

Writing Curriculum and "My Access!"

When they are asked to discuss the "Three Rs," educators generally agree that teaching writing is often a challenge. District 73 Coordinator of Student Achievement Lisa Cerauli explained, "We asked teachers, 'If you had an assistant in your classroom just for writing, what would you have that person do?'" She says the teachers had no difficulty

expressing their needs:

- ❖ Give the students more personal attention.
- ❖ Help students with difficult revisions.
- ❖ Provide a sounding board for brainstorming.

My Access!

For the past several months, the district has investigated a computer-based writing

program, My Access!, and will now make it available to all students in grades four through eight.

Superintendent-elect Sue Zook described the Web-based program and noted that students can log on anywhere they have Internet access. "Once they log on, students will receive computerized support for the entire writing process including pre-writing

graphic organizers, writer's checklists, and tools such as grammar explanations, word banks, and spell checkers."

Cerauli added that one of the most rewarding aspects of My Access! is the provision of instant feedback to students. They receive both a score on the written piece as well as explanations as to

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October 2007

Hawthorn Highlights

"Learning for All: Whatever It Takes!"

Hawthorn Institute Day: Drennon Keynotes; Teachers Facilitate Breakout Sessions

As students enjoyed a "no school" day on October 5, Hawthorn teachers and staff were fully engaged in a day of professional development.

The day began with a presentation by Dr. Craig Drennon who is a professional development associate with the Leadership and Learning Center. His presentation was developed to support the current District 73 initiative to

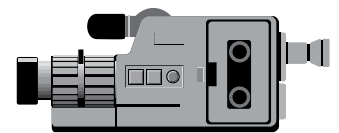
enhance the teaching of writing across the curriculum. He focused on collaborative strategies and tactics designed to improve student achievement.

Staff Takes the Lead

Following the keynote presentation, teachers spent the rest of the morning attending breakout sessions, the majority of which had been designed and were facilitated by "resi-

dent experts"—members of the Hawthorn faculty. Topics ranged from "Differentiated Instruction: Tiered Assignments and Thinking Prompts" to "Enhancing Literature through Drama." In support of Hawthorn's mission of "Learning for All: Whatever It Takes," Drennon offered sessions on working with under-achievers.

Following lunch, teachers spent the afternoon with colleagues in grade-level and department articulation meetings, again facilitated by volunteers from the District 73 staff. In reflecting on the day's activities, Superintendent-elect Sue Zook observed, "Given the emphasis we have placed on staff development over the past several years, it is enormously gratifying to watch as our staff members stepped up to take the lead in designing and presenting our Hawthorn Institute Day."



Board Meetings on Cable

Residents are reminded that Board of Education meetings are rebroadcast on Vernon Hills cable, channel 4, at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays following board meetings. Residents who do not receive this channel are welcome to check out videotapes of the meetings from the Educational Services Center.



Dr. Craig Drennon was the keynote speaker for the Hawthorn Institute Day.



Thanks to the "Resident-Experts"

The following Hawthorn staffers prepared and facilitated sessions for the Hawthorn Institute Day.

Lisa Anderson, Aspen, Middle N.
Mimi Batson, Townline
Faith Becker, Middle South
Mary Benton, Middle South
Jeremy Blair, Townline
Karen Brennan, Elementary N.
Anne Buckton, Middle South
Lisa Cerauli, Elem. S., District Off.
Lara Christoun, District Office
Kristi Dechter, Elem. N., Townline
Michelle DiCarlo, Middle South
Chris Dierbeck, Aspen
Susan Finn, Middle South
Dave Firnbach, Middle South
Joan Galantha, Aspen
Julie Georgeson, District Office
Alice Grubb, Townline
Chris Hansen, Townline
Dave Hunwick, District Office
Sherry Kabak, Middle North
Joy Kane, District Office
Nancy Kocal, Middle South
Mindy Lamberti, Townline
John Langelund, Middle South
Cathy Lanyon, Townline
Cathy Logsdon, Middle South
Kathy Manchester, Aspen
Dennis Matuch, Middle North
John Metzger, Elem. S., Middle S.
Tom Millar, Middle South
Anne Moebius, Elementary South
Joy Mullaney, Middle South
Karen Olker, Elem. TLC, Dist. Office
John Ostrander, Middle North
Frances Palm, Middle South
Melissa Sabin, Townline
Dan Schneider, Middle South
Toni Schramm, Elementary North
Doug Shearer, Middle North
Joan Sheldon, Aspen
Joann Silvertrust, Middle North
Michelle Vazquez, Middle South
Maureen Vinci, Elementary TLC
Katie Waggoner, Elementary TLC
Karen Wheeler, Aspen
Dan Yablonsky, Middle South
Gina Zubert, Elementary South

where they can improve. She added, "Research has found that immediate feedback is crucial to learning. This program lets students use that feedback right away to improve their efforts."

Across the Curriculum

My Access! supports both the writing process and the entire curriculum. There are hundreds of writing topics

available that explore key curriculum points. The program can support science and social studies learning in addition to language arts. Teachers can customize the program by writing their own questions and adding to the computerized feedback. The program also has features to support ESL students.

Zook also wanted to make it clear that My Access! will

support, but not replace, existing curriculum and writing programs. And Cerauli noted that the Teaching and Learning Coaches (TLCs) have been working with teachers to help them set up their classes to make the most of this resource. Both administrators agree that the feedback from teachers has been very positive.

As a learning community, it is important for parents and all other community members to both understand and be supportive of the direction in which the district is moving. Only then can we truly reach our goal of "Learning for All."

All Schools Now on Trimesters; Updated Report Card Rollout Begins

With the opening of the current school year, all six Hawthorn schools are now using the trimester system. In prior years, Elementary South, Elementary North, and Townline Elementary had used a quarter system, while Middle South, Middle North, and Aspen Elementary had used trimesters. The change was part of an ongoing effort to improve consistency across the district.

New Report Cards

For the past two years, Hawthorn teachers and administrators, along with parents and assessment experts, have worked to develop an updated report card for use in the district's schools.

The new report card has been designed to accomplish several goals:

- ◆ To provide a consistent reporting tool across the

district. In prior years, each school developed its own reporting system.

- ◆ To link what students are learning (the curriculum goals) directly to report card categories. The new report card emphasizes key learning areas at each level.
- ◆ To separate academic achievement from work habits.

Learning and habits are both very important, and both are very different. Parents will get a more realistic picture of how well a student is learning the material and a picture of how well that student works toward a goal. Superintendent-elect Sue Zook explained, "Imagine a student who doesn't turn in assignments, yet truly masters the content. This picture is very different from a student who is fastidious about doing homework,

yet requires a great deal of support to reach the learning goals."

Rollout Begins

Because administrators recognize the challenge of change, they have chosen to stage a multi-year rollout of the new report card. This year, the revised report card will be used in kindergarten, third, and sixth grade classes. Next year, the intent is to add first, fourth, and seventh grades, and to use the new report card on a district-wide basis in the 2009-2010 school year.

"I am very grateful to the many members of the Hawthorn community who have contributed to this initiative," said Zook. She encouraged parents who have questions or concerns to contact their student's teacher or building principal.

Hawthorn Happenings

Hawthorn Middle School North has started a new vocabulary building program called “Word of the Day.” Each morning during homeroom, a new word is announced. During the day, any student who can use the word correctly in a sentence receives a raffle ticket. Students can also receive a raffle ticket by finding the word in print. Every other week, tickets are drawn and one winner from each grade is announced. Prizes include gift certificates for such items as iTunes music and meals at local restaurants. ✨ In celebration of the completion of the serious business



of MAP testing, Middle North provided all students with a pizza lunch. Students who improved their scores by five or more points received coupons which were redeemable for either a school store item or ice cream. ✨ Student Council is proud to announce their newly elected representatives: Michael Anagnostopoulos, Elizabeth Borgman, Grace Ferolo, Mary Tsakadze, and Tyler Wood for sixth grade; Gabriel Cotton and Allison Tran for seventh grade; and Maryam Abdallah, Sarah Kolb, and Paige Mahrenholz for eighth grade. They join the Executive Board that was elected last spring. ✨ On October 26, Middle North will hold its second Mania Night! The evening’s features will include: game room, computer room, open gym, dance street revolution, and street canoe races. ✨ In September, Student Council sponsored an assembly for sixth and seventh graders on bullying. Larry Wirtz, a nationally recognized expert on character development and bullying prevention, presented the assembly. ✨ In early October, Middle

North students planted a tree in memory of Wesley Zamost, a seventh grade student who died last May. ✨

Sixth Grade science classes at **Middle School South** met with firefighters from the Countryside Fire Protection District to learn important fire safety practices for home, school, and workplaces. The firefighters reviewed the importance of working smoke alarms, having a home escape

plan in case of a fire, and the effectiveness of sprinkler systems. The visiting firefighters particularly

emphasized the importance of preparing a home escape plan. ✨ The Middle South Student Council sponsored a letter-writing campaign to our community police and fire departments. Stu-



dents wrote letters of thanks, and staff and students sent along tasty treats for department members to enjoy. ✨ Several seventh grade classes enjoyed their field trip to Independence Grove. The Voyageur field trip is part of an ongoing seventh grade study of Illinois history. Students learned how fashions in Europe led to the hunting and trapping of animals here and contributed to extensive

trade between the native tribes and the French. As they paddled a large canoe across the lake, students learned that they needed to work cooperatively and that singing songs such as “Alouette” helped voyageurs stay in rhythm and overlook aching muscles.



✨ Middle South eighth grade students got first-hand experience studying lake ecology while trying to determine if the lakes at Independence Grove and Van Patton Woods are healthy. With assistance from Lake County Forest Preserve field educators, the students canoed the lake

in the Resource Center during their lunch hours. Pizza was provided for all booklovers. ✨

Aspen Elementary fourth graders are learning about ecosystems. They have planted terrariums and look forward to exploring the nature of earthworms. ✨ In art classes, second graders made pictures of scarecrows using torn paper, colored pencils, and markers. They are learning how to fill space and move color around.



✨ Teacher Randi Szoke’s second grade students celebrated Johnny Appleseed’s birthday. They read books about apples and learned about apple farming. ✨ Physical education teacher Karrie Meiners’ kindergarten classes are learning the long vowel sounds. Students combine fitness and phonics. ✨ Third, fourth, and fifth grade technology classes were showered with flood articles, so they splashed into researching the effects of this September’s floods, thundered their way into using PowerPoint, and lit up the skies with their slide show presentations! ✨ Teacher Lindsay Gerjol’s third grade reading group completed their final project about their community. The students made collage storybooks about their community using watercolors and magazine photos. ✨

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www.hawthorn73.org

Hawthorn Highlights is published as a service to residents of District 73. Please direct questions about your schools to Superintendent Dr. Joe Yomtoob. Residents are also welcome to attend meetings of the Board of Education.

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Learning about apples is a popular subject for Hawthorn second grade students.

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