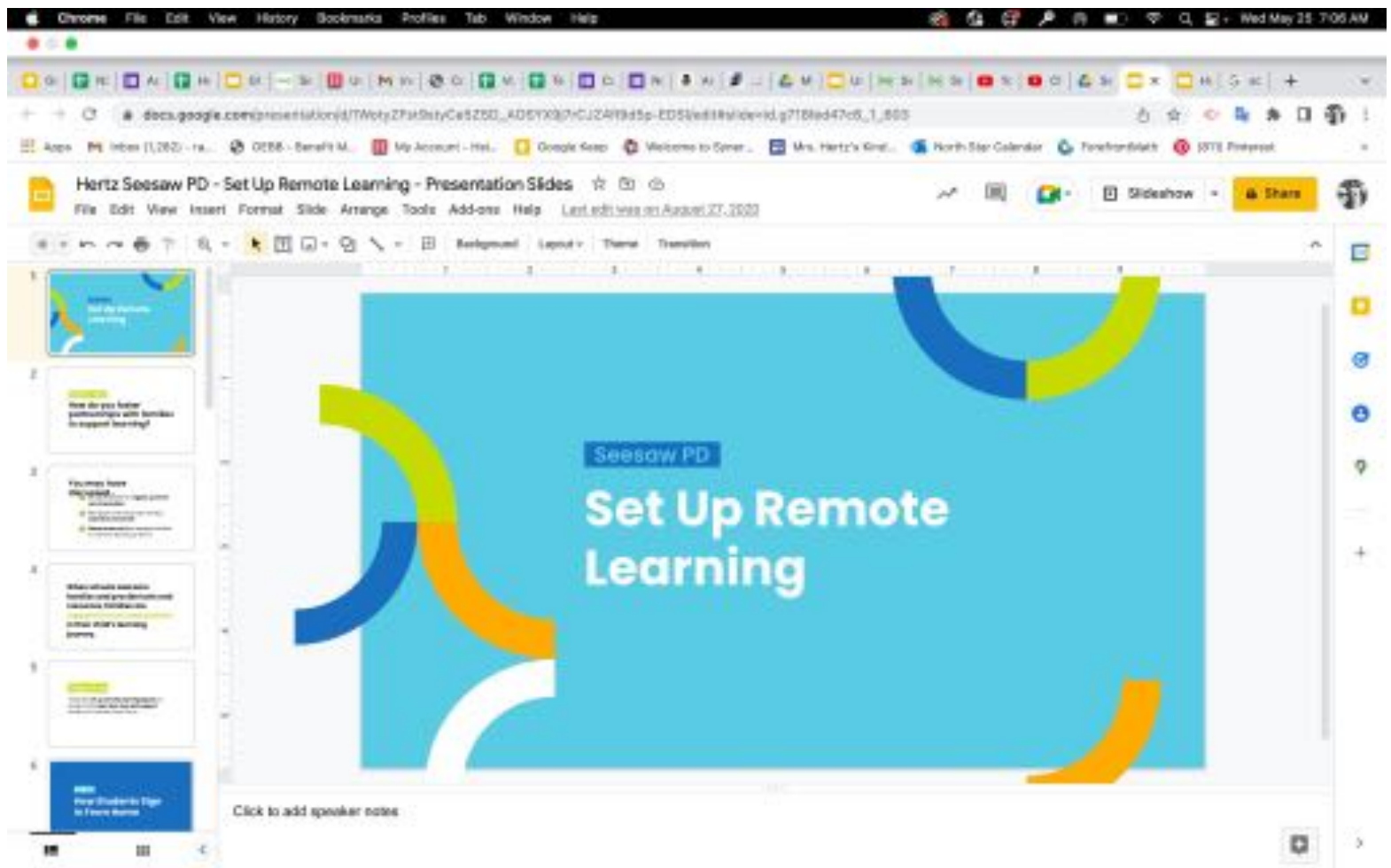
Mrs. Hertz hosted a team-building at her home for all school staff. She had them do the same collaborative art project that she does with her students each year.



Seesaw Certified Educators are passionate advocates with years of Seesaw leadership. They partner closely with the Seesaw team to inspire educators globally.

Feedback from teachers who took her professional development class on Seesaw sent by the Elementary Director of Curriculum for Bend La Pine School District.





Screenshot of slides used to present district-wide during Distance Learning.



Receiving the California Distinguished School Award with State Superintendent, Tom Torlakson. Pictured: Jeffrey Baier (Los Altos School District Superintendent), Natalie Axley (teacher), Rachel Hertz (teacher), Tom Torlakson (State Superintendent), Nadia Oskolkoff (principal), Lauren Leinenbach (teacher)

Rachel,
 I don't even know how to thank you for all that ^{you} have done to help me grow this semester. I know this year has been a wild ride, but I can't imagine teaching these kiddos without you. You have been so patient, kind, and encouraging! You believed in me when I didn't know if I had it in me. Thank you so much for always being so thoughtful for not only me, but all the people you come across and work with. You are a "Marigold" as confident as I learn in open my classroom, and other help others grow! I hope one day to feel you are amazing!
 Jada

A note from a student teacher thanking Mrs. Hertz for her help, mentorship, and guidance in education.

Student teachers are always encouraged to try new things and practice their craft in a safe space. These are two student teachers practicing their classroom management techniques.





Watchable by bend.k12.or.us.

Earn a Master of Arts in Teaching at OSU-Cascades



OSU-Cascades
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Mrs. Hertz's work with Oregon State University, Cascades, to support Teacher Candidates. Through this process, she is constantly learning from her candidates and what each of them brings to the profession. She is also able to share resources, model, and mentor them.



Watchable by bend.k12.or.us.

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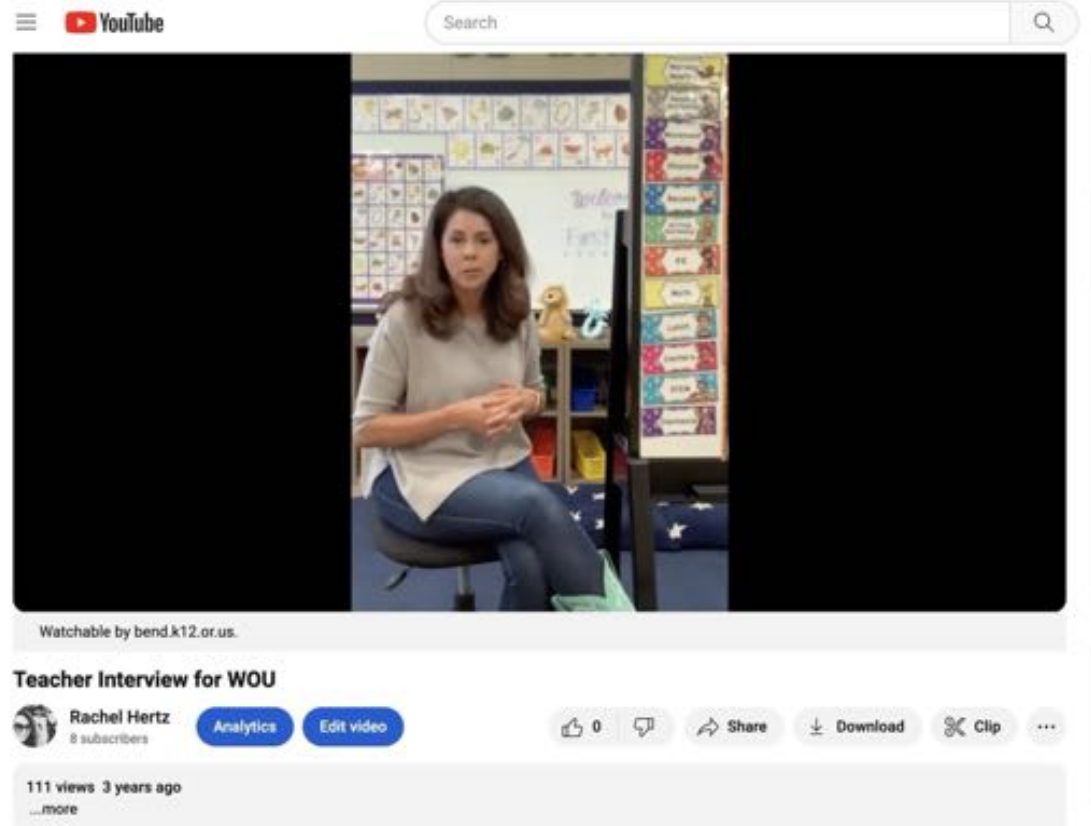
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143 views 5 months ago

Few professions have the potential to impact lives like teaching. Our nationally-accredited, cohort-based teaching program offers Master of Arts in

Supporting Western Oregon University's Teaching Program with a video interview for teacher candidates.





