

March 2015

March 2, 2015

Notes from the Arts Education Director:

March is Youth Arts Education Month. This month presents an opportunity for us to make an effort to connect in some way with our community. Hopefully, everyone who is reading this has planned something, no matter how small, to let others (parents, teachers, administrators, students, businesses, community groups, arts groups) know about the valuable work that we do. Please take the time to email me, or call, and let me know what you are doing, or have done to honor what we do. I will collect that information and write about it for next month's posting so that we can share ideas for next year.

Wednesday, March 11 is Fine Arts Education Day here at the Capitol Building in Jefferson City. Students from various school districts will be performing in the arts both in and outside of the Capitol throughout the day. Students will also have an opportunity to visit with their legislator and avail themselves of the many educational opportunities that can be found at our State Capitol. If you have any questions about Fine Arts Education Celebration day for this year or next, please feel free to call or email.

A couple of weeks ago I attended a conference sponsored by the Midwest Equity Assistance Center on the subject of educational equity. The nation-wide issue of equity in education is beyond the scope of this page, however, it is difficult to change things for the better unless people at the grass roots work to create positive change. By grass roots, here I mean our classrooms. Each of us has an obligation to treat our students equitably. Truthfully, I had to remind myself of this obligation every day of my 32 year teaching career. Sometimes there is a tendency among teachers to treat students differently based upon how hard they try, how respectful they are, how well they pay attention, how likely they are to volunteer to answer questions or to participate in discussions. Teachers must present themselves as cheerful, consistent, genuine, respectful, patient and flexible with their students no matter how they might be feeling on any given day. We expect our colleagues to exhibit those qualities in their interactions with us, and we are disappointed if they do not. Imagine how difficult it is for students to maintain a high level of engagement and to perform their best when they are convinced that they are being singled out or being treated unfairly. There you have it. Being equitable in our actions with students is a huge part of our job. The arts reflect the best of humanity, and we are at our best when we have equity in our schools. Let us always be working individually and collaboratively towards achieving the highest standard of equity.