



NATIONAL URBAN ALLIANCE FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION

Eden Prairie's Forest Hills Elementary "all but eliminates achievement gap"

At Eden Prairie's Forest Hills Elementary we were told by Principal Connie Hytjian that her highly diverse school had all but eliminated the achievement gap, and her black students were now 85% meeting or exceeding state standards as compared to 92% of white students (cutting the gap between them by more than one-half over the past few years). It was shared "...the staff is excited about every student who walks into the school," and through tears of joy, it was suggested how difficult leadership can be at times.

At this school and those we visited, children know they belong and are equally valued. This was true we might add for all the schools we visited. To name just a few, excellent learning and teaching is underway as the Eagle Heights Spanish Immersion School in Eden Prairie, as well as Sunset Hill Elementary in Wayzata, and Gatewood Elementary in Hopkins. Teachers and staff were welcoming and embraced the visitors. At these schools teachers and staff are treated as professionals and allowed to deepen their instructional skills through guided support, shared energy and commitment. Examples abound where teachers often work beyond the school day to ensure all schoolchildren and youth are learning and working up to the high expectations applied in classrooms and schools.

Teachers from NUA projects share their reflections on the learning:

- As a result of my interactions with NUA, I learned many great strategies for teaching for greater understanding and comprehension.
- I feel I will use many of the tools, such as Thinking Maps and taxonomies to help students' master concepts and gain understanding.
- I believe that these concepts truly will help the students be more engaged and on task in their learning.
- I always will do my best to help students achieve and set high expectations for them.
- A mind can always grow and continue to learn
- I have a clearer understanding of how children learn, how to motivate, how important it is that we celebrate together
- I learned how to accelerate student learning, how to use Thinking Maps, how to make learning meaningful
- I feel privileged to have been a part of this learning
- I believe all teachers should have this opportunity
- I always will grateful to NUA for bringing this learning to us
- I learned many strategies, tools, activities, maps and great research to be a better teacher to help my students be better learners and performers
- I feel the 3 years of training have made me so much more aware of how students learn best (and how I learn best, too)
- I always will use and remember the things I have learned to help my class reach High Intellectual Performance
- I learned the value of Thinking Maps; I feel that they are helpful to understand different content areas in a way that students will learn and understand the big idea and how to break it down into smaller pieces
- I will always try to use the maps as often as possible
- I learned that learning is influenced by the interaction of culture, language and cognition
- I feel that understanding a student's culture is vital for learning
- I believe, truly, that intelligence is modifiable
- I always will remember what NUA has done for my understanding of how students learn
- I learned how to be a culturally relevant teacher
- I feel like I now have skills to be a more effective teacher
- I believe NUA is exactly what we needed
- I always will remember these strategies
- I learned how to teach my students differently



OUR MISSION IS TO SUBSTANTIATE
IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF URBAN
AMERICA AN IRREFUTABLE BELIEF
IN THE CAPACITY OF ALL CHILDREN
TO REACH THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF
LEARNING & THINKING DEMANDED
BY OUR EVER-CHANGING GLOBAL
COMMUNITY.

- I feel fortunate to have had this opportunity
- I believe the strategies I have learned will make a difference
- I always will continue to use NUA strategies and build community for all my students
- I will always remember Dr B and her energy! Truly a gift! I hope my students will continue to show growth and feel confident in their learning; I hope they continue to build on their learning
- I learned I need to stretch myself as a teacher, planner and learner
- I feel empowered by the tools given to me
- I believe all students deserve to be challenged for High Intellectual Performance
- I always will remember to be intentional in my teaching daily and intentionally engage my students
- I learned to motivate students to learn
- I feel privileged to have worked (with) and learned from Dr. B. Rich
- I believe in the strategies I have learned from NUA
- I always will use the information to help me be a better teacher
- I hope students will grow academically and developmentally to be great second graders for next year
- I learned how to better align and frame my instruction
- I feel invigorated and better prepared to teach my students strategies that can better equip them to become independent learners
- I believe no matter the circumstance ALL students can learn
- Learning is modifiable
- I always will use what I learned from NUA! I learned a new dimension of teaching
- I feel empowered to be a better teacher
- I believe all students have the right to learn
- I always will use the strategies I learned from NUA
- I hope that each day I can help at least one student become a better reader
- I learned more about how children learn and how we need to teach them
- I feel empowered with valuable new knowledge
- I believe it will make a difference for all children and teachers
- I always will use the powerful learning tools we've been given so all children can learn