- Schedule
- Career & Grad School Expo
- Attendee Resources
- Partnerships
- Coming Soon - Registration
- 2022 Recap
- Coming Soon - Call for Posters
- Request for Proposals

Registration

We are pleased to invite you to the 13th Annual Conference in Anaheim, California! We look forward to over 1,300 attendees across the world coming together for this four-day conference experience, taking place **November 9 - 12, 2023** at the Anaheim Marriott. Check-in starts Thursday, November 9. Join us in a celebration of diversity across all fields.

Conference registration is SOLD OUT!

We hope you will join us next year in Portland, OR, when we move into a much larger venue to accommodate our growing community's needs. Fill out the form below to be notified when tickets for oSTEM 2024 go on sale.

[oSTEM 2024 Ticket Alert](#)

Attendee Registration

There are 4 attendee ticket types:

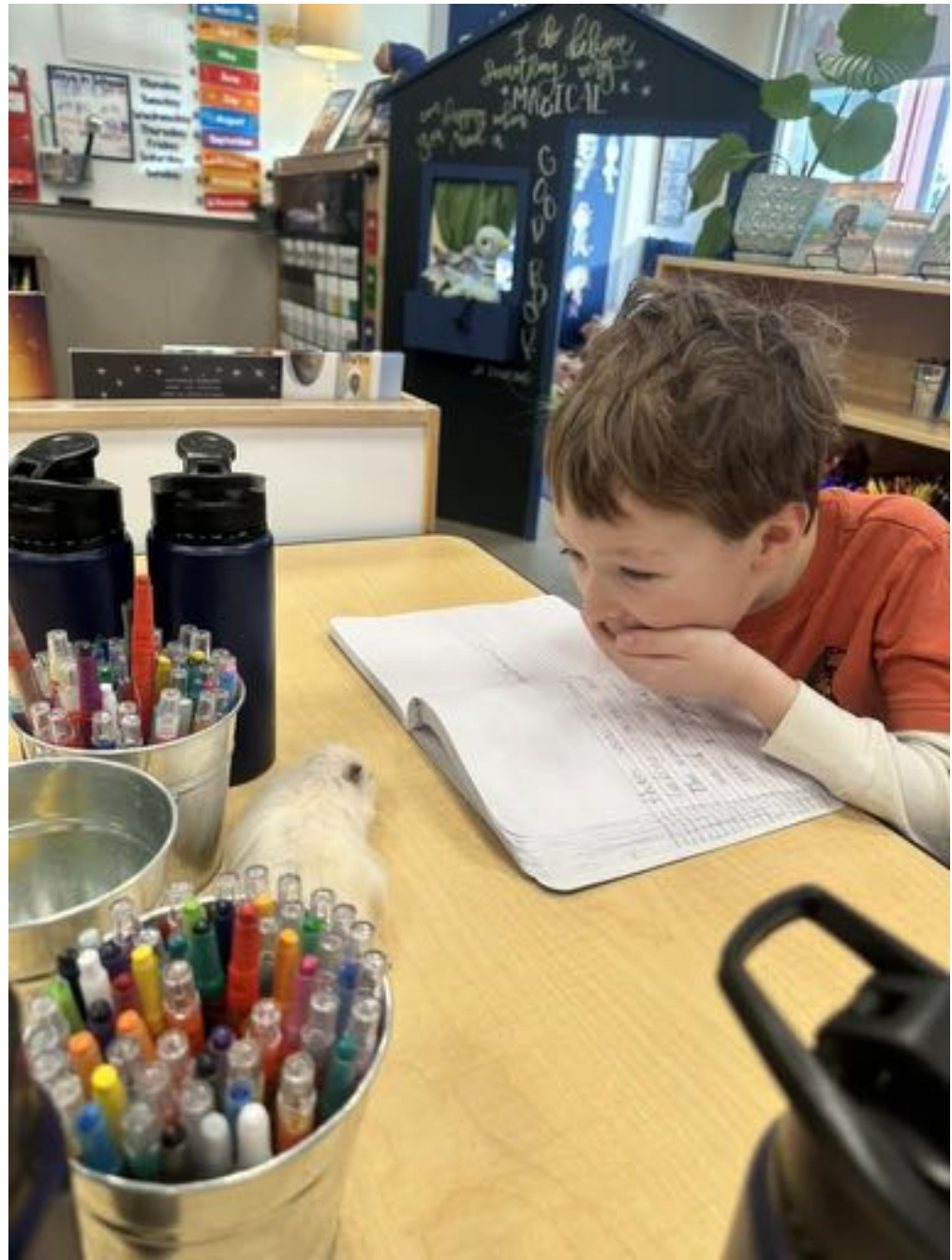
- Student
- Professional
- Student Chapter Advisor (Must be registered in MemberNova as a Student Chapter Advisor)
- Expo-Only

Registration Milestones:

- **Early Bird Pricing Ends:** Monday, August 14
- **Regular Pricing:** Tuesday, August 15 - Sunday, October 8

She has attended STEM professional development, one of which was a 4 day symposium in Anaheim, California.

Social Emotional Learning



Class pets are an important part of the classroom. The children are responsible for their care. They also act as a catalyst for learning. Mrs. Hertz regularly centers activities in all subject areas around their class pets.



Reading outside with the ducklings. She has been hatching them for 18 years with her students to reinforce science standards as well as cultivate compassion and responsibility amongst the children.

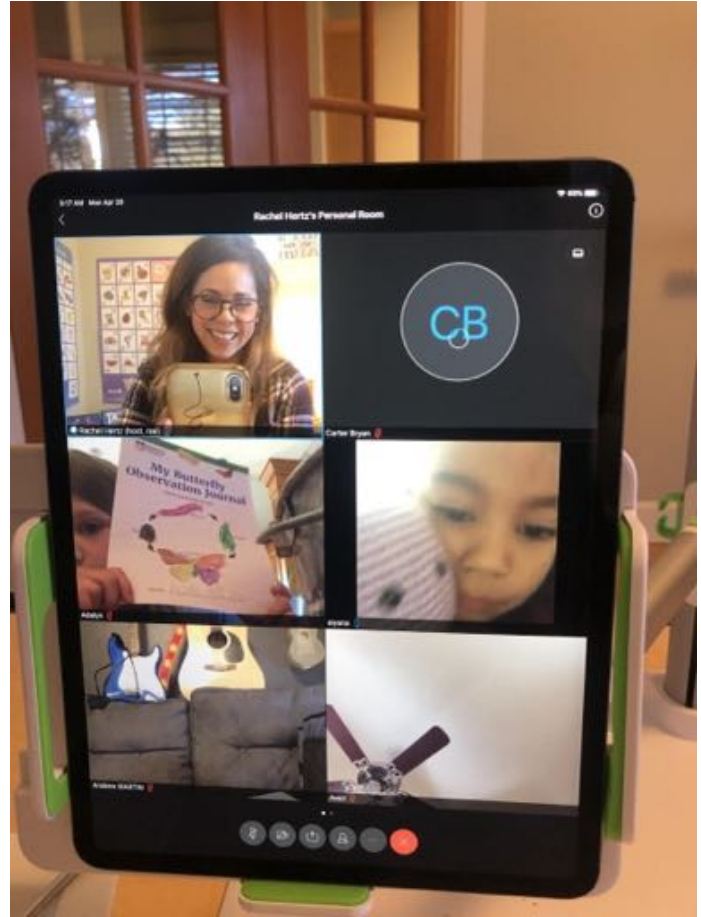
Students are responsible for cleaning, feeding, and caring for the ducklings.



