

## **Discovery Program**

The Discovery Program serves students in grades 1-5 who live in the Highlands attendance area as well as open enrollment students from within Edina and outside of the Edina School district. The Discovery Program began when Highlands reopened in 1990. The looping model began in 1992.

### **Program Components**

#### **Continuity**

Students in a grade level stay together for the five years they are at Highlands. Each grade level has 2 teachers with 50-58 students. The students loop first and second grade and again in third and fourth grade. Looping means that students and their teachers stay together for the two years. When they move to the next loop, children are mixed into new classes. The students in each loop have opportunities to be with students from the other class as well as the other teacher. In fifth grade students are mixed again.

#### **Single Grade Groups**

Students are in single grade classrooms. There are opportunities during the year for classrooms to team with classes in different grades.

#### **Family Involvement**

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning process. Parents have many opportunities to volunteer in their child's classroom on a regular basis in addition to field trips and special activities.

#### **Cooperative Learning**

Cooperative learning is a fundamental goal in the teaching process. Structured social interaction with an academic focus promotes the development of social skills and a positive classroom climate, as well as a deeper understanding of academic content. Collaboration rather than a competition is fostered. This prepares students for the realities of home and the workplace.

#### **Process of Learning**

There is a value placed on the process of learning as well as product. Because of the continuity, the student's growth pattern can be observed over time.

**Curriculum** Students in the Discovery Program participate in the same curriculum as other Edina Elementary Students. The content areas of science, social studies and health are integrated in a thematic manner. Each grade level's curriculum is organized by concepts within a yearlong theme.

Yearlong themes:

First Grade: We All Live Together

Second Grade: The World From Where We Stand

Third Grade: Making a World of Difference

Fourth Grade: Minnesota Treasures

Fifth Grade: Make it a Better Place

#### **Environmental Education**

Students go to an environmental camp at the end of second grade, in fourth grade and in fifth grade.