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Asian Studies

Boyd Buchanan Elementary School 2008 – 2009 School Year

Carol Littlejohn Second Grade Teacher

Boyd Buchanan School is a family oriented, Christian school in Chattanooga, Tennessee, situated between a small neighborhood and the Brainerd Levy off Moore Road. It is a school fully accredited by the Southern Association of Christian Schools. The 2008 – 2009 projected enrollment is 975 students, Pre-K through Twelfth Grade. The school is privately funded through tuition, endowments, and a supportive parent council. It provides a full range of athletic and arts opportunities as well as educational enrichment. The elementary curriculum is based upon integration of all subject areas. Our school administration is strongly committed to this idea and supports its teachers in their efforts to connect each child's life experiences to the world. It is with this educational philosophy that I am very excited to integrate the Teaching About Asia Program across all subject areas for our second graders.

The other second grade teachers from Boyd Buchanan Elementary School also attended the UTC East Asia Seminar with me and we have decided to each study a different Asian country. The countries include China, Japan, and Korea. Our curriculum will be similar, only through the eyes of a different country. Since our school has become more culturally diverse in the past few years our team teaching approach will

better serve the population that has chosen Boyd Buchanan Elementary as their school home.

I will be teaching about the country of Korea since I have taught several Korean children whose families have helped bring the Asian culture into my previous second grade classrooms. These experiences have afforded me a unique journey across the world without ever leaving the classroom. I have been given a deeper insight into the language, art, music, food, clothing, sports, customs, etc. of the Korean people.

Being a part of the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA) has given me an incredible glimpse into the history of Asia and its people. I have a much clearer understanding of the reasons behind Asian customs and I am motivated to expand and enrich the second grade Asian unit that is already in place.

To enrich the existing second grade curriculum several books, videos, and other teaching materials will be bought through the use of the websites shared in the NCTA class. Our librarian is working closely with me to help choose several non-fiction books and videos that show the history, customs, and everyday life in Korea. We are also searching for fiction books and videos that share many of this Asian country's legends.

These materials will be specifically used to help the students design a very large Korean map. Each student will be responsible for finding information concerning a particular fact about Korea, for instance, traditional clothing, food, schools, sports, mountains, rivers, money, music, art, etc. Next, the student will decide how to create a representation of what has been learned and glue it onto the map with a brief written

explanation. When the map has been completed the students will share with each other what they have learned before the map is placed on the wall outside our classroom. Then the students will compile the information they have gathered into a student generated Korean counting book similar to the one entitled, Count Your Way Through Korea by James Haskins.

We will discuss the art of calligraphy known to Koreans as “beautiful writing”. I hope to buy enough paintbrushes to allow each student in my class to experiment with the brush technique in writing the phrase “Happy New Year” in the Korean Hangul language. This phrase will be written on paper that the students have made themselves and framed and matted with the help of some parent volunteers that have already agreed to be a part of our Asian study. I also hope to teach each student to write their names in Korean using the brush technique with information that was given to me by Korean parents.

With NCTA monies I will purchase several Korean language tapes to teach the students how to speak some simple Korean phrases. I already have several pages of words and phrases given to me by Korean parents that we use to design a Korean language book. However, I want the students to actually hear these words and phrases from Korean people to hear proper pronunciation. This should make a better connection in a student’s understanding of other children across the world!

There is a family that attends Boyd Buchanan who owns a plant nursery here in Chattanooga. They will be contacted to help us decide and purchase materials used in a small garden located under my second grade classroom window. This garden is

extremely small but can be viewed by each student year round from the classroom window. Korean gardens adapt to nature in its original state and our garden will be filled with rocks that the students find in and around the garden site and Chrysanthemums from the nursery, since these flowers were used by Koreans to make a luxurious tea. We will try to bring natural elements together in peace and harmony within a definite space through an orderly and functional arrangement. In the spring the garden will be used for practical purposes with herbs, such as mint for our tea, and lettuce and radishes for salads. The students will be taught that inner peace and joy can be attained by viewing the garden and taking care of its needs.

I plan to integrate the Korean unit more thoroughly by enlisting the aide of other extracurricular teachers. The art teacher will involve the students in several lessons on *Japanese* paper folding techniques, known as origami. She will also aide the students in designing puppets that could be used in performing a play to recreate a Korean legend. The music teacher will teach several Asian songs that relate to China, Japan, and Korea. Some of the songs are about the Asian New Year. He has bought several CD's to share and will help the students hear the differences in tones and musical instruments from each country. Even our PE teacher has agreed to play games that Asian children enjoy, especially during the Asian New Year celebration.

All three of the second grade teachers have extended their Asian units to two weeks instead of one. This will allow more time for all three classes to teach each other certain aspects of each country, such as counting to ten, saying "Hello" in each language,

singing New Year songs to each other, introducing certain customs important to each country, etc. One custom that we have decided to compare and contrast is the tea ceremony. Each class is going to purchase several tea sets and learn each country's tea ceremony. Then, the second graders will be divided into groups to visit and participate in each country's tea ceremony.

At the end of the unit the students will participate in an Asian New Year Parade throughout the halls of the school. They will be dressed in Asian clothes. Some students in my class will be carrying the flag of Korea at the beginning of the parade and the other students will be carrying pots and pans decorated with Korean symbols to be used as traditional drums. The other classes will participate in the parade holding items traditional to their Asian country. Our school photographer will attend and take pictures for the newspaper and this year we hope to have a camera crew from one of the TV channels in the area to let our community know that cultural awareness in our community is vital to the education of our children. When the parade is over our students will have lunch at one of the many Asian restaurants near our school. At the end of the day students will sit under the trees close to our garden and use their writing journals to reflect upon what they have learned during our unit and how we are both different and alike with our Asian friends across the world!

Boyd Buchanan Elementary
4626 Bonnieway Drive
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37411
(423) 624-9065
