

## **Leaders Leading Leaders**

The start of the 2011-2012 school year brought all the anticipation and eagerness that every school year brings. Recognizing the fact that the staff at Cordill – Mason Elementary School were a group of teachers who were serving on a variety of cadres and committees and also attending a variety of in-service activities, Principal Alan Michelson asked Fourth Grade Teacher, Cheryl Schmidt, and First Grade Teacher, Alicia Barrows, to survey staff and inquire what their professional needs might be. Once surveys were completed, information was gathered as to whom might be willing to provide Professional Development Activities and in-service to the staff at large. Response was overwhelming. At once, Barrows and Schmidt set to the task of scheduling staff in their areas of expertise. Committees were immediately formed based on information the individuals had garnered at various Professional Development opportunities. Teachers planned their presentations according to the Curriculum and Instructional Department Guidelines for scope and sequence for the different levels of elementary. The die had been cast and learning was set to begin! The first group up was “The Math Lab Team”. Their presentation was on point. They were knowledgeable, honest, realistic, and also provided a level of humor which supplemented the information to make it at once interesting and informational. They had set the bar and it was indeed high. The staff embraced the information and hungered for more. It was everything Michelson had hoped for, not to mention what Schmidt and Barrows had planned for. “The Science Matters/ICE 5 Team” were next to take the stage the following month. They were every bit as good as their predecessors. A strong sense of community already existed among the staff, but it was now being enhanced between the K-2 and 3-5 teachers through these presentations. Staff were sharing their successes, as well as what they had tried and learned. Everyone was seeing how what they did was interrelated between grade levels. They were indeed living in a spiraling curriculum and vertical teaming across curricular areas. There was real team problem solving and discussion going on. The building “Literacy Team” was next to present and they did not disappoint. Why, they even found a way to have David Letterman be a part of the presentation! The staff continued to carry away new and improved ideas. They were sharing, morale continued to be high, and more people wanted to share their knowledge and expertise. It was all about the school, what can we do for the students, we were indeed a team! We now look forward to presentations about Warren Phillips, Comprehension Strategies using Art, The Olweus Program, Reading Fluency, Writing, and Communication Arts. We also had SAP Training and Presentations from Instructional Coaches. There is a real thirst for knowledge and instructional improvement. The staff, students, and parents are all realizing that it is, “A Great Day to Be a Cougar” thanks to all the **Leaders Leading Leaders**.