



The Richardson School

BOBCAT BEAT

Summer 2022

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Exploring the Scientific Method at TRS-Brookfield's Science Fair

Just before spring break, TRS-Brookfield held its annual Science Fair, where each classroom collaborated on their own project and then presented the findings. Some of the Testable Questions were “Which soda would cause the highest Mentos explosion?”, “What kind of liquid (acidic or basic) can dissolve a nail?”, and “Which solution keeps cut flowers fresh the longest?”

Classroom 101's teacher, Ms. Reilly, shared, “I like to go big on projects, so the challenge was finding one that all the kids would stay engaged in and also interact with each other.” She knew right away that she wanted to do something messy, and remembered a project she had done years ago, making oobleck.

What's oobleck, you ask? It is a non-Newtonian fluid that acts like a liquid when being poured, but like a solid when a force is acting on it. After watching “Emily's Wonder Lab: Walking on Oobleck”, Ms. Reilly said her students were ‘all-in’ for the experiment.

A hypothesis was formed: “If I (walk, run or hop) across oobleck, I won't sink.” The students picked their mode of movement to test, and started creating the mysterious substance.

After lots (and lots!) of mixing, the oobleck was finally ready. Both students and staff tested each of the three modes of movement, and the results were consistent as all participants attempted to cross. Staff and students who attempted to walk sank to the bottom. On the other hand, everyone who ran or hopped was able to successfully cross the oobleck without sinking!

More importantly than the results, according to Ms. Reilly, were all of the positive things she saw during the process.

While most of her students enjoyed the messy experiment, one in particular left his comfort zone of cleanliness and was able to participate the entire time. “He would look at his hands, go to wipe them off, and then put them right back in the oobleck to keep mixing,” Ms. Reilly shared.

The students were also inclusive, doing a great job of being patient and taking turns, even though they were excited to participate. They also asked if other staff throughout the building could come into the classroom and participate with them.

The most rewarding part was seeing the students excited to engage not only with the project, but also with each other. Considering social interaction and sustained academic engagement are the primary focus of skill building for this classroom, we'd say oobleck was a big success!



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What motivates or inspires you to continue working at TRS?

Being part of the administration team at TRS West Allis, the students continue to motivate me every day. Something else that motivates me every day is being supportive to the other staff as much as possible and trying to make it the best workplace possible for them.

-Nik, Instructional Aide Supervisor, West Allis



The students I work with. The team of staff I work with. The environment is fun and full of possibilities.

-Lisa, Teacher, Brookfield



Even on our busiest and seemingly worst days, I always manage to find a reason to laugh. My coworkers and our kiddos have a way of pulling me out of my weirdest moods and making every day a little better, no matter what. Brookfield will always be my family.

-Elizabeth, Float Aide, Brookfield



I am not sure if there is anything else I would want to do. The thought of working anywhere else is very unappealing. I enjoy working through the tough moments with the kids and growing right along with them.

-Dan, Day School Director, Appleton

I love seeing the culmination of small successes that students have. I entered this field because I believe children with disabilities are misunderstood and underserved and I love all of the supports that TRS offers for our students!

-Jill, Instructional Aide Supervisor, Appleton



Making a difference in children's lives. I love seeing the difference that's made from when students start with us versus when they leave. It makes me feel like our TRS team is really changing lives in a positive way.

-Emily, Art Therapist, Appleton



Seeing my students everyday motivates me to continue working at TRS. Building relationships with them and watching them grow makes my heart happy, whether it is a kiddo understanding how to finish a math problem or talking about their big feelings for the first time.

-Lauren, Float Aide, Brookfield



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After a year of navigating the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic, we are grateful to have such amazing and dedicated staff who continue to support the students we serve. We had chance to ask staff two questions about their time at TRS and this past year. Here are some of their answers along with some pictures of all of our schools' last day of the 21-22 school year.

What is one highlight from the past year that is most memorable/inspiring/encouraging to you?



Seeing Dima's excitement to come to school each day as he runs into the classroom and throws his arms around me with a huge smile on his face is a big inspiration for me. On days when our classroom is a bit more chaotic, Dima is always there, ready to flash a beautiful smile at me to remind me that there is always good in each day, even the crazy ones!
-Heather, Teacher, West Allis



One highlight this school year and the previous school year has been seeing several students transition into adult programs or even get jobs. It is always such an amazing thing to see how happy the students are to move forward with their lives.
- Nik, Instruction Aide Supervisor, West Allis

One of our high school students, Hernan, has always struggled with anxiety that has impacted his ability to get to school on a daily basis. The year after we came back from distanced learning due to COVID-19, Hernan barely attended school. Even when he did come, it would usually be late and involve a verbal battle in the car between him and his mother or sister to come inside the school. The family was heartbroken and didn't know what to do to help him. Hernan started to build some amazing relationships with students at TRS and had some key staff members stay present with him throughout the next year. This year, Hernan has had amazing attendance. He comes in most days on the bus and has a smile on his face when staff yell his name to greet him in the morning. He has been joking with the kids in his class, even letting loose enough that I have seen him dancing with staff when not a lot of people are around. Hernan has always been an amazing young man, but his personality and ability to grow friendships has blossomed this year. It is heartening to see him face anxiety that is still there and find comfort in being around peers like him, encouraging them to be their best like he is doing every day.
-Jennifer, Day School Director, Brookfield



Having a student open up to me about their feelings and asking to talk to me when they are struggling, after over a year of having them as a student.
-Anonymous

The way the staff are all there for each other. Whenever a call is made everyone possible shows up and supports each other in whatever way they need it. My highlight from this past year is being part of an amazing group of people that have become a second family to me.
-Anonymous

**BOBCAT****HIGHLIGHTS:** *Rachel Elliott***Madison's Day School Director**

Hello my name is Rachel Elliott and I am very excited to introduce myself as the new Day School Director at the Richardson School in Madison, WI. I am honored to have the opportunity to lead a school with such persevering students, an extremely dedicated staff, and a supportive school community. I can assure you that I share in this school community's commitment to caring for your students each and every day while providing them a positive learning environment.

I come to you with 8 years of experience as an educator in rural, urban and suburban settings ranging from the elementary, middle and high school levels. My experiences have helped me see the social, academic and behavioral transitions from Kindergarten to senior year of High School. I have been a Classroom Teacher, a Technology Integrator as well as an Instructional Mentor for Teachers. I am thrilled to bring my skills as an educational leader to the Richardson School and to work with you as a partner in education to ensure your student's success.

Once again, I am so thankful to have the opportunity to bring all that I have experienced and learned with me to your wonderful community. I look forward to working with you as a team to help each student at the Richardson School meet their goals.

**APPLETON**

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