



**DR. HOWARD:** Interactive games and activities, healthy snacks and a little aerobic exercise are all part of Dr. Howard's Reading Rally Extended Day Program. The 45 4th and 5th graders in the program all have the same goal—to become better readers.

## Dr. Howard Reading Rally Extended Day Program Prepares Students to Achieve Success



The goal is to facilitate student success by building self confidence and an enjoyment for reading. “Studies are showing that 3rd and 4th graders’ success in reading is a strong predictor of success in high school and beyond,” says Dr. Howard Principal Jennifer Heinhorst- Busby. “We developed the *Reading Rally Extended Day Program* to give all of our students the best possible opportunity to succeed in the future,” she adds.

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, from 2-4 pm, 45 Dr. Howard 4th and 5th graders gather for 20 minutes of aerobic exercise. After a healthy snack, they separate into seven teams to participate in three 30-minute interactive reading activities—one geared to improve

fluency, one to aid comprehension and one to build vocabulary. Their teachers, chosen for their energetic and enthusiastic manners and methods, actively engage each student in games, activities and interactive assignments designed to build reading skills. Staff has carefully chosen materials proven to be of interest to the ages and demographics of the students.

“With only 6-7 students on each team, teachers are building trusting relationships with the students as the students are gaining confidence in their abilities and reading skills,” Heinhorst-Busby explains.

The *Reading Rally Extended Day Program* began December 3, 2007. It is free to students who sign an agreement to follow stated rules and to work hard to become better readers, and whose parents give written permission. The district provides two after school buses at 4:00 pm to transport students who need rides home.

### ▶ Dr. Howard & Columbia Partner on *Reading Rally Connection*

At noon on Wednesdays, two Dr. Howard 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms are being taught reading lessons. The younger-than-usual teachers, however, are actually students from Columbia Center.

A new collaboration—*Reading Rally Connection*—between the two schools is intended to benefit both the students exposed to the lessons and those preparing them. Columbia Principal Charles Hogue initially asked Columbia middle and high school teachers to recommend students with the character, capability and responsibility to teach in this special program. “From the recommendations, we chose two middle school and two high school students we believed would be good teachers and good role models for the program. The middle school students have already presented lessons to the Dr. Howard students and have been well-prepared and well-received. This is a win-win program for all the students involved,” Hogue remarks.

The Dr. Howard librarian, Pat Matthews, initially selected 10 books from which the Columbia “teachers” could choose to teach. When the Columbia students have chosen and read the book, they work with a teacher or staff member at Columbia to practice reading the book aloud and showing the illustrations. The collaboration only works if the students are well prepared and read fluently and with expression.

The Columbia student “teachers” follow a specific lesson plan that includes questions before and after the reading, vocabulary building exercises and actually reading the book and discussing illustrations.

“Our students love having the older students in their classrooms. We are excited about the benefits of this program to students from both our schools,” adds Dr. Howard Principal Jennifer Heinhorst-Busby.