

# Hawthorn District 73

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## *The Curriculum Quarterly*

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### Zook's Nook

The first quarter of the 2006-07 school year has been filled with many activities in the areas of student achievement and staff development.

At the building level, teachers have been examining data and developing Whole Faculty Study Group action plans and making adjustments to individual students' instruction and learning plans to improve overall achievement.

Ongoing training has been scheduled in the following areas: Understanding by Design (UbD), Bernstein Artful Learning, and 6-Traits Writing. New training with the Center for Performance Assessment on Writing Excellence and Common Assessments also took place.

For the first time ever, training has spread to our Educational Support Personnel (ESP). On December 15, lunch/recess supervisors, both ESP and certified teachers and administrators, will participate in a workshop with the Bureau of Educational Research (BER) on "Significantly Reducing Playground Bullying and Discipline Problems" (Grades K-6). This seminar, presented by Jo Ann Freiberg, promises to bring...

- \* Realistic ideas for significantly reducing discipline problems on the playground
- \* Dozens of practical ideas for designing, managing and supervising physically safe and emotionally respectful playgrounds and recesses
- \* Research-based strategies for reducing physical and emotional bullying behaviors on the playground
- \* Ready-to-use ideas for establishing safe and sane rules, supervising effectively, recognizing and diminishing bullying behaviors, solving problems and conflicts appropriately, surveying and assessing existing playground situations, and much more.

We are anxious to apply this training to help us with our goal of a Safe and Orderly Environment for students. We'll keep you posted on results.

### Summer School Schedule Set

The 2007 Hawthorn Enrichment Institute (HEI) will include two, three-week sessions. Robin O'Connor will return as this year's HEI principal. She has planned and coordinated with the Vernon Hills Park District to provide the option of a full-day program and a variety of special Friday events.

HEI classes will meet Mondays-Thursdays from 8:30-11:30 a.m. at Middle School South. Session I will run from June 11-28, 2007. Session II is scheduled for July 9-26. No classes are scheduled for the week of July 2. Parents can opt to enroll children in one or both sessions.

Complete information about the program will be provided after winter break with, registration for the summer enrichment program beginning in late January 2007. Packets will also include information about the Park District Camp programs to assist with making complete summer plans.

### Report Card Update

The Professional Report Card Grade Team, who trained with Dr. Tom Guskey last year, is scheduled to meet on January 10, 2007 to continue its work of developing new report cards, which are aligned with our standards.

The November 1 meetings with Dr. Guksey provided some new information, which may influence and cause the team to make some changes in the drafts that were created almost a year ago.

When the team meets on January 10, it will also plan for "next-step work" with other teachers to take place during an early release day meeting on January 31. We do not anticipate having new drafts and/or a revised implementation timeline for report cards until after spring break. At such time, we will reconvene the Parent Team and/or conduct a special coffee to share the work of our Professional Team. If you would like more frequent email updates, please email Sue Zook, Ed.D. with your contact information.

**The Center is at the Heart of  
This Year's Training**

Doug Reeve's Center for Performance Assessment has come back to Hawthorn this year for Writing Excellence and Common Assessments. In past years, the Center has worked with us in the following areas: Data Teams, Data-driven Decision Making, Making Standards Work, and Identifying and Unwrapping Power Standards.

Why The Center? They believe there are seven keys to effective professional development, and each of these keys is necessary for our investment of time and resources to be effective in improving student achievement.

First, there must be a clear and consistent purpose for professional development. At the Center, their singular mission is improving student achievement by building the knowledge and skills of educators and school leaders. They work effectively in districts, like Hawthorn, that share this mission as the primary focus of their professional development work.

Second, specific areas of knowledge and skills that are necessary for improving student achievement must be identified. Their research suggests that we must build knowledge and skills in these key areas:

- Designing and developing standards-based performance assessments
- Advanced Assessment Design
- Effective teaching strategies
- Data-driven decision making
- Accountability for improved student achievement

Third, every building must have permanent resources so that the knowledge and skills are reinforced for current faculty members and introduced to new faculty members.

Fourth, local leadership must be encouraged and nurtured through networking with other educators and leaders who are committed to the best practices in teaching, assessment, and leadership.

Fifth, the efforts of teachers and school leaders must be supported with a holistic accountability system that includes not only test scores, but also a comprehensive analysis of the

teaching and leadership practices that are associated with improved student achievement. This step is absolutely essential in order to translate the good intentions of professional development into actual changes in practice by teachers and administrators.

Sixth, leaders and policymakers must be supported in their efforts through direct support and access to the most recent information. Through a combination of personal visits, telephone conferences, and videoconferences, the Center provides direct support to meet the needs of superintendents, senior leaders, and board members.

Seventh, the motivation to put all of the pieces together is provided in the form of dynamic and research-packed presentations and trainers.

Our experience, with the Center, makes it clear that all seven of these keys are essential. Schools waste money and time when they provide motivation, but no deep study that provides knowledge and skills. Schools waste money and time when they provide knowledge and skills to one group of teachers, but fail to provide permanent resources to reinforce those messages and assist new teachers and administrators coming into the building. School systems waste money and time when they provide professional development but fail to assess the actual application of professional development techniques in the classroom and school building through an effective accountability system.

By adhering to these seven key principles, Hawthorn has been able to see results in student achievement. While there are so many initiatives taking place, it is difficult to sort which is having the greatest impact. However, we are pleased to say that significant student achievement results have been realized with our comprehensive staff development program.

**Contact Information**

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