Purposeful play (or Prefrontal Cortex time) happens every day. Mrs. Hertz uses a curriculum called Growing Early Mindsets (GEM). She teaches a lesson on a specific skill and then children are given free choice in their activities. Mrs. Hertz uses this time to support students as they practice the skills they've learned.



Connection & Community



Distance learning: Dropping off learning and care packages to her kindergarteners and keeping them engaged on WebEx!

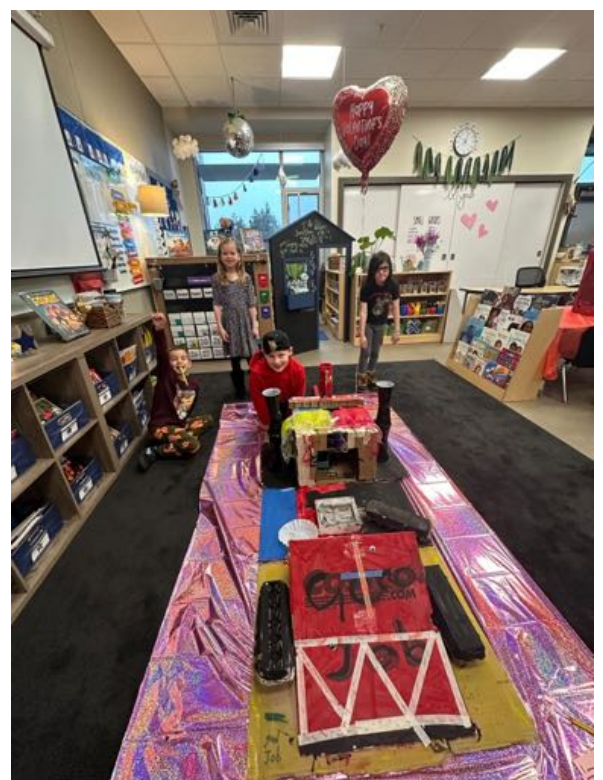


Former kindergarten students, now fourth graders, won the Oregon Battle of the Books for our school. This is Mrs. Hertz celebrating with them immediately after.





There is daily partner work. Reading together, writing together, building together, being silly together are just some of the ways she connects and builds community.



The Annual Kindness Carnival is held on Valentine's Day. The class learns the Engineering Design Process (EDP) and students work in groups to design and build carnival games. They invite the whole school to come and play their games. There are "compliment cards" at each game for students to leave kind comments for the first graders after playing their game. Families are encouraged to volunteer.



Mrs. Hertz partners with her parents, inviting them into the classroom to support in learning and activities. She believes in building strong relationships with each family so that they feel a sense of belonging in her classroom as well.



There are times when those strong connections with parents lead Mrs. Hertz to an opportunity to support them in their own growth as an educator.

Mrs. Hertz's classroom is a family. Students learn about one another's interests and families.



Winter gifts for her families. These porch snowmen are cut to the exact height of the child. The children paint the snowmen using their fingerprints, and she then creates name decals for each one to make it more personal.



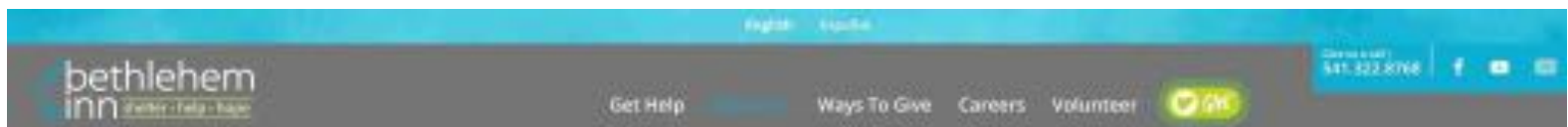
The annual staff scavenger hunt has become a treasured tradition. Mrs. Hertz is fortunate to be able to plan it each year and involve locally-owned small businesses. The staff travels around Bend, in search of clues and just get out in our community!



Mrs. Hertz spoke at a Juvenile Type 1 Diabetes event (as a teacher who supports Type 1 kids within her classroom).



The Bethlehem Inn (a family shelter) is within our school boundary. North Star serves many of the families that stay there. Mrs. Hertz is involved in regularly collecting needed items.



Bethlehem Inn is a community-supported, high barrier emergency shelter that provides a warm, safe place to sleep, nourishing meals, and case management services for adults and children experiencing homelessness in Central Oregon. This life-saving and life-changing work could NOT be done without the generosity of this community.



Mission

Transforming Lives Together Through Shelter, Help and Hope

Vision

Ending homelessness in Central Oregon together.

Core Operating Values

- **Compassion.** Creating a welcoming space where people are respected and accepted for who they are as individuals.
- **Equity.** Sustaining an inclusive environment that ensures equitable treatment, access and opportunity for all.
- **Empowerment.** Empowering residents to achieve stability.
- **Integrity.** Requiring the highest ethical standard of conduct inside our organization and in the community.
- **Collaboration.** Actively collaborating with community partners to fulfill our mission and vision.
- **Accountability.** Holding ourselves accountable to these principles.

We provide
shelter, meals,
case
management,
access to
transportation,
and work
experience for
our residents.

Our mission is to transform lives together through shelter, help and hope



Covid-19 Response

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At Family Kitchen, volunteers are *everything*.
Volunteers bring the heart, soul, skills, time, humor, smiles, kindness, dignity and respect that make true nourishment happen.

Join us!

If you've never volunteered with us before, please fill out this [volunteer form](#) to register your availability and interests!

If you're a volunteer already and looking to help for an upcoming meal service, check out this [SignUpGenius](#) link to see what's coming up.

Please check in via phone, text (631-942-3528) or [email](#) before signing up, as things change quickly.

PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING SIGNING UP A TEAM OF 4 OR MORE.

turi@familykitchen.org
And, **THANK YOU!!!**


[SIGN UP!](#)


[Read Lunch Shifts](#)

Housing Assistance for the ██████ Family?



ⓧ Rachel Hertz...

Saturday, March 16, 2024 at 2:56 PM

To: ⓧ Christy Maciel; Cc: ⓧ Tim Burdsall; +3 more ▾

Hi Christy,

I was not sure if this was at all within your realm, but thought I'd reach out (and put the rest of the team on CC to keep them in the loop).

█████'s parents reached out to me on Seesaw this weekend, asking if we could help them find an apartment to rent. Wondering where to start with this and if we are able to put them in touch with someone who could help?

Thank you!

Rach

Our school has many families in need of support, beyond their child's education. It is especially important to Mrs. Hertz to connect with those families and serve beyond her classroom walls. Sometimes it is volunteering at our local food service program, Family Kitchen, other times, it is putting the family in contact with the proper resources.

Rachel Hertz
First Grade Teacher
North Star Elementary
Bend La Pine School District
Bend, OR



Quotes and comments from former and current families, students, and colleagues

Rachel is a wonderful teacher who truly loves and cares about her students. She goes above and beyond to make sure each student's needs are met. - Anonymous Colleague

Her passion for teaching and her compassion for her students shines and it fosters such a thriving, safe learning environment for the children. She goes above and beyond for her class and we couldn't be happier to have her as a teacher. - Sonnie M, Parent

She exudes diversity, equity and inclusion of all children. Her gifts to education help children feel safe and comfortable to be ready to learn. - Kim Martin, Parent

The relationships that she builds with her students are truly unmatched. She truly has a positive impact regardless of where her students come from. Her ability to grow and care for the profession has allowed me to see the value in a qualified professional such as her. - Anonymous Parent

Mrs Hertz taught my son's kindergarten class. Building relationships and honoring her students' authentic selves was core to her teaching. My son Josh loves camping, and Mrs Hertz created an entire "camping day" for him and his classmates. The students wore their pajamas and read books with flashlights inside of the giant tent she set up in the classroom. For math, they added and subtracted mini marshmallows and went on a nature scavenger hunt. My son felt so special! Rachel's example of excellence is also one of the primary reasons that I myself became an elementary school teacher. It was a privilege to watch her teach. She was always so gentle and kind, and held the students to being the best versions of themselves. And she is an amazing storyteller! Her example inspired me to change careers. She encouraged me and believes in me, and now I try to live up to her example in my own classroom! -Erin Hurd, Parent

