

VALLEY STREAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT THIRTY

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Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Valley Stream 30 Community,

Strategic Planning

The last of the roundtable discussion groups gathering input and feedback for the Valley Stream 30 Strategic Planning/Future Forward five-year plan has now taken place. Thank you to so many of you who have provided input through answering surveys or attending the roundtable discussions. Your thoughtful participation will be very valuable as the District plans for the future. The Strategic Planning/Future Forward Committee is now in the process of collating and organizing the material gathered. Further discussion will occur at the upcoming November and December Board meetings. By the start of next week, all the data collected will be available on our District website at www.valleystream30.com.

Professional Development Update

Sometimes it's a surprise for students to realize that their teachers and building and district administrators "go to school" and continue to learn, just like they do! The continued commitment to professional growth by District 30 educators is a terrific role model of the value of education and the importance of life-long learning for our students. It also helps to ensure that your children get the most up-to-date education available. New York State, in fact, recognizes the absolute importance of such continued learning, by requiring 175 hours of professional development for teachers every five years as part of the newest certification requirements, similar to the continuing educational guidelines for lawyers and physicians.

Each year, our Valley Stream 30 Professional Development Planning Team (PDP) consisting of teacher, administrator and parent representation, in conjunction with the District instructional department, develops a plan of professional development to support the accomplishment of the District instructional goals for the year ahead (For information regarding 2009-10 instructional goals, see Superintendent Newsletter, 10/1/09).

Examples of the professional development occurring this year in literacy, for example, include opportunities for the reading teachers to continue to gain even further expertise in new and different strategies to support struggling readers, as well as the opportunity for all K-2 classroom teachers to participate in ongoing training in Foundations, the primary grades phonics, handwriting and spelling program. Both primary and upper grade teachers are participating in workshops to support such new student benchmarking techniques as AIMSweb (see Superintendent Newsletter, 10/8/09) and the Fountas and Pinnell reading benchmarks that help teachers determine "just right" books for students, as well as gauging their progress toward meeting or exceeding standards.

Professional development occurs in a variety of forms. These include bringing in experts in the field, such as the Wilson Language Training Foundation. In this model, consultants run workshops (such as those that might take place on a Superintendent's Conference Day) and provide a program of ongoing consultation and support in classrooms, as new programs and techniques are implemented. Other valuable professional development opportunities include opportunities for shared collaboration and discussion among our staff, where expertise from our staff is shared across the District, as well as the opportunity for new staff to participate in a year-long mentoring program.

Whatever the topic or presentation style, though, all professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators and other Valley Stream 30 instructional staff are all designed with our students in mind and directly tied to how we can continue to expand opportunities for children's growth and learning. Thank you very much to the members of the PDP Committee: Collette Giardella, Debra Maerhofer, Dennis Carr, Erin Malone, Helene Levine, Joanne Lufrano, June Innella, Dr. Marie Antoinette Bernard, Ryan Meloni, Tina Farrell and Vickey Zapelli who spent time this spring and summer helping to plan our 2009-10 professional development opportunities, which we will continue to highlight in future publications in the variety of subject areas.

Have a good weekend

I wish everyone a good weekend. Please email (ekanas@vs30.org) or call me (285-9881, ext. 222) with any suggestions, comments, questions, etc.

Sincerely,

Elaine Kanas

Elaine Kanas, Ed.D