

Minford elementary and middle schools incorporate murals throughout the buildings to liven up the education atmosphere

Over the past two years Minford's new schools have gotten a little more color. The school system's parent teacher organization has budgeted to pay for murals placed throughout the middle and elementary school buildings.

"The walls with the new buildings were kind of bleak, so we wanted some color," said first-grade teacher Susan Bender.

The elementary teachers decided to ask for murals after approving of the examples in the middle school, which had murals first.

"They really improved the building a lot and brought some color to it. The murals are wonderful and we are so proud of them," said Bender. "We hope to have some more done in the future."

The murals were painted by a local artist from South Webster named Cindy Gibson. She was chosen for the job because of previous work she had done for different teachers and parents in the system. The elementary school features whimsical representations of characters from children's literature, said Bender. The murals include the well-known caterpillar from Eric Carle's "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" and the brightly colored tree from Brian Selznick's "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang."

In the elementary school, the teachers of each grade level chose their own mural, said Bender. That way, the picture would be age appropriate and fit into the teachers' lesson plans.

The previously completed multiple pictures in the middle school building reflect different types of objects including the cover of "The Great Kapok Tree: a Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest" by Lynne Cherry, a book that students are required to read, the Statue of Liberty outside of a Social Studies classroom and a math book illustration.

All the pictures taken from the various books give the title, author and illustrator in an effort to teach students about the issues of plagiarism, said Bender. The teachers were also concerned about copyright issues in the reproductions.

In future murals, the school hopes to include at least one collage showing the evolution of the Minford Schools from the one-room school house to the present day buildings.

"We wanted to make it more homey and take away the institutionalized feel," said Minford Elementary School Principal Timothy Allen.

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**— Susan Bender**

**Minford first-grade teacher**

*by PDT Contributor Aerin Curtis*

*Photo by Robert Lyons*