

October 11, 2007

Dear Parents,

Professional Development Days

While families in Carlisle hopefully enjoyed an extra long Columbus Day weekend, the staff at Carlisle Public School spent hours collaborating on curriculum. All departments met to discuss vertical articulation of the curriculum (what happens from one grade to the next).

The math teachers gathered during the morning to discuss feedback from the Math Review Team. Led by Liz Perry, teachers reviewed the survey information and gave feedback on the pros and cons of our program. After a hearty discussion, most teachers agreed that Every Day Math, supplemented by additional materials, met the needs of our students.

Another area found important was communicating expectations of the program and assignments to parents. The English Language Arts teachers (ELA) met to look at the writing program in each grade level. Susan Laporte and Steve Bober had previously gathered information on what each grade level teaches in writing. The information was compiled prior to the meeting so that subsequently our teachers could review the vertical articulation and make recommendations to address gaps or overlaps in the curriculum. This is one of the first phases of the ELA audit that has begun this year.

The afternoon was spent with teachers discussing children. Each grade level met with another grade level team to share important information to help enhance the learning experience of all students in Carlisle Public Schools. Teachers had a busy, yet rewarding day during our full release day.

Finally, we look forward to the return of Sarah Ward during our next early release day. This expert on executive functioning addressed our staff on opening day and gave strategies to help all children learn more effectively. The staff requested that we bring Sarah back as they found her techniques to be helpful. Executive functioning has been described by Elkhonon Goldberg by using the metaphor of the orchestra conductor to the functions of the brain's frontal lobe. Dr. William R. Stixrud, a psychologist, described executive functioning as " a set of processes that include planning, organizational skill, maintaining a mental set, selective attention, and inhibitory control – for which the prefrontal regions of the brain are specialized." The more that we understand how students learn, the better we can meet their needs.

Thanks for supporting our early release days and professional day as this provides us with valuable time to work together.

Sincerely,
Marie Doyle