



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS and Illinois North Central Association present

SchoolNotes

A quarterly publication to provide schools with information from the Illinois NCA state office to help educational professionals raise student achievement, meet high standards, & engage in continuous improvement.

Illinois-NCA CASI *Spring 2008*



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Director's Desk

In the last issue of our newsletter, I reported that we were preparing for the unification of NCA with the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities (SACS CASI) and the National Study for School Evaluation (NSSE) under the parent organization, AdvancED. I am happy to report in this edition that the unification occurred; and we are operating under the new school standards with quality reviews currently underway. In this edition of the newsletter, you will find an article on the quality review process.

I am excited about the standards because they are research based and are practitioner friendly. Each of the seven standards have identifiable quality indicators along with impact statements that clearly articulate when practices and procedures are fully integrated; and are effectively and consistently implemented. For more information, please refer to www.advanc-ed.org or contact our office at 866.292.1781.

This edition of *SchoolNotes* includes announcements, news, and a brief survey. To highlight just a few of the articles, we've received notice from the national office that the first 13 Illinois schools have been re-accredited under the new standards and nine Illinois' schools have been recognized for maintaining 100 years of continuous accreditation. We are preparing our professional development plan for 2008 – 2009 school year and would like your feedback. We would appreciate you taking the time to complete the brief survey enclosed in this newsletter. We've also brought onboard a new assistant state director, Becky Densmore-Stoll.

As always, my sincere thanks to each and every one of you for your commitment to raising student achievement, meeting high standards, and engaging in continuous improvement. Please don't hesitate to contact our office if we can answer any questions or be of any assistance.

Susie Morrison

Volunteer Focus

Members of the Illinois State Committee are educational professionals who volunteer both their time and expertise to raising student achievement. They are dedicated in making a difference in the lives of our youth and are committed to providing each and every student the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes to be successful in the world in which they will live and work. The State Committee members include:

Fran Brady – East Leyden High School, Franklin Park
Brian Brown – Brehm Preparatory School, Carbondale
Steve Cordogan – Township High School Dist 214, Arlington Heights
Jerry Douglas – Chaddock School, Quincy
Paul Maloney – Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago
Eric McLaren – Illinois Math & Science Academy, Aurora
Elise Schwartz – Carlinville Primary School, Carlinville
Susan Silvey – Bloomington Junior High School, Bloomington
Careda Taylor – Chicago Public Schools, Chicago



Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Process

Accreditation is an ongoing process of meeting standards, continuous improvement and quality assurance demonstrated through internal and external review. The QAR requires