

Two things you may not be aware of what happened. Can you guess? OK, the first one is on me. It was the first ever Teacher for a Day sponsored by the Cobb Chamber of Commerce that occurred on October 1<sup>st</sup>. You may have heard of the “Principal for a Day” that has been sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce for some time. This is an annual event whereby a leading business person or elected official gets to be a principal for a day, get their picture in the paper, and, maybe even a sound bite on how hard the principal works. That is true and there is some benefit to this program. However, wouldn’t it be interesting to see if there were any takers to be a teacher for a day, teach to the Georgia Performance Standards, and see if one could survive past lunch time?

Well I along with 55 brave souls took up the gauntlet and taught for a day in Cobb County and Marietta public schools. Each of us were assigned a teacher of the year from the specific host school and taught to the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). GPS are the standards that public school educators are required to teach because that is the material that the state evaluates public school systems under the “No Child Left Behind Law”.

I taught at Keheley Elementary School. I have been told that it’s the Chairman’s favorite school in Cobb County. The teacher of the year is Ms. Laura Lindsey and the paraprofessional is Ms. Barb Cannon. This team was the same dynamic duo that taught Corky Abraham’s baby boy Michael twelve years ago. Ms Lindsey along with the other teachers of the year in Cobb County will be honored later this month by the Chamber of Commerce at Roswell Street Baptist Church.

As I entered the school a cold sweat ran down the back of my neck together with an uncomfortable feeling in the pit of my stomach. What on earth was I thinking? A voice inside of me was reassuring: “Relax, how hard could it be? After all it’s kindergarten. What do they do? You pass out blocks, read them a story or two, pass out the graham crackers, sing some songs, and throw out the kick ball for recess.” With my apologies to my hosts my thinking was far from reality. However, my former reality is probably in line with a lot of my fellow citizens.

I was awed by the learning on going in that classroom. Moreover, each child was able to recite the standard to be learned and focus on the task at hand. Yep there was some singing and there was some reading all geared to GPS. I read and they were able to sound out new words. They described consonants and vowels in question as well. I demonstrated my printing prowess and they corrected me constantly. “You’re not closing the letter e. The letter e needs to touch the bottom of the line. Also, you wrote a capital N instead of a small n..” Then the children worked in groups. The dynamic duo had a kind of controlled chaos going on in their classroom. It worked. The children were engaged in their assignments.

As I was teaching I noticed the dynamic duo of Laura and Barb working on future lesson plans, giving individual attention to each of the kids, and then go back to work. There was no break for them. The energizer bunny had nothing on some of Cobb County School District's finest. Oddly, enough throughout the day I did not notice any behavior disturbance by the children. They were focused on learning. I ate lunch in the cafeteria and then went out for recess and lasted until 1:30 when I said good bye to my new found little friends and left to ponder what a kindergarten teacher's day entails.

The Chamber of Commerce is currently analyzing the questionnaire responses of the rest of the inaugural class of teachers for a day. I am looking forward to reviewing the report and see what we can do to get more of the community involved and possibly expand on this program so that it can occur more than just once a year. Think of the relevance to a child's learning that this community rich in talent could provide not to mention a new found relationship between teacher and the community. This can be a meaningful factor in improving not only student achievement but the overall quality of life of the community.

As for the second great thing that happened this month.....you will have to guess and wait until next time.

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