

Hawthorn District 73

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Zook's Nook

In November-January all parents and community members were given the opportunity to respond to the ASCD, "What Works in Schools" online survey. Also, in November all parents and students in grades 3-8 had a chance to complete a district-developed survey on World/Foreign Languages and Related Arts classes in our middle schools.

Let me share highlights of the survey results and our beginning plans or next steps that we will be taking to address some of the areas of concern identified in the survey results.

The ASCD survey's purpose was to learn the community members' perception of schools as framed by Robert Marzano's 11 Factors for Effective Schools. There were 259 total responses to this survey, representing an estimated rate of response of 10.5%. Responses were fairly well distributed among the six schools and community members with no students. The consistency of answers seems to indicate that these responses are representative of the larger population.

Responses fell in a fairly consistent pattern. Most responses fell in the "3" range on a four-point scale. Generally, higher marks/more positive perceptions were given in the following areas:

- Professionalism of school staff
- Classroom management
- Classroom curriculum design

Generally, lower marks/less positive perceptions were given in the following areas:

- Home environment
- The school provides information about effective parenting techniques
- The school provides information about how to support student learning at home

The "Top 10 Priorities" that we will be focusing on in a plan of action include:

1. Each student has specific learning goals.

"Top 10 Priorities" (cont.)

2. The school provides a wide variety of out-of-school experiences that support students' learning.
3. The school provides information about effective parenting techniques.
4. Students write frequently about what they are learning.
5. Students have many opportunities to pursue their individual interests.
6. Teachers provide useful feedback to students about their homework assignments.
7. The school provides ways to involve parents and guardians in running the school.
8. The school has a plan for improving student achievement both for the school in general and for individual students.
9. Students who make significant academic progress receive acknowledgment from the school.
10. No matter their subject or grade level, all teachers teach important content well.

The Administrative Team and Hawthorn Planning Council will review these survey results and incorporate specific plans of action within building School Improvement Plans to address these priority areas.

For additional information about this survey, check out the website www.hawthorn73.org. Click on Learning at Hawthorn - Presentations; choose survey results.

Report Card Update

The Professional Report Card Grade Team, who trained with Dr. Tom Guskey in December 2005, has been meeting to continue its work of developing new report cards, which are aligned with our standards.

We would like to share the work of this group at a special coffee on Monday, April 16, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. in the District Office. If you would like more frequent email updates, please email Sue Zook, Ed.D., zooks@hawthorn73.org, with your contact information.

World/Foreign Language and Related Arts

On this district-developed survey, there were 1905 responses, a 78% return from students in grades 3-8. A total of 245 parents, or 9.9% responded to the survey.

In responses to a question about whether a **World Language** class and learning another language is important to you, 73% of students and 93% of the parents responded either Very Important or Somewhat Important. Students felt it was important to begin studying a language in grades 6-8 (49%) and 46% of the parents indicated that grades K-2 was when a language should be taught.

While a majority of parents and students thought the schools should teach two languages, when asked if only one language could be taught, most students and parents identified Spanish as the language of choice; 49% of students and 79% of parents.

Other languages of interest included: Asian languages, including Japanese, Chinese and Korean.

When asked, how important is it for **Related Arts** Classes to be exactly the same at both of the Middle Schools, 82% of students and 89% of the parents indicated that it was either Extremely or Somewhat Important.

Four related arts courses: Consumer Science and Life Skills; Industrial/Applied Technology; Information Literacy; and Media Literacy and Digital Production are currently different at the two Middle Schools. Consumer Science/Life Skills was chosen as the number 1 ranking class by 41% of students and 39% of the parents choosing it. Industrial/Applied Technology was the second choice, with both 24% of the students and parents choosing that class.

In April 2007, teams of teachers and administrators will begin studying the survey results and investigating options for a World and Foreign Language and Related Arts plan. The primary goal of the Language Team is to determine which languages and what delivery of services we will use to teach multiple languages in our schools. The Related Arts team will be investigating options and developing a plan to have consistency between the two Middle School Related Arts programs.

ISAT/IMAGE Tests 2007

All students in grades 3-8 will begin taking the Illinois State Achievement Tests (ISAT) or its equivalent for English Language Learners (IMAGE) in reading and math on March 12, 2007. Students in grades 5 and 8 will also be tested in writing and those in grades 4 and 7 in science.

These State tests are one measure of how students in our district are performing and achieving relative to the standards. Hawthorn uses multiple measures and data points in looking at overall student achievement.

You will want to read an article in the April issue of *Hawthorn Highlights* for more information about how Hawthorn students achieved, overall, looking at the multiple measures.

Even though ISAT/IMAGE is just one measure and a snapshot of a student's achievement at a given point in time, please help us with helping students to do their best on these tests, by reviewing some basic test preparation strategies with your child: get a good night's sleep, eat a good breakfast, come prepared with at least two, #2 pencils and erasers, a good book or reading material in case you finish a part of the test early. The District will provide a morning snack to students during each day they are testing.

Mark Your Calendars

Fifth Grade Parent Information Meeting, **Tuesday, March 20, 2007** at 7:00 p.m. in the Middle School South Cafeteria

Special Coffee - Report Card Information Meeting, **Monday, April 16, 2007** at 6:30 p.m. in the District Office Board/Staff Development Room

Sixth Grade Orientation for Parents of 5th Graders, **Wednesday, April 25, 2007** at 7:00 p.m. at both Middle Schools

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 and phone number at district office is 847-990-4244.

