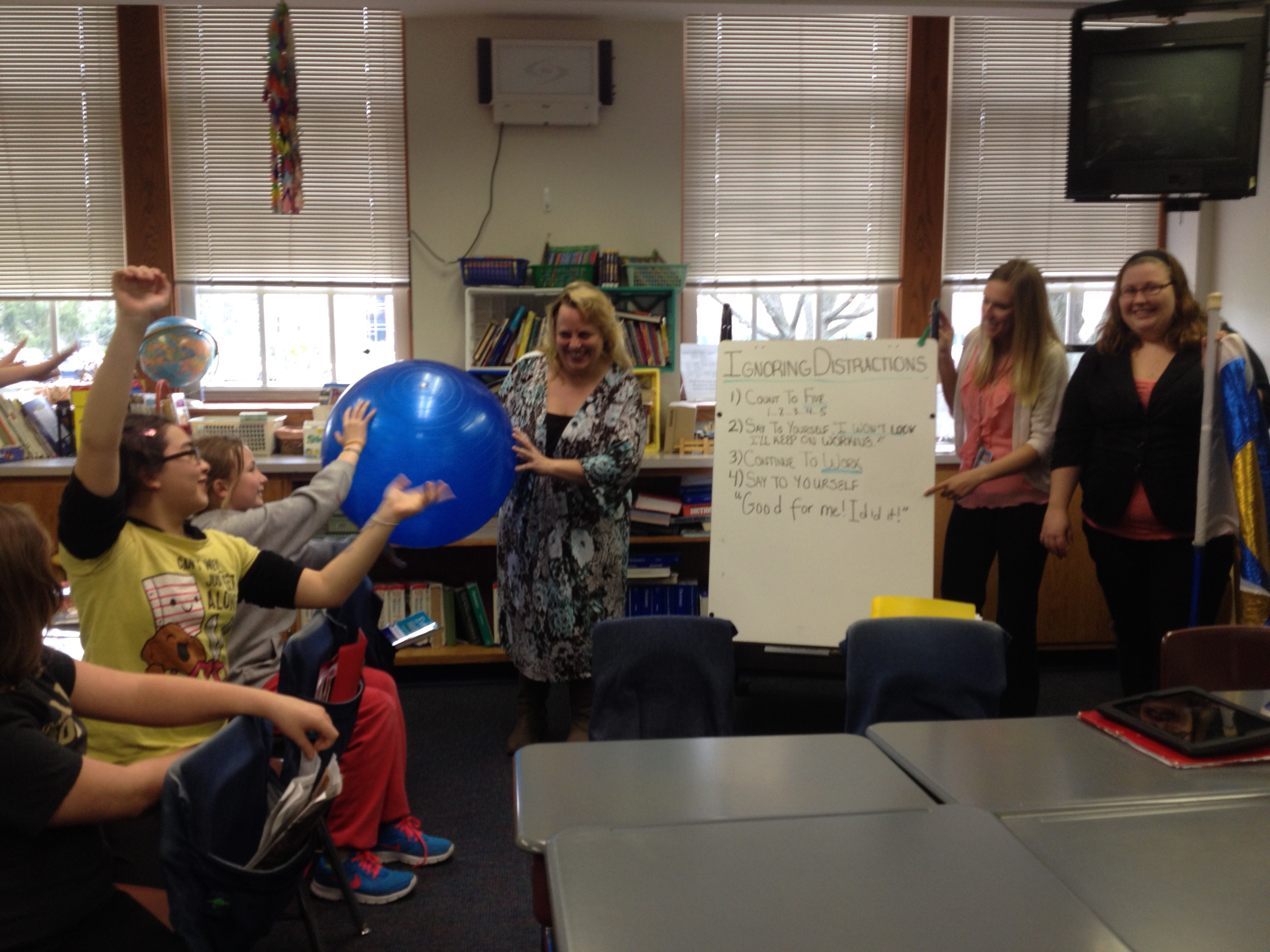
***SKILLSTREAMING***

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Each month this year, the SkillStreaming Team has had the opportunity to work directly with elementary students by visiting each classroom to teach thirty-minute classroom guidance presentations. These SkillStreaming presentations focus on specific social skills that the teachers identified as troublesome. Past lessons have included skills such as, Listening, Saying Thank You, Setting a Goal, Dealing With Embarrassment, Responding to Teasing, and Ignoring Distractions.

Skillstreaming is a project in which we teach the students about social skills by leading role-play activities and modeling these skills in ways that the students are able to understand and replicate. We like to include various props in each lesson that relate to that month’s skill. For example, we brought in a small basketball goal when we discussed Setting a Goal and, as you can see in the photograph below, we used many fun items when teaching the students about Ignoring Distractions. After modeling our own role-play, we encourage students to develop their own scenarios and participate in the role-plays. These activities allow students to make informed decisions about their social environment. This has been a very rewarding project because we have witnessed the positive impact this training has had on the Burris atmosphere, and we have enjoyed fostering this safe and welcoming environment at Burris.

After gathering data from post-tests distributed in March, we found that each skill showed improvement from the pre-test distributed in early September. For example, one question on the post-test survey asked, “Do the students listen when someone is speaking and make an effort to understand what is said?” The teachers responded using a scale from 1 (Almost Never) to 5 (Almost Always). Results from the post-test also showed that ten out of eleven teachers considered the SkillStreaming lessons to be beneficial for their students.

In addition to the general improvements in the elementary classrooms, teachers also observed specific changes in students since the implementation of the SkillStreaming intervention. One teacher wrote that the students had a larger vocabulary due to SkillStreaming and often used the terms that they learned in the lessons. This teacher also stated that, “They (the students) are more aware sometimes of how their actions impact others.” Another teacher mentioned that the greatest improvement in their classroom dealt with the students’ listening skills. Finally, one teacher specifically mentioned that the students were saying thank you more often and were practicing good active listening skills.

With all of these changes and improvements, we consider SkillStreaming to have been a success here at Burris! We want to give a special thanks to Dr. Albrecht for guiding us throughout this project, as well as all of the elementary teachers who were incredibly supportive and actively participated in our sessions. Finally, we want to thank all of the elementary students who gave us their full attention and kept working even after our sessions to improve on each of these skills. Thank you very much everyone!