



January 2015

# Community Unit School District #205

..... Helping Students Achieve Their Dreams .....

## Curriculum & Instruction

### Upcoming Dates

January 16 – End of Quarter

February 11 – Early Dismissal

February 12- Lincoln's Birthday

February 14 - *Valentine's Day*

February 16- *President's Day*

February 19- Early Dismissal

### What is Data?

- *Assessments*
- *Observations*
- *Projects*
- *Essays*
- *Homework*

### Using Data to

#### *Make Decisions!*

Good coaches look at **stats** after every game. From these stats, coaches determine what to work on at **practice**. This same concept should be utilized by teachers. Student **data** should be **analyzed** and **interpreted** in order to **formulate** a plan for student growth and improvement. Once we have **summarized** the data, we know what we need to **practice**.



## Illinois Vision 20/20 Initiative

### 21st Century Learning

**For success in life, students need more than knowledge of math and reading. It is time to expand the definition of student learning, commit to the development of the “whole child,” and invest in policies proven to link all schools to 21st century learning tools.**

- Develop the "Whole Child"
- Preserve Instructional Time
- Invest in Early Childhood Education
- Link Students to College and Careers
- Expand Equity in Technology Access

### *PARCC Test Windows*

*March 9 – April 3*

**What is  
most  
important  
right now?**

People who trust and care about one another and are engaged in something important such as education should feel compelled to disagree, and sometimes passionately. Only then can we commit to a plan of action!

***The Advantage***

## Visual Learning



On January 14, 2015, several staff members, community people, and School Board members Natalie and Josh attended a tour of the **Ron Clark Academy (RCA)** team classrooms and bathrooms. The classrooms and bathrooms were colorful, bright, and inviting. **Visual Learning** is very important. Although **10%** of secondary students are auditory learners, **80%** of instruction is delivered orally (U of I). **Visual Teaching** is very important. Over **65%** of the population is visual learners. **We** must have **colorful hallways, classrooms, walls, and bathrooms** that **teach**. *Please take a minute to visit the RCA rooms!*

- ❖ **90%** of information that comes to the brain is visual. (Hyerle)
- ❖ Our eyes can register **36,000 visual messages per hour**. (Jensen)
- ❖ **40%** of all nerves to the brain come from the retina. (Jensen)
- ❖ The brain processes visual **60,000 times faster** than text. (3M)

*"If one wants to reach younger people at an earlier age to shape their minds in a critical way, you really need to know how ideas and emotions are expressed visually!" Martin Scorese*



## African American History Month

February is designated as **African American History Month**. Harvard-trained historian, Carter G. Woodson, like W. E. B. Du Bois before him, hopes were to raise awareness of African American's contributions to civilization. Although February is designated as African American History Month, I encourage all teachers to incorporate **multicultural, afrocentric, women's studies, and linguistics** into your daily lessons. Every area of our curriculum has been touched by diverse groups. We need to honor and celebrate their contributions. It also manifests an **acceptance** of diverse cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and languages. This approach to teaching and learning does not take time out of your day or lessons. **Allow** the students to speak of their experiences and to conduct research on their own. (History.com)



## Project Based Learning

One of the first questions about the Common Core Standards is, **What will it look like?** The answer is: **Very different**. The internationally benchmarked standards will emphasize **creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, presentation and demonstration, problem solving, research and inquiry, and career readiness**. Teachers will have to teach with **greater depth of understanding** rather than coverage, memorizing or listing, and demonstrating and performing rather than worksheets. Successful implementation of the new standards will require teachers to utilize innovative best practices such as **Project-Based Learning (PBL)**. PBL, done well, will help us to accomplish these goals. The new **Gifted Enrichment Curriculum** for fourth graders emphasizes this concept. However, PBL is not just good for elementary students, it is good for all students. Teaching **inquiry** and **skillful problem solving** places the **quest for knowledge** in the hands of the students instead of the teacher **banking** all of the knowledge. We must **stimulate reflective critical thinking and deeper engagement**. (Thom Markham, 2012).

Galesburg schools have been listed as a **Priority District** for **Health Education**. Why? School Districts around the state with high numbers of teen pregnancy and instances of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are being monitored. How does this affect our schools? Our high school and middle school Health teachers are mandated to teach *abstinence* as well as the use of *contraception*. They have been provided with a curriculum called **Flash** in order to support the work that they are already doing. Studies have shown that districts with **Exemplary Sexual health Education** programs have a positive effect on the overall academic performance of their students. **Reading** and **Math** scores are improved. We feel that our Health teachers are *topnotch*. Several of them have been to trainings this year. Changes in curriculum are affecting everyone! We have over 21 students in our **Parents as Teachers Program**. They are serving students from the middle school through high school. We want to ensure that these students have the opportunity to graduate and learn good parenting skills.

## What is going on in Galesburg Community Unit School District #205?

“Please do not confine children to your style of learning for they were born in another time!” Chinese Proverb

Creating an environment that values and promotes student achievement cannot be the sole responsibility of educators and the schools. It requires the concerted effort of the entire community. **Community Partnerships** provide huge rewards for both partners. **King School** has partnered with **Knox College** and the **First Presbyterian Church** in order to provide students with **Blessings in a Backpack**. Every Friday, eligible students receive a bag of food to take home with them. This program runs the entire year. We know nationwide, over 23% of school age children live in poverty. (nces.org) This program helps to provide children with nutritional supports when school is not in session. Feeding students brains is very important to academic success. **King School** also recently had their 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation through the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program. This school-based substance abuse, gang violence prevention program is in 75% of the schools across the United States and in 48 countries. Students in this program sign a pledge not to use drugs or join gangs. **Gale, Steele, Nielson, and Silas** also participate in the DARE Program with local police officers .(dare.org)

The **Illinois Statewide Young Authors' Contest** is an event sponsored by the *Illinois Language and Literacy Council* and the *Illinois Reading Council*. It is designed as a celebration to honor exceptional writing by students in grades K through 8. This contest provides an opportunity for young writers to create characters and stories that can become books. Students at **Churchill** and **Lombard** have created some very elaborate and imaginative stories. Many of the stories are based on facts. The students have conducted extensive research. We must encourage our students to participate in these types of writing projects. Studies show that only 7 to 15% of classroom time is spent studying **Informational text**. Yet, by sixth grade, most of what students are required to read is nonfiction. Understanding **informational text** is critical to students' future success in higher education and the workplace. **Reading, writing, and discussing biographies, historical books, and technical texts** will help to improve their skills. (Reading A-Z)

