Empowering Students in Math
Learning is Inclusive

SANDRA WILLSON: I was concerned when I was first given this placement not because of the placement itself or the teacher but how I would fit in. Because of my approach, I work with special needs children and my whole role is to assist in their learning. So it could mean monitoring medical, it could mean teaching them skills for self-regulating, it could be very basic skills how to eat safely. I didn’t know how I would fit in because of the open--the different concept in here and I didn’t want to squash that. I didn’t want to interfere with that. I didn’t want to have children be stopped from that type of learning because I didn’t understand it. So the first couple weeks I spent listening and watching, and observing. And every day I went home blown away because of the depth of what I was seeing. I watched kids sit on the carpet and reflect to the point where there was times that challenged my thinking, it challenged my information that I knew. And I was able to ask them questions, and we were helping each other. And I also knew for once that I was finally gonna get some help with my technology needs because old school, you still have that intimidation of technology. If you hit the wrong button you’re gonna lose it whereas these kids were just as accepting of me as I was of them and they taught me how to use the technology. So this class has been absolutely breathtaking in learning, and experiencing, and sharing. And the team approach that they have, I can't say enough about the highlight of what this has been to watch these kids blossom and just articulate what they've learned and name what they're learning to decompose numbers in such a way. There is adults that might not be able to articulate that, and these grades 2s and 3s are doing it and just the openness to the learning that has happened I can't wait to see what they do with this next year. What impact they're gonna use next year in their challenges, 'cause they're even challenging their parents coming home with stories and the parents say well we're gonna be doing this and the little girl turns around and says to daddy can you justify your answer, daddy? That's learning, that's education when you can take it forward and make that connection outside of the classroom. I can't wait to see what they do and we challenge them on a regular basis don't let this go. Keep it going next year because you can be a vessel of change and that's what we want. This is the whole idea, right?