Our experience with Rachel Hertz goes back to when she first joined Bend LaPine School District in the 2019-2020 school year. We didn't know it then, but we now know that we hit the lottery having her as our son's Kindergarten and First Grade teacher. We hope for our daughter to have her next year. 2020, as we all know, was an incredibly difficult year. And 2021 was not much different. We didn't know what to expect from public school, given that was our first year with a student in the district, and everything was turned on its head with Covid. Through it all, Rachel was a constant support and beacon of hope and positivity. Her ingenuity and unwavering dedication toward educating our son was incredible, but, it wasn't just that—she created a bond with our entire family in a way that was more genuine than anything I've ever experienced. She left an unforgettable impression on our family. She's just incomparable in the teacher category and I can't recommend her more for this award. - Karaka Leslie, Parent

Quotes and comments from former and current families, students, and colleagues

First and foremost, Mrs. Hertz places her students' best interest in every decision she makes in the classroom. She knows every child and what makes them special. Her lessons accentuate their unique capabilities. I had the privilege of being one of her previous supervisors. Mrs. Hertz served as a mentor to other teachers. She is talented, humble, and caring. I highly recommend her as teacher of the year. - Sherry Adams, Founder, Stratford Schools

Teachers like Rachel Hertz have the ability to influence students in such profound ways, and none more so than primary school teachers. They build the foundation for all future learning, set the tone for how students perceive school and learning and provide a critical role model for socialization. Many primary teachers do some of these things well, but Rachel Hertz brings together all the skills. She excels in teaching and her students respond to this special talent - she brings out their full potential with joy, with authenticity and especially with love. We are so lucky to have her in our schools! - Noah & Tara Heilbrun, Parents

Passionate about Teaching - Meena Narayanan, Parent

I shamelessly begged for my son to be placed in Mrs Hertz class this year. I had heard all the stories from my friends with older children who were lucky enough to have her. But all those stories did not prepare me for just how wonderful she really is. Her classroom is amazing.... I wish it was where I went everyday! Essential oils diffusing, music playing, perfectly appointed. Rachel goes the extra mile all. The. Time. Knowing 1st graders can be a bit forgetful, she has water bottles with each student's name on them sitting at their desks. No need to take them home. She washes them every afternoon. She provides a set of headphones for each child to use with their school iPads.... At her own expense. It's a holiday..... chances are she has some thoughtful gift she has made for each one of her "squishies". I'm lucky enough to be able to volunteer in her classroom & see her in action all the time. But when I'm not there, no worries..... She's constantly posting pictures & videos in Seesaw so I have daily insight into what my child is doing at school. She is readily available & always willing to talk to you about your child. She genuinely cares for her students and it is evident. I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this award. Rachel is an angel sent from above & I feel so privileged that I get to know her & my child's learning career will be shaped by her. Thank you Rachel for always going above & beyond. I adore you & North Star is so very lucky to have you ♥ Hannah Yeomans, Parent

In the years I've known Rachel, first as my principal and second, as a friend she has made an impact on my life. Rachel has a huge heart filled with love for every person she meets. The positive energy she shares has a way of bringing people together to build community. The generosity and time she devotes as a teacher to her classroom of little "nuggets" has always inspired me as a fellow educator. Your district and students are lucky to have her! - Lindsey Stockman, Teacher

Quotes and comments from former and current families, students, and colleagues

I had the opportunity to work with Rachel at Stratford Schools in Santa Clara. She was my principal for five years. She was a leader, helper, parent (I had her son in first grade), friend, and so much more. She knew what it was like to be a teacher even when she became a principal. She knew what it was like to be in the classroom and treated us with respect. She became a principal much earlier than some and I can understand why she wanted to go back to the classroom. Being in the classroom is where teachers make a difference. Rachel makes a difference everyday. She is creative, fun, serious, and understanding of all students. Rachel helped me become the teacher I am today. I truly hope that Rachel earns this special award because she deserves it.- Allison Oliveria

She is able to understand her students' individual challenges- .

I have had the privilege of knowing Rachel since 2005, when I hired her as my kindergarten teacher. From day one she joined the team, Rachel stood out as an exemplary educator who embodied passion, dedication, and innovation in her teaching approach. Throughout her time with me, she consistently demonstrated a commitment to fostering a dynamic and inclusive learning environment where every student feels cared for, valued and empowered, hence why I encouraged Rachel to apply for the principal role. I wanted her to share her gift and make an impact on more than just her students in the classroom. Rachel's multifaceted journey in education, transitioning from a dedicated kindergarten teacher to a transformative principal and now returning to teaching, uniquely positions her as an exceptional candidate for the OnPoint Teacher of the Year. Rachel brings a wealth of knowledge, leadership, and passion that enriches her teaching and inspires her students to reach their full potential,. Her commitment to educational excellence, adaptability, and unwavering dedication to student success make Rachel an exemplary educator deserving of the OnPoint Teacher of the Year award. I could not have picked a better candidate! All you need is 15 minutes in Mrs. Hertz's classroom and you will see why she deserves this award.- Ellie Tariverdi

It is daunting to move country and to have your child start school in a new country. We knew our son had learning difficulties and what he needed most was a teacher who would love, support and nurture him for who he was, simply perfect, just learning things a little differently than some other kids. We have had the honor of having Rachel Hertz in our lives for the last 6 years. We watched a boy who hated going to school transformed to being first in line every morning. How she supported Luca, encouraged him and how Rachel provided a safe space for Luca just to be himself and not be judged, I am forever great full. He is the young boy he is today because Rachel believed in him. Accepted him for who he was and allowed him to be himself. I hope Rachel doesn't mind me telling you this but I know she was my son's first crush! I consider myself fortunate to write to you today as Mrs. Hertz has single handily been the best teacher I have ever come in contact with be it on this continent or Europe! I thank you for allowing me to write this today and for acknowledging Mrs.Rachel Hertz and all the amazing work she does daily to enrich the lives of every child, the whole child. Every child should have a Mrs. Hertz experience! With warmest regards, -Edel Flynn

Quotes and comments from former and current families, students, and colleagues

Where to begin?!!! We were so fortunate to be put in her class when our youngest entered Kindergarten. I have 3 boys and my oldest is 20 now so we have had our share of teacher experiences throughout our time. Rachel Hertz is by far one of the best teachers we've had the luck to get. She's compassionate, caring, engaging, warm, super intelligent, highly capable, creative, organized, communicative, empathetic, and just so loving. We were extremely sad when she moved on from our school but I was glad that we got a couple of years with her at our school. She genuinely cares for every one of her students and their families, not to mention how she mentors other young teachers. She set such a high standard for us in what to look for from a teacher. So far, no one has come close to beating her out. She's had so many obstacles, things that would make anyone crawl under a rock from, thrown at her these last few years yet still puts more than 110% into her work and her students well being. She is who's photo you would see in the Webster's dictionary beside the definition of all these following words: genuine, beautiful, caring, strong, loving, gentle... the list can go on forever! In our class, my son and his buddy decided to show her the steps to do "The Bro Hug" 😂 they were adorable and she just couldn't get enough of it! She filmed them and sends me and my friend the video every year - both boys are now in 6th:)) I used to go into her classroom and dance with the kids every week- I got to personally see how she managed the classroom and connected with each child understanding what they needed individually and making sure they got it to the best that she could give it. No effort was too great for her. She has it all: School spirit, connection with the students, fellow teachers and staff, and an unbelievable rapport with parents. We visited her and Brooklyn during Covid- we were in Sun River for a week and drove out to Bend to see them. We've never done that for any other teacher. It's just so telling what an amazing human she is. You know this- that's why she's being nominated. She deserves this. Thank you for doing this 😊 - Mona Ahuja

Rachel is one of the most talented teachers I've ever met. My younger son had her for kindergarten 6 years ago when she was teaching at Gardner Bullis in Northern California. There are very few teachers who are universally loved by parents. Rachel is one of them. She is warm, kind, and patient with all of her "noodles." But she is also an amazing teacher who somehow makes teaching five year olds look easy. When she left Gardner to move to Oregon, it was a huge loss for our school. She is still missed, but we are happy to see that she continues to be loved and appreciated by her new school.-Tina Hulse

Quotes and comments from former and current families, students, and colleagues

This fall, our family moved from Canada to Oregon. My daughter was very upset to be leaving her friends, and was very nervous to come to a new community. When she saw the classroom at orientation, she started crying and hid. Mrs Hertz came to talk to her and made her feel better. Olive left the orientation feeling excited about her new year and thrilled to have Mrs Hertz, the "best teacher ever," for her first grade teacher. Mrs Hertz is a caring and compassionate educator who encourages her students to do their best work. I am so impressed by how much my daughter has learned this year. Most importantly, my daughter feels safe and supported at school, by Mrs. Hertz and her classmates. Mrs. Hertz is a truly incredible teacher.- Ashley

As long as I've known Mrs. Hertz, she's had the passion and drive to serve children and their families completely. She goes above and beyond putting in extra hours and using her own money to support her classroom. As her principal, I witnessed her plant the seeds of learning in our youngest children and share her love for math, English, science, art and so much more. Her students learn in an environment that Mrs. Hertz creates just for them. I've been in education for decades and worked with many teachers. Rachel Hertz is a rare gem and the children she teaches benefit for years after they leave her classroom. - Nadia Oskolkoff

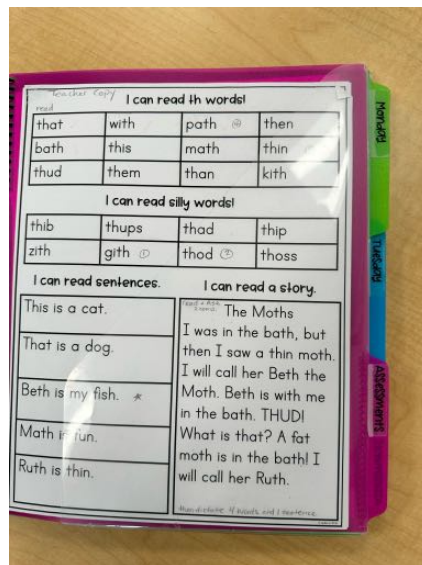
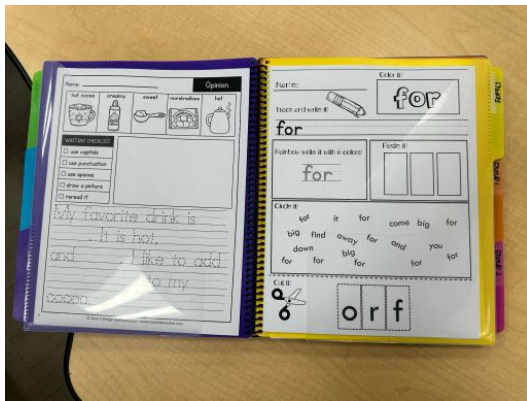
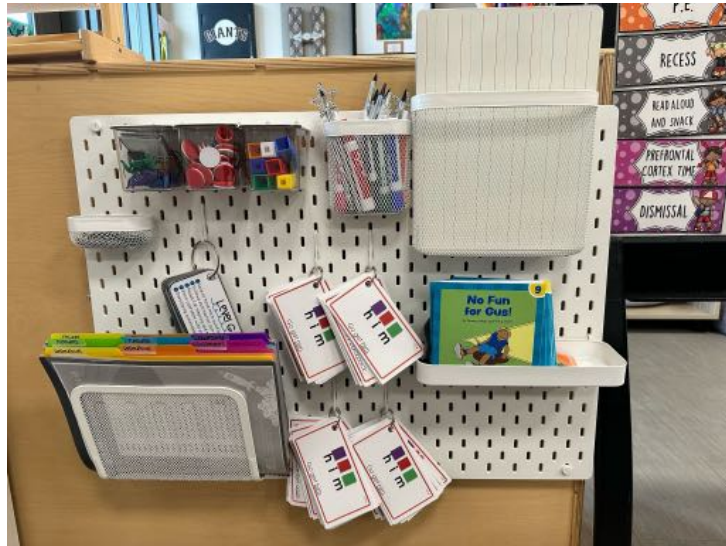
I worked with Rachel for years in California, and consider her a close friend and colleague. She is one of the most dedicated, loving and committed teachers I know. She cares deeply about not only the students in her class, but their families and the greater community; and she shows it by going above and beyond for each and every person who's walked through her door. She's always striving to improve her craft by learning and implementing the most up-to-date teaching methods, contributing to the district as a whole by advocating for curriculum change, and going the extra mile to make her class magical, as well as a place for social-emotional growth and academic rigor. She's always working beyond the classroom, beyond the workday hours, and across classes as the years go by; once you've had Mrs. Hertz, you're one of her students for life! I can't imagine anyone more deserving of recognition than Rachel. - Natalie Axley

Rachel is one of the most genuine teachers I have ever met. The level at which she cares for her kids is unmatched. I've had both my kids in her class and of course they both love her so much. I've seen so much growth in my kids after being in her class. Not just academically, but socially and emotionally as well. We are so thankful for her being in our kids lives. She is one of those teachers you'll never forget. She truly truly deserves this award! - Anonymous Parent

Rachel is an exemplary teacher in every facet of the profession. She deserves recognition due to her unwavering dedication to her students' academic and personal growth, innovative teaching methods, exceptional communication skills, and profound impact on the school community. - Chelsea Meyers, Parent

Teaching Methods

Organization is essential for Mrs. Hertz to be able to maximize instructional minutes. This is the amazing small group instruction area.



This is the planner for small group work. It is always at her fingertips and includes all the differentiated resources from the foundational skills curriculum.



This is one of the small group activity bins. These activities are meant for independent practice of a skill or concept.



Thoughtful and thorough planning are an essential component in student engagement. The students know the schedule, routines, procedures, and her clear expectations. They are able to take accountability for their own learning and their choices, knowing what to expect.

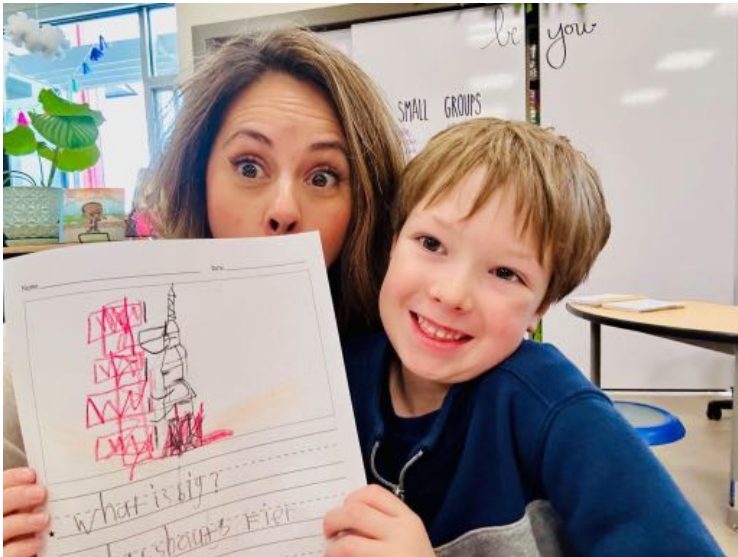


HERTZ LESSON PLANS						
	WEEK 8	3/18	TUESDAY 3/19	3/20	3/21	FRIDAY 3/22
7:45	7:45-8:00 OC	journals	journals	journals	journals (file app in iPad, code: 144)	journals (file app in iPad, code: 144) Yanet pulled for testing
8:00	8:00-8:15 Number Corner	Days in School, Calendar, Days of the Week, Months of the Year	Days in School, Calendar, Days of the Week, Months of the Year	Days in School, Calendar, Days of the Week, Months of the Year	Days in School, Calendar, Days of the Week, Months of the Year	Days in School, Calendar, Days of the Week, Months of the Year
8:30	8:30-9:00 Blast	Wdr reading playgrounds assessment	Wdr reading playgrounds assessment	Wdr reading playgrounds assessment	Library 8:30-9:00	open/closed syllables sort worksheet
8:45	8:00-8:15 Recess (Monday Duty on Blacktop)					
9:05	9:05-10:00 Math	lucky charms graphing	King Penguin	Little Blue Penguin	US M1 51- penguins on ledges (lesson on slides app on iPad/hard copy in Thursday box) Ana with Mrs. Valierga	Centers: polydrons, dreambox, geoboards, Ana with Mrs. Valierga
9:30	10:00-10:30 Walk to Skill	decodable: a new dog		Betty White/ISG directed Order (reading workshop)	decodable- dictation with heart words	Yeti Loves Rhyming Words
9:45	Lunch 10:45-11:05					
10:00	Recess 11:05-11:25					
10:15	11:30-12:00 Reading Workshop	Betty White Read Aloud 55- readers think about the story to problem-solve words	55+ readers slow down to break up long words	PE	55+ readers use words they know to solve words they don't know Yanet pulled for testing	Jane Goodall Read Aloud (book in Friday cubby)
10:30	12:00-12:30 Writing Workshop	editing/revising	55+ writing reviews to persuade others	Buddies	55+ talking right to readers	partner share stories (have them read their writing to one another, strategically partner them up)
10:45	12:30-1:00 Speciale	PE	Music	Dismissal 12:45	PE	Music
1:00	1:00-1:15 Recess	Recess 1:00-1:15			Recess 1:00-1:15	
1:15	1:15-1:30 Snack/Read At Home				play a story on Epic! or Vooks on iPad while kids have snack Ana with Mrs. Valierga	play a story on Epic! or Vooks on iPad while kids have snack Ana with Mrs. Valierga
1:30	1:30-2:30 OLM				no kinetic sand	no kinetic sand (while kids are playing, wipe down tables, empty trash cans,
1:45	Dismissal					
2:00	Dismissal					

STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math) are regularly incorporated across the curriculum. Children are given opportunities to work collaboratively, practice resiliency, and flexible thinking through this process.



Using the student's passions to ignite engagement in tricky subjects, like writing!



Students practice partner reading and supporting one another in applying the foundational skills they are learning.





Using Oreos to demonstrate the phases of the moon.



Learning fractions with apples!

Hands-on exploration is one of the favorite ways to practice a concept and transfer our understanding.



Students playing math games in partners.

Studying animals during the non-fiction reading unit. Students are learning to make notes and ask questions as they read.



Learning sight words by playing a game of "Headbands!"

Mrs. Hertz leads a peaceful protest after learning that their principal had changed the playground rules (all for the sake of this lesson). They had just learned about Martin Luther King Jr. and how he had used love and words to create change. The children decided they wanted to use their words too.





Learning through purposeful play during daily Prefrontal Cortex Time. Mrs. Hertz acts as a facilitator during this time.

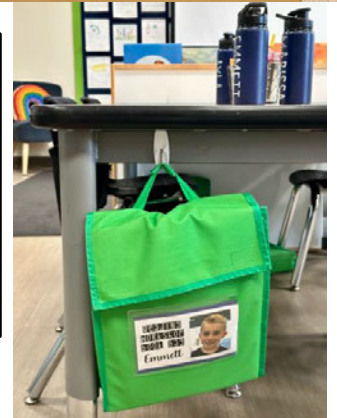


Mrs. Hertz has created three classroom libraries:

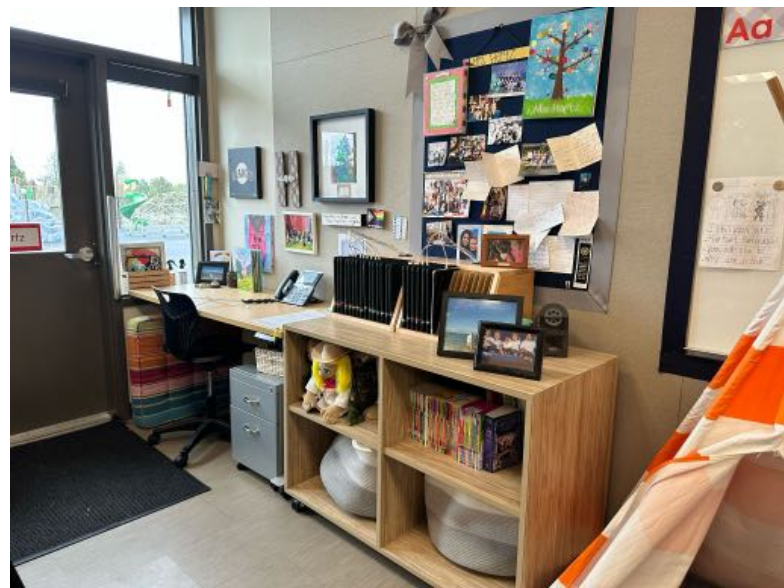
- Leveled Library for students to select books within their individual reading levels.
- The “Book Nook”-where students can go to read with stuffed animals and choose books based on interest.
- Read Aloud Library- carefully curated books that create windows and mirrors for students and reinforce themes.

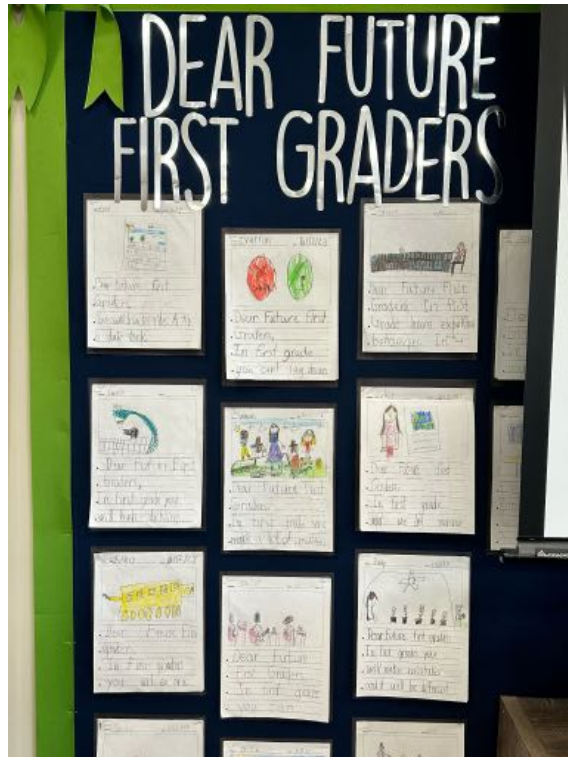


Each child has their own book bag filled with books that they pick themselves. They select their books from the Book Nook and the Leveled Library (They “shop” for instructionally appropriate leveled books).



Environment





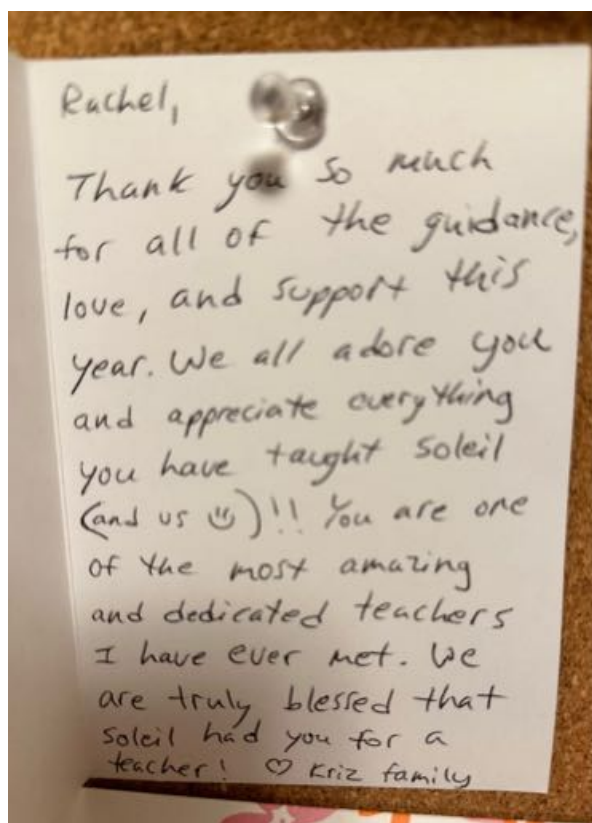
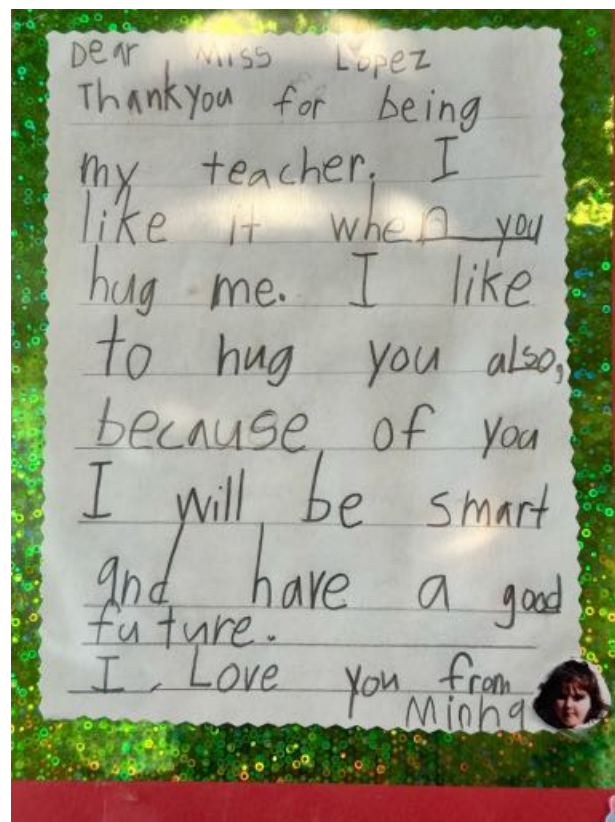
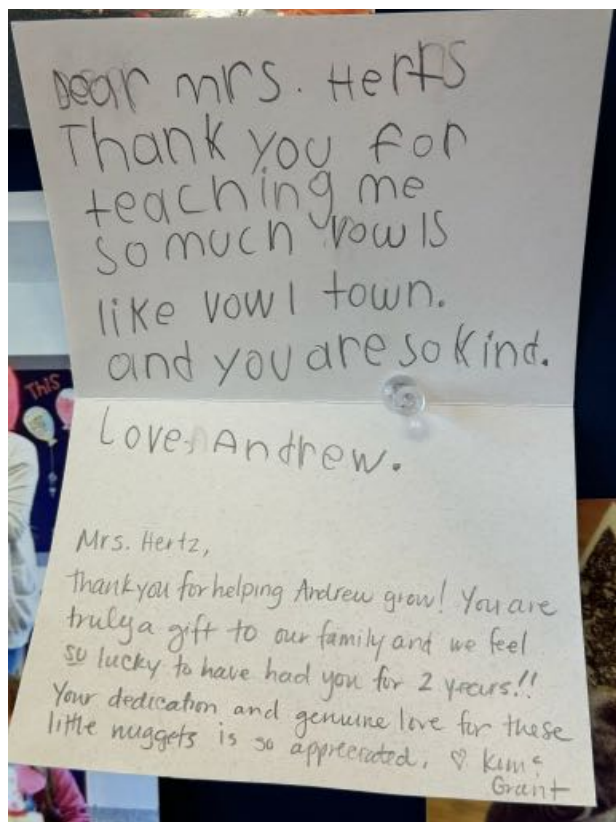
Student work is always displayed in areas around the classroom as well as outside of the classroom.



The daily schedule is posted and reviewed each morning.



Mrs. Hertz organizes prepared materials for each day of the week in these cubbies. This way they are easy for student teachers and subs (if need be) to find.



Bulletin board with some treasured notes and photos from students and families.



Before school starts, Mrs. Hertz contacts families and asks them to send a family picture. She prints them and puts them on student lockers to make the children feel “more at home.”



A “calming space” for students to go and practice self-regulation strategies. This is named “Calm It Corner” in reference to a “Comet.” North Star’s theme is all about space.

Data and Assessment



Students using Seesaw to demonstrate learning with their families. This also allows Mrs. Hertz to collect data. Parents are able to comment on their child's work, which the children love!

During small group instruction, she is also able to assess through games and skill-building activities to inform her next teaching moves.



These students are applying a concept previously taught. She is able to score and input this data to the Foundational skills binder.

This is during a foundational skills lesson. Mrs. Hertz is doing an observational assessment of where the students are by asking them to “say, stretch, and write” a word on their whiteboards. This active engagement allows equity since all are participating, rather than only calling on the most confident students.



Finley Strachan

In response to: Blast U13/U14 Check In

Blast Unit 13/14 Review

th	a	wh	d	ss	i	sch	sh	al
b	bl	e	ch	fr	sch	sk	zz	o
ll	mp	ego	all	ff	u	pr	age	ck

napkin light hot tub pumpkin ego
ventral egg labors contest

many those then so some

May we rest at the picnic?
The dentist came down the steps.
Press the edge of the napkin to fold it.

View Original

February 28, 2024 11:45 AM

Rating: clear

Phonics and Word Recognition (LRF.3): clear

Approve 12 posts? Approve All

Skills View

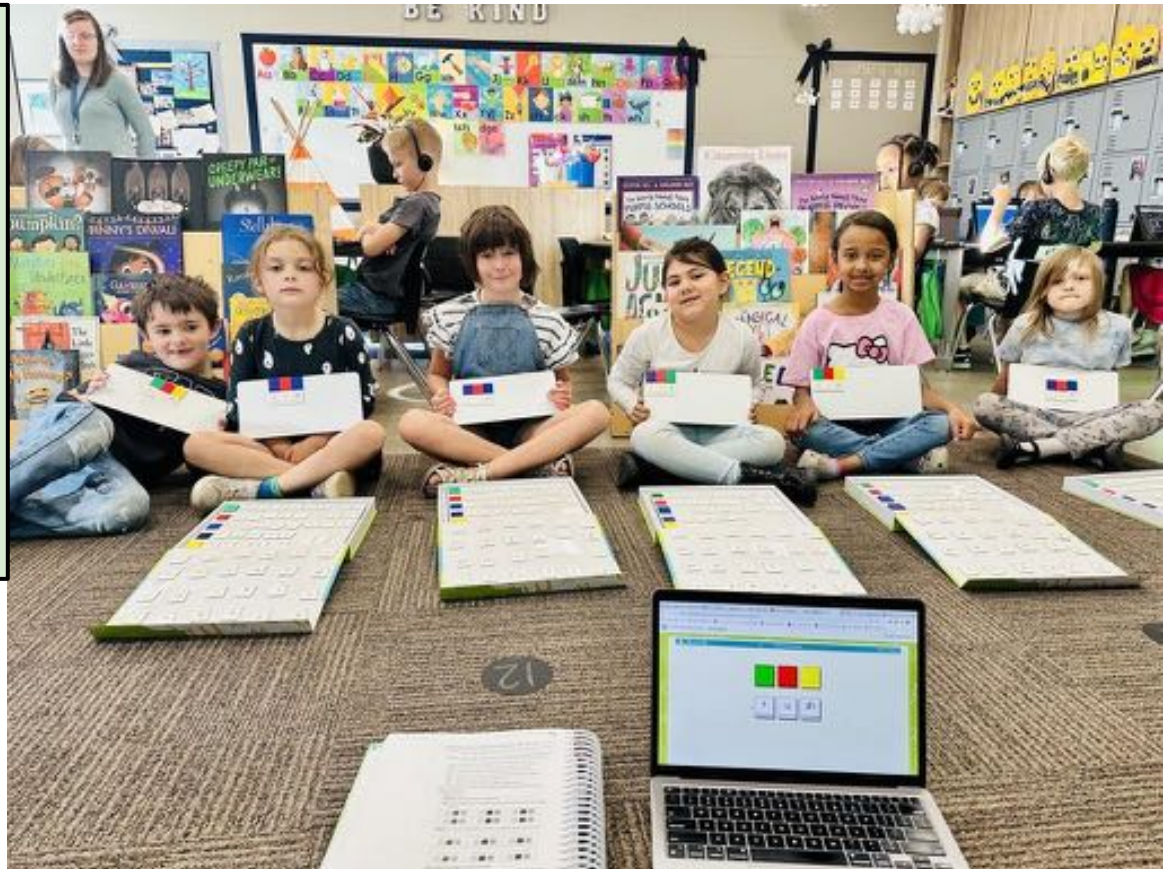
Student	Skills	Mastery
Andrew Schuetz	2/2	2★
Arlo McVicker	2/2	2★
Atticus Tibbitts	1/2	2★
Austin Harris	2/2	2★
Ayla Hollowell	2/2	2★
Ben Hansen	2/2	2★
Brody Yeomans	2/2	2★
Caydence Clarke	0/5	—

