

VALLEY STREAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT THIRTY

Administrative Offices

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Dear Valley Stream 30 School Community,

Teachers' and Administrators' Learning

If your children ever wonder what their teachers, principals and central office administrators do when children aren't in school, but the grown-ups are, we are learning ourselves so we can continue to give our students the most updated, effective education possible.

This past Tuesday was Superintendent's Conference Day, and it was a busy day of learning for all the staff. Two major activities involved classroom, special education and support teachers' learning about or gaining refresher information on two important District initiatives: the introduction of Writing Fundamentals units that supports our new District writing program and Fountas and Pinnell benchmarking assessments that help teachers and principals know if children are progressing on schedule regarding their reading levels. Having consistent, Districtwide grade-level standards for reading enables teachers to easily challenge children by providing them with the information to match advanced independent reading books to advanced readers, as well as providing them with timely information regarding which children need additional support.

The new writing units being implemented this year are: First Grade: Poetry and How To, Second Grade: Launching and Literary Non-Fiction, Third Grade: Personal Narratives and Biography, Fourth Grade: Launching and Non Fiction Writing, Fifth Grade: Touchstone Texts and Feature Article, Sixth Grade, Personal Narrative and Feature Article.

A main focus of all of the writing units is on craft, which is considered the art of writing. As the developers of the program explain, "Craft is the art of writing. It can be found in those intentional touches each writer layers into his or her own work - leaving a voice print behind for any reader to find." Examples of craft include word choice, language, sound, attention to details, placement of words on a page, punctuation use, font/size of print, figurative language, use of parentheses and repeated words/phrases.

The writing units the children will participate in all have a strong connection to reading, as well. As Lester Laminack, one of the Columbia University and Writing Fundamentals staff developers describes:

"The more you read with the eyes and ears of a writer, the more the moves of a writer seep into your thinking and become part of the way you use language to communicate more effectively and more efficiently."

Also, on Tuesday's Superintendent's Conference Day, the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum and Instruction and building Principals and Assistant Principals participated in a workshop given by the Wilson Language Foundation regarding our phonics, handwriting and spelling program in Valley Stream 30, the Foundations program; as well as gaining additional expertise regarding some of the tiered interventions we are currently implementing in the District, including Wilson Reading and Just Words programs.

Parents Learn Too!

Tonight is the first of the parent literacy workshops where parents can learn good tips to help support their children's learning at home. The workshops are designed for parents of children in grades K-6. *Tonight's workshop* takes place at *Clear Stream* at 7:00 p.m. Two other workshops this month will take place as follows:

November 17th – Forest Road

November 18th – Shaw Avenue

Remember that the workshops given in each of the three buildings covers the same content, so regardless of which school your child attends, feel free to attend the workshop most convenient for your schedule. Thank you to the PTAs for working with the District to present these programs.

Have a Good Weekend

As always, if you have any questions regarding the information in this newsletter, or on another topic, please do not hesitate to contact me or your building administrators for further information. If you have any questions or suggestions, please email me at ekanas@vs30.org or call 516-285-9881, x222.

Sincerely,
Elaine Kanas
Elaine Kanas, Ed.D.