

Big News In Burkina!

Last Updated Tuesday, 24 June 2008

Remember that little 3 classroom Christian school many of you helped me build? Well, in Burkina after the 6th grade, all students must pass a very important State exam in order to go any further in school. In addition, if they pass, they receive a diploma which makes them eligible for certain jobs. It is very difficult to pass. The students just took this exam last week and it had some very challenging questions to the point that it was televised how difficult the exam was this year.

Okay, get to the point – they just announced this afternoon that we scored 95%, the top of the District! That is phenomenal! The next school had 89% and the last place school had 36% - I'm not trying to gloat over our score; but give you a comparison of how well they did. Not only that, but if a student scores a certain number of points, he is "admitted" to 7th grade on scholarship – ALL of our students who passed were admitted for scholarship! I don't know yet what percentage usually get admitted, but I can tell you I have known very few children who were over the years; so it must also be hard to achieve.

So, this is a really big deal here because:

1.
Everyone said, "How will the children learn if you won't beat them"?
2.
The Department of Education asked "Are you sure you will be able to cover all the material if you take time out for Bible lessons?"
3.
They said, you have to make your students come in on their day off to prepare for the exam. I said, "No, the teachers and students need a day of rest". They said, that won't work.
4.
Most class sizes average 100 students per teacher. Look what we can do if we limit the class size to 25 (although the school who scored 36% also had small class sizes).
5.
We took in many children who everyone else had given up on or were 'too old'. Karim's Mom said, "his head is empty". Karim passed! Gregoire's Dad asked me to have his hearing tested because he was previously doing so poorly in school. We had him tested and his hearing was fine. Gregoire passed! Gilbert failed miserably prior to coming to us – we had him in a remedial group – Gilbert passed! I could go on and on...
6.
The teacher, Innocent, has an 11th grade education, 2 years of teaching experience, no formal training; but he knows the Lord!

God absolutely gets the credit here – it doesn't make sense otherwise. Sure, I know early childhood education, but what do I know about Burkina education, a whole different beast. And, teachers with minimal education and no training; but we focused on putting God first so he

could lead us and look at the results! In fact, I'm quite certain based on the 6 points I made above that the whole town wondered how the crazy white lady was going to pull this off; so even they will have to give the Lord credit because they think I'm crazy!

One more thing – each year there is a big soccer competition. They play throughout the year and end with the big game. Our little tiny school with 25 eligible players took 3rd place amongst the other schools each with about 100 eligible players! No one saw that coming!

If I were home right now I'd be inviting all of you over to celebrate! The whole town of Yako is offering their congratulations and asking "when's the party?" and "what will you kill? (i.e. cow, goats, etc. just to clarify!).

One sad note, just one student, a girl named Nafissatou did not pass. I'll find out Monday how close she was. Of course she is in tears and I'm sure humiliated –PLEASE pray for her.

Thank You for all of your support that made this possible!!