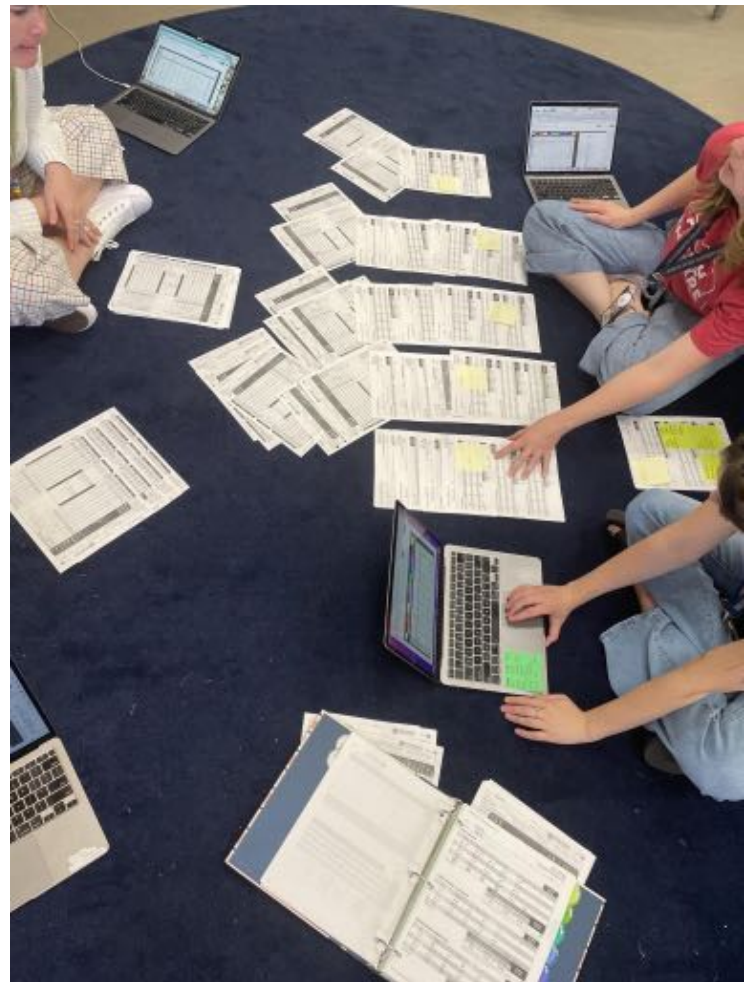
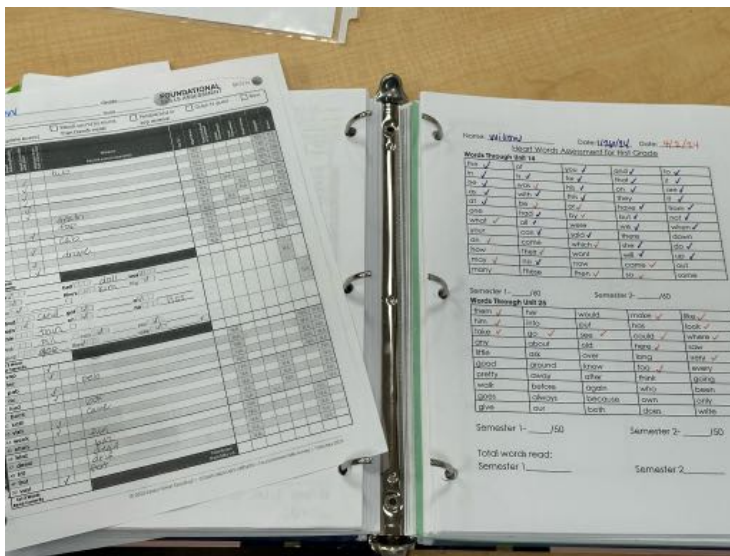
Seesaw allows Mrs. Hertz to rate a student's mastery on a grade-level standard after they have submitted an activity she has assigned to them. She is able to then see all students through a “skills view.”



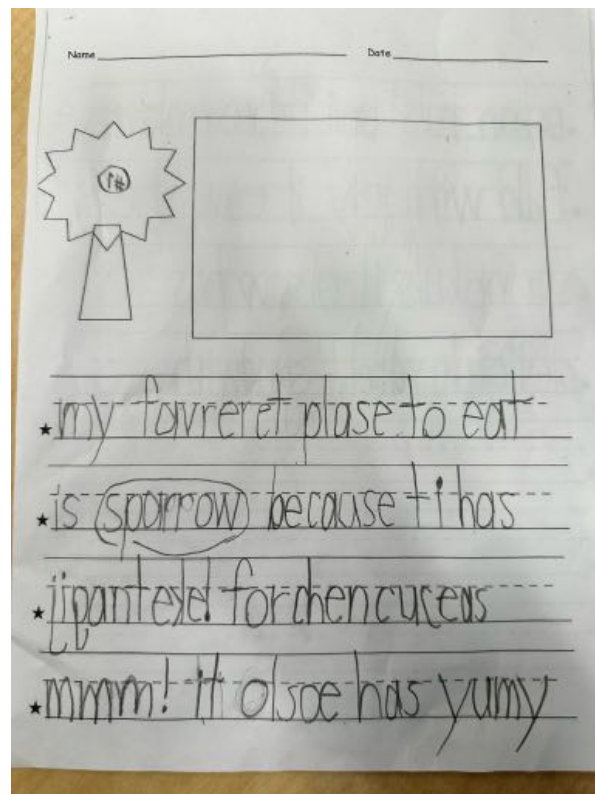
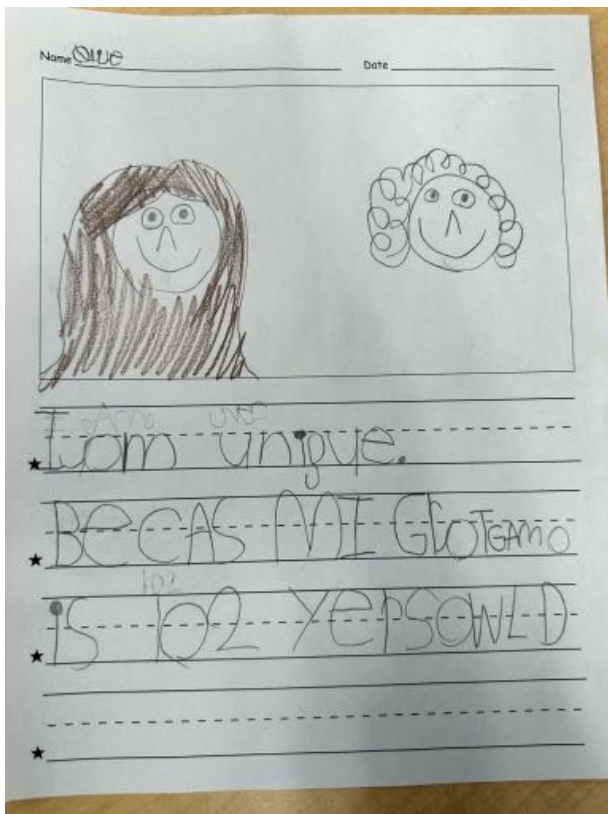
A student's annotations in a leveled book. She can go through and assess comprehension this way.

Formative and observational assessments are consistently a part of her lessons. Here she is checking each board within her small group of students to see who is understanding the concept and who may need more intensive instruction.





The first grade team uses specific foundational skills assessments that are from our curriculum. The kindergarten and first grade teams regularly meet to calibrate student progress and evaluate any interventions needed.



The left picture is of her student's writing in September. The right picture is of that same student's writing in March. She uses "on demand" writing samples to monitor progress within writing standards.