

Dear Staff,

It's a dichotomy to me that we find the shortest of the weeks of school with the most for which we can be thankful! Really, my original intention was to focus this letter just on the news and activities of last Friday because both buildings hit high notes for students.

First, everyone knows that Condensed Days are new this year, and we are all watching very closely that this learning opportunity



for teachers is being maximized each time. In my opinion, both buildings hit it out of the park on Friday. It was my turn to join HES for their activities, and in my opinion, what I found matched exactly what folks said they needed a Condensed Day to be when the concept was only a twinkle in somebody's eye. Who came up with

the original suggestion anyway? It doesn't really matter anymore, I guess.

Technology was the focus of the staff learning sessions going on at the elementary school. Teachers chose between learning strategies with Ms.

Isaacs (Thanks, Ms. Isaacs!) in the library to enhance the use of iPads in primary classrooms and with Ms. Henderson and Ms. Hunt (Thank you, Ms. Henderson and Ms. Hunt!) on creating assignments and quizzes, creating a class resource page, using the research pane within a doc and how students can cast their individual work on their Chromebook screen onto the classroom whiteboard for the teacher and the rest of the students in the class to see. What inspiring instructional potential! Will these become regular parts of using technology in our classrooms?! Who would ever have imagined! Beyond assuring



CD sessions start and end on time, I look to see if there is differentiation provided to better meet the learning needs of teachers because teachers requested this be the case on CDs. HES provided a basic level of tech strategies in one classroom and a different level in the other. And it's not "one and done" either. The staff's plan is to continue this training on a CD in January. Building in a follow-up training later allows teachers to try out what they learned last Friday and then come back together again to ask those questions that will inevitably pop up as they try strategies on their own. Bravo!

Though I didn't get over to HJr./Sr.H. during their CD activities, teachers and administrators spent Friday's CD working in groups on activities required by their School Improvement Plan. Their plan is a good one written to address the academic needs their SIP committee identified and incorporated in the plan. Both schools get high marks for the preparation that was accomplished before Friday. Learners already knew their group and the objective for their time together so they could get the biggest bang for their buck out of those 45 short minutes. All of that preparation doesn't happen by magic! We send a tip of the Tiger's tail to everyone for making the very most out of this exemplary Condensed Day!

GROW
THECREEK @

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When I finished at HES on Friday, I hopped over to the Jr./Sr. high because Mr. Sloniker had arranged for a professional singing group from Fort Wayne to appear in a convocation for Grades 7-12 staff and students in the auditorium. It's rare that the whole student body is in the same place at the same time. It was 30 minutes of pure fun, and a great way for everyone to start their school day. Choir members



spent additional time with these performers in a workshop afterward which was also a unique opportunity. We send a tip of the Tiger's tail to Mr. Sloniker for helping this happen! I also want to send a tip of the Tiger's tail to Ms. Drake. I was in the back of the auditorium, and I guess from my teaching years, I am conditioned to spend as much time keeping an eye out for student misbehavior as I am watching what's going on on stage, and I recognized some superlative active supervision by Ms. Drake. I spotted her spotting a young man who was not as attentive to the performers as he needed to be. She caught his attention, and used that teacher look (Level 1). It worked for a while. When he got off-task again, she used the teacher look (Level 2). It worked for a while, but he still wasn't attending as he needed to be. (I thought, "Oh, Oh, here comes strike three...") and sure enough, the next time he horsed around Ms. Drake gave him the "You're Out!" sign, and he left his seat to sit by her in the back. After the performance I acknowledged Ms. Drake for her effectiveness, and she said, "He is NOT going to act like that." And I thought, "And that expectation is exactly why our schools are safe and focused on learning. Thank you, Ms. Drake. While teachers might look like they are casually enjoying the show, they actually have their eyes peeled and actively supervising students. Whether it's on the playground or in an assembly, a teacher just can't help it! 😊"

Another quick, related story while I'm at it... I was in the HES cafeteria recently buying my lunch. I was at the end of a long student line waiting my turn to pick out my food, and of course, I was watching students (See note above...). There were two girls in the other lunch line who were horsing around. It wasn't horrible, and at lunchtime they try to give the kids a little slack in the lunch room because lunch/recess is just about the only time students get a little down time through their day. The girls were getting pretty close to the line I draw before I'd step in to redirect them (and I really try not to do it at all because my relationship with students is different (unfortunately) not being in the classroom. The girls kept it up, and I was just about to my breaking point when I noticed one of the lunch supervisors from across the cafeteria spot what was going on, and she became a "woman on a mission" and had the girls in line in nothing flat. I send a tip of the Tiger's tail to this supervisor for scanning the room, spotting the situation and addressing it effectively even though these girls weren't her assigned students. Thank you! Our student behavior is typically top notch in both buildings because we have great kids, our families do a great job at home and because our staff supervises expertly!

Well! I've used up my two pages this week a bit differently than I had originally planned. I meant to talk about ISTEP+ scores. I have plenty more to share about the good things going on in our schools. I guess the rest will have to wait for my December Parent & Community newsletter. I hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving. I am so thankful that we are working together!

Yours for another successful short week with children!

WD

