

Tutoring Program at Thornton Creek School

What is the Tutoring Program?

The Thornton Creek Site Council provides for a tutoring program in our school for children in grades K-5. The intent of the program is to assist students who are slightly behind in their skills in some area, but who do not qualify for special education services. Tutoring children who are struggling in some academic subject allows the classroom teacher to better educate all the children in the class at their level. The tutoring program is not an enrichment program; its intent is to help bring children up to grade level and then to phase them out of the program.

The tutoring, usually in small groups, takes place during school hours on a pull-out basis, with few exceptions. Each tutor has a location in the building that she uses to work with the small groups of children.

The cost of the program is born by the Site Council; there is no financial cost to the parents of the child being tutored. A tutoring coordinator, Ginny Allemann, helps arrange scheduling, accounting, and evaluation of the program.

How are students referred for tutoring?

Identifying students for tutoring involves three parts: first, and most importantly, teacher *recommendation*; second, *assessments in the academic subject area*, such as the DRA (Direct Reading Assessment); and third, *tutor assessments and input*. In many cases, tutoring can actually begin based on teacher recommendation, with the assessment and tutor input following.

Classroom teachers are in an excellent position to assess a child's strengths and areas for growth. They are trained in teaching and assessment and have the background knowledge that comes from working with many, many students. Teachers are professionally equipped to determine if a student is falling behind or struggling in some academic area.

Assessments clarify and verify the teacher's recommendations and give specific information about how far behind the child is in a particular skill. Tutors can use specific assessments to closely identify the student's needs and to pinpoint skills to target in their work with the student.

How are parents informed?

Children in grades 1-5 are typically identified for tutoring early in the fall; Kindergarten students are not placed with a tutor until January. When a teacher refers a child for tutoring help in an academic subject,

he or she will communicate directly with the parent about the need, either by phone call or email. The teacher will explain her concerns to the parent and explain the time and place of tutoring, and who the tutor will be.

Tutors and teachers communicate frequently regarding students' progress. Tutors regularly update parents and teachers about the progress of the student. Several times a year, tutors will prepare formal progress notes for the parents and the teachers.

When a student has progressed to the degree that the tutor and teacher, in consultation, agree that he or she no longer needs tutoring in a particular subject, parents will be informed and tutoring discontinued for that student.

Who are the Thornton Creek tutors?

Thornton Creek is fortunate to have experienced tutors helping our children.

Cindy Deshler

Cindy has a BA and MA in Education and 25 years teaching experience in all grades K-7, as well as post-grad credits in Linguistic Remedies and many other teaching strategies. She taught for 10 years at Pathfinder, has taught both whole class and small groups, and is the parent of two Thornton Creek graduates! She has worked as a tutor at Thornton Creek for several years, and is currently also our literacy specialist.

Anne Van Loen

Anne is an educator with a Masters from Simmons College, endorsements in Elementary Education, English, and Early Childhood Education, and over 10 years of teaching experience. In addition to being a Thornton Creek parent and volunteer, Anne has completed training in Everyday Math, TERC/Investigations, and Linguistic Remedies and has worked as a tutor and academic coach at Thornton Creek for two years.

Jenny Stewart

Jenny is an educator with a BA from Occidental College and teaching degree from the University of Washington with endorsements in Elementary Education and English as a Second Language. Jenny has over 10 years of teaching experience and has completed training in Everyday Math, TERC/Investigations, as well as Six Traits Writing. Jenny is a parent and volunteer at Thornton Creek and started as a tutor here last year.