

## *High Ropes Leadership Program*

*The Skokie School*



### ***Purpose:***

The Kinetic Wellness program at the Skokie School was fortunate to integrate a high ropes initiative into the curriculum during the 2001-2002 school year. The Kinetic Wellness staff was not prepared for the overwhelmingly positive impact this unit would have on the student body during its inaugural year. Many students that did not display strong gross-motor skills such as throwing and kicking thrived and excelled during the high ropes unit. Throughout the climbing unit leaders emerged, empathy was recognized and valued, and students were challenged beyond their comfort zones.

The idea for a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student leadership program is a natural progression in the development of the KW climbing curriculum. In the first year, it was felt the student to teacher ratio was an inhibiting factor for maximum class participation for both the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The KW staff is training experienced, responsible 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to aid the teacher allowing for increased daily participation as well as providing leadership opportunities.

### ***Goals:***

- To promote positive leadership qualities among the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students
- To recognize and support individual differences in climbing abilities
- To assist with the student teacher ratio in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade climbing units
- To create a natural link between Project Reach and the Kinetic Wellness curriculums
- To enhance the district's atmosphere of cooperative learning

### ***Referral Process:***

Every student that is interested in becoming a Leader shall complete and turned in on time:

- Leadership application (see attached)
- Advisor recommendation (see attached)
- Exploratory recommendation (see attached)

### ***Leadership Selection Process:***

Consideration for a student leadership position includes:

- All paperwork completed and turned into the KW teacher on time
- The principal will evaluate discipline issues. If the student has a chronic discipline pattern, it is the principal's decision whether the student can participate in the program.

- The KW teacher will evaluate the information compiled from all of the applications and referrals then finalize a list of leadership candidates and make final selection decisions.

The Kinetic Wellness teachers firmly believe in the benefits the Leadership Program will have on the students. Taking initiative, building confidence, and being a positive role model are just some of the benefits of the program. For this innovative program to continue and to be successful, the KW teachers need the support and cooperation of the entire faculty.

Classroom time is valuable to each and every teacher and student in the building. The KW staff recognizes this and has tried to limit the time the student will be out of the classroom. In order for this Leadership Program to evolve, the student leaders will need to be released out of 4<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> period.

The two students from the advisory that are selected for the program will be on a three-day rotation. For example, if the student leader starts on a Monday, their next day would be on Thursday. This cycle continues for two weeks, and then another group starts a new two-week cycle. Keep in mind that the two students that are working 4<sup>th</sup> period may not be from the same advisory.

The referral/evaluation process and communication are the two key components for the success of the Leadership Program. **The classroom teacher's referral has the most weight when making the final decision on a student leader.** The first priority is that the student is a vital member to his/her classroom. Handing in homework on time, contributing to classroom activities, and hard work are all qualities that each leader needs to display. The KW team needs to know that the student will be responsible for making up missed assignments or projects while being a student leader. If a student has a hard time turning completed assignments in on time, this program is not for that student.

Communication between the student and the classroom teacher is a must. The student is responsible for getting any assignments he/she will miss during the climbing time. This should be done **BEFORE** school begins or when morning advisory is completed. The classroom teacher will determine the procedure for obtaining missed assignments (i.e. the morning or, a week before, etc) and it will vary from teacher to teacher. A big component to this program is instilling student responsibility. It should **NEVER** be the teacher's responsibility to remind the student of his/her missed homework.

The communication between classroom teacher and the KW team is also crucial. If a student falls behind on assignments and is not displaying positive leadership qualities in the classroom, that student will be pulled from the program. Above all else, the position of student leader is an earned privilege.