

# Teaching kids college just part of life

## Fox School works with universities to make higher education second nature

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With a college education more necessary than ever for a successful and prosperous future, it's never too early for children to start thinking of it as a normal part of growing up.

That's why Anne Fox School in Hanover Park has affiliated itself with two other elementary schools in California for what's being called the "No Excuses University" program.

In conjunction with the program, students and faculty recently celebrated "homecoming" with a touch football game and an evening dance.

"It was neat for me because it was probably the biggest turnout we had for a night event in a long time," Principal Nick Myers said.

Between 200 and 300 students showed up for the homecoming dance, hours after watching their sixth-grade team defeated 21-14 by the faculty team in football.

Since the start of the school year, each classroom has adopted a prominent university to call its own and identify with through June.

Some of them, like the University of Nebraska, have really leapt into the program with enthusiasm — sending their particular classroom a lot of supplies and memorabilia.

The class that's adopted Northern Illinois University will tour the campus next week, while a speaker from the local Roosevelt University will visit Fox School in December.

Students have already heard from Kevin Reeves, a Fox School alumnus who earned his degree from Harvard University a few years ago.

"We want to instill that message that after high school comes college," Myers said.

Fox School receives Title I funding and its student body comes from diverse backgrounds. Teachers and administrators are trying to show the kids that nothing is beyond their reach, even if they'll be the first members of their families to attend college.

A couple days a week the sixth-graders and kindergartners wear shirts displaying the years of their college graduations. The sixth-graders are the class of 2017 and the kindergartners are the class of 2023.

Events for the rest of the school year are still being planned, Myers said, but it's fully intended that the program will run for years. Among the ideas to keep it fresh and dynamic each year is that the students will always belong to a different university and will have various teachers with new approaches to the program.

Although the 27 schools of Schaumburg Township Elementary District 54 are encouraged to tailor programs to their own student bodies, a few of the other schools are already looking at what Fox School is doing this year, Myers said.