

Intro: Leandro & Arielle

Washington Discovery Academy is an elementary school located in Plymouth Indiana. When looking at this building one might think it is an average school for elementary aged children. Brick building, playgrounds and classrooms. A Title one school with an average of 350 students and 60% free and reduced lunch rate. Although this school seems like your everyday average elementary, it's what happens on the inside that is anything but ordinary...

PBL:

At Washington Discovery Academy, we use Project Based Learning as our instructional model. Projects are focused around things we are interested in! We are given a real purpose for our learning. We learn through inquiry to understand how things work, grow and live. We also learn to help others, our community and our school. When we know why we are learning and how we can use it in the real world the process is much more meaningful to us. We are given real life opportunities to apply our knowledge which allows us to take ownership over our learning.

New Tech: DONE

WDA has been part of the New Tech Network for 5 years. New Tech is a network that works closely with schools to transform them into innovative learning environments. WDA is the only model elementary school named a New Tech demonstration site for 2 years in a row. Students have the opportunity to work using technology. At WDA we are one to one with technology. Students K-1 have iPads and 2-4 have MacBooks. With this technology and using Echo as our learning platform, WDA is preparing all of their students to be college and career ready even at the elementary level.

Service Learning: DONE

Each year every grade level does a "Service Learning" project. Service learning is a project that is focused around helping others outside of WDA.

- Kindergarten holds a food drive each year to support our local Neighborhood Center
- 1st grade hosts a blood drive through the American Red Cross each year.
- 2nd creates and reads poems to residents at a local nursing home.
- 3rd grade hosted a Color Run inspired 5K. All proceeds went to a local handicapped accessible park to help them build swings.
- 4th grade had done a Random Act of Kindness project to share kindness throughout our community.

As an entire school, we have a garden that all grade levels participate in. All produce from our garden goes to support those in the community to who need help getting fresh food for their families.

Doing service learning projects allows us to have an authentic purpose for learning. It makes us feel like our learning is important and that we can take what we have learned and help others with our knowledge.

Culture: DONE

At WDA staff and students work together continuously to create and maintain a positive school culture. Our staff has done intentional work to create a vision of doing what is best for students. They then continually work to keep this vision a reality. Each grade level starts the year off with a "Building Culture" project. This allows teachers to set the stage for a safe and positive learning

environment. In our classrooms we know that our teachers care about us and this allows us to embrace failures and learning opportunities. We know we can fail, and that our teachers and peers will be there to support us so we can grow as learners and individuals.

At the 3rd and 4th grade level, students get to participate in the connect program. Connect is a program that teaches us how to cope with the many different situations that we will face in our life. We learn how to identify and deal with bullying, how to be an upstander and how to have meaningful conversations when working through conflict.

At WDA we celebrate the positives we see through each other! To help us identify the positive things students and teachers do host montly PAWS convocations. PAWS stands for Practicing self control, Acting responsibly and Showing respect. Students are recognized daily for showing their PAWS by being recognized on the daily news for making good decisions and being positive role models. Students are also recognized at our monthly PAWS convocations where the whole school comes together to recognize one student for positive behavior.

Community Connections: Done

At WDA we make personal connections with community members. We do this by inviting professionals from the community to help us learn more about their trade and what they do. Each project that is created at WDA needs experts for us to learn from! Who better to help us than professionals from our own community?

Another connection we make with the community is through our "Science Rocks" night. We invite members of the community in to teach students about their jobs and how science is incorporated into it.

We also host Title One family fun nights such as a back to school night, winter wonderland, and haunted hallways. We also partner with the Marshall County Humane society. Students create ads to help persuade others to donate and adopt animals.

We also partner with a local service dog that comes in and allows students to read to her.

Another way we stay connected to the community is by hosting project showcase nights. Each grade level hosts a showcase night each year to share their learning with friends, family and the community.

Being connected to the community allows us to see how our learning will impact our future. By making connections now, we open the door ways of communication which leads to collaboration between community members and students who will grow up to understand the power of being connected from a young age.

After School:

WDA offers many different after school programs to extend learning such as Robotics Club, Choir, Science Club, Student Government, Basketball and tutoring.

Conclusion:

As you can see Washington Discovery Academy looks like any other elementary, but what happens on the inside is anything but ordinary.

