

Superintendent Highlight of the Week

March 14, 2014

Parkway Elementary School is STEAMing ahead this year, and the kids are having great fun in this new focus area in the curriculum. This week, I spent some time with the children in Debbie Lovett's fourth grade class as they completed work on their straw towers. Each fourth grade class at Parkway participated in the tower project as part of a building-wide S.T.E.A.M. initiative.

Students researched and reviewed famous towers around the world and gained an understanding for the requirements of functional design. They were then given 100 straws, masking tape, pipe cleaners and paper clips, and they were asked to build a tower that measured between three and five feet tall that could also support the weight of pennies. Before building, they had to make a hypothesis as to how many pennies their structure could support.



It was interesting to see the student's problem solve the issues with their towers and work to make the adjustments needed to correct their designs. One team built a structure that was so stable that we ran out of pennies!!! Members of that team then became consultants to other teams that were having less success with their design.

After building the tower, the children reflected on the project and wrote about both their challenges and successes. Teamwork, creative thinking, time management, knowledge of shapes and engineering all were vital components to this project. These are exactly the skills we need for our future scientists and engineers.