

# Hawthorn District 73

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## *The Curriculum Quarterly*

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### Zook's Nook

I am pleased to present the second volume of *The Curriculum Quarterly*. This newsletter will be sent home with students four times a year as well as posted on our website.

The purpose of the newsletter is to keep you informed about the many wonderful things being done in our district in the areas of Student Achievement and Staff Development.

Over the summer, our 2006-07 Curriculum Guide was drafted. We are in the process of getting it ready to go to the printer and should have copies available by mid September. You will notice that the guide includes not only the power standards for every content/goal area, but also the unwrapped standards for each grade level.

Power standards, which are aligned with the State standards, reflect the most important things that we want students to know and be able to do before leaving a grade level. They include the knowledge and skills that are essential for students in school, in life, and on high-stakes tests.

Unwrapped standards include detailed lists of not only the concepts and skills, but also, the evidence that will indicate that a student has mastered the standard. The unwrapped standards will guide teachers in their lesson and unit planning.

Eventually, progress reports and/or report cards will be aligned with the Power Standards. A reporting system will reflect a student's progress toward achieving each of the standards for the grade level. See page 2 for more information.

An action team, composed of administrators and teachers, was formed last year to work on the development of new report cards. A parent advisory team was formed to provide feedback on the work of this group. If you are interested in participating with this group of parents, please contact me by calling 847-990-4244 or email me at [zooks@hawthorn73.org](mailto:zooks@hawthorn73.org).

### 2006 ISAT Results Exceed Expectations

In March, all students in grades 3-8 completed State tests in reading and math. Students in grades 4 and 7 were also tested in science.

Although final reports will most likely not be available until mid-late November, the preliminary results look fantastic. The district average of students in grades 3-8 meeting or exceeding standards was the following: 86% in reading, 90% in math and 93% in science.

The following chart gives a breakdown of the percentages by grade level.

Grade	Reading	Math	Science
3	83%	89%	N/A
4	86%	92%	94%
5	83%	85%	N/A
6	86%	92%	N/A
7	84%	89%	91%
8	91%	93%	N/A

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires all states to measure each public school and district's achievement and establish annual achievement targets for the state.

The overarching goal is for all students to meet or exceed standards in reading and mathematics by 2014.

Each year, the state will calculate a school or district's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) to determine if students are improving their performance based on the established annual targets.

AYP calculations are in and I am pleased to report that ALL Hawthorn schools have met AYP targets for reading and math in ALL areas including sub groups in the areas of ethnicity, Limited English Proficient (LEP), Students with Disabilities, and Economically Disadvantaged.

Each building is presently reviewing its data to establish school improvement goals for this year and formulate Whole Faculty Study Groups to address improvement goals. Great things continue to happen with student achievement at Hawthorn.

**The Proposed New Report Cards: It's Really about Grading Practices that Work**

Last December a group of administrators and teachers completed two days of training with Dr. Tom Guskey from the University of Kentucky. The focus of the training was on improving student learning with standards, assessments, and grading.

Over the past 3-5 years, we have been diligent about aligning our curriculum, instruction, and assessment with the Illinois standards. As a next step, we have begun the challenging task of developing more meaningful grading practices and reporting systems.

Some of the guidelines we are examining as we go through the process include the following:

- The importance of changing/modifying traditional assessment and grading practices
- The role of daily and culminating assessments as tools for learning
- The purposes for grading and the need to clearly state it
- Various ways to report student learning, including report cards, student-led conferences, phone calls, web-based grade book programs, etc.
- Reporting systems to better communicate and involve parents in student learning, and
- The impact of negative policies and practices to be avoided.

While there have been many debates over grading and reporting, today, thanks to the work of researchers and educators, like Dr. Guskey, we have a better understanding of which practices benefit students and encourage learning.

We want teachers to check regularly on how students are doing, what they've learned, and what problems or difficulties they've experienced. What we need to keep in mind is that checking is different from grading

Dr. Tom Guskey will be returning to Hawthorn on November 1, 2006. He will assist us with the on-going development of new report cards, as well as other tools to improve our communication system with parents.

On the morning of November 1, Dr. Guskey will be meeting with the administrators/teachers that he trained last December. From 1:00-3:00 p.m. he will be addressing all teachers on the topic of Effective Grading Practices. At 7:00 p.m., Dr. Guskey will meet with parents, at Townline Elementary, on the same topic and address questions and concerns that parents have concerning the proposed pilot for new report cards. Mark your calendar now and plan to attend what will be a very informative meeting with Dr. Guskey.

**Better by the Dozen - 12 under 12 Network Values Relationships That Are Being Developed**

The Fall 2006 article of the Journal for Staff Development, a National Staff Development Council publication, opens by saying, "Several years ago, about a dozen schools from different parts of the country volunteered to challenge themselves to close the achievement gap - and to do it sooner than the 12-year deadline set by the federal government".

Two Hawthorn Schools, Townline Elementary and Middle School North are part of this National Network. Building leaders, Karen Cencula, Eileen Conway, and John Ahlemeyer, are cited in the 4-page article about how the network is helping make a difference in student achievement.

While only two of our schools are part of the network, all Hawthorn schools are benefiting from the work that's being shared by the 12 Under 12 teams. We are very proud of the active leadership and involvement in this national network on behalf of our students. Hawthorn's goal is to have all students demonstrate proficiency in reading, math, and writing by June 2010.

To read the complete article, go to our website and click on [learning@hawthorn](mailto:learning@hawthorn), 12 Under 12.

**Contact Information**

Questions or comments related to Student Achievement and Staff Development should be directed to Sue Zook, Ed.D. The email address is [zooks@hawthorn73.org](mailto:zooks@hawthorn73.org) and phone number at district office is 847-990-4244.