

Showcasing Excellence: Susan Brooks, Flynn Elementary

with reporting by UVM student Michele Russell



Close your eyes and imagine your first grade classroom. When I walked into Susan Brooks' class at Flynn Elementary, I could see how much thought she puts into everything that happens in her room. There are inspirational posters and student artwork. Mixed in with these are alphabet posters and number lines. The tables are set up in a way that allows the students to interact with each other and for Ms. Brooks to easily get to everyone. There is a corner dedicated

to books and another to a classroom meeting space. Every place you turned, there are inviting learning spaces.

When I visited, Ms Brooks was teaching her favorite subject, reading and writing. After students did some writing on their individual white boards, they got together in pairs. Ms. Brooks commented that working together helps students to improve their writing and develop relationships. Kids were excited to talk with a classmate about their stories.



Connecting with families at least once a week, Ms. Brooks values the relationships she develops with parents to support their student's learning. Community connections also enhance Ms. Brooks class. They have done "Hikes for Hunger" to support Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger as well as bake sales to help community groups. These experiences help the students learn to be good citizens while they learn their reading, writing and math, too.



Ms. Brooks began her teaching career in Dallas, Texas. She really enjoys the economic and cultural diversity of the students in Burlington. Everything that Ms. Brooks does, from the way she has her room set up to the way she organizes her lessons, is designed to help her students learn well. It was so nice to observe a teacher that is so dedicated to her students.