

## Chamberlin Hill Intermediate School

600 W Yates Avenue

Findlay, OH 45840

Teacher: Deb Wickerham

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Chamberlin Hill Intermediate School is one of four intermediate schools in the Findlay City Schools District, in Hancock County, Ohio. Deb Wickerham, who is National Board certified, teaches deaf and hearing children in her fifth-grade inclusion class.

- ◆ Intermediate (3–5)
- ◆ 89% White
- ◆ 6% Multiracial
- ◆ 32% free- and reduced-price lunch
- ◆ 25% Special Education/Disabled

Wickerham has taught for 32 years. She teaches all subjects except mathematics. In 2001, Wickerham achieved National Board Certification and she recruits and helps other teachers achieve National Board Certification as a facilitator and mentor. She has received numerous awards and recognition for her teaching including: the Presidential Award for Elementary Science Excellence; Vernier National Science Teacher of the Year; Rotary Golden Apple award; Jaycee Teacher of the Year; and, in 2007, the VFW Regional Teacher of the Year. Since 1999, Wickerham has served as adjunct professor in middle childhood science at the University of Findlay.

Wickerham uses a hands-on approach to teaching her 5<sup>th</sup> graders science. In the lesson featured here Wickerham uses eggs, candy bars and cupcakes to represent the layers of the earth. As her students conduct core sampling of the materials they make connections between the abstract concept of geologic time and the structure of the earth's layers, as well as what causes the layers to form.

“I like to use concrete models in my science instructions because many students are visual learners or even more so tactile/kinesthetic learners,” says Wickerham. “Hands-on activities help them visualize the concept and internalize it. They help them understand what they are learning, especially with earth processes and space, which can be very abstract to them.”

Wickerham encourages her students to consider both the strengths and the limitations of scientific models. Wickerham explains, “We also talk about how models have limitations that they aren't totally representative, that there are differences in proportion and size that are not accurate.” In doing so Wickerham helps students to understand the shared and relevant connections between the model, the concrete context, and the abstract phenomenon.

Wickerham uses a number of strategies to help her students review and internalize key material. For example, she has her students complete worksheets that summarize their understanding of big ideas and serve as tools for review later in the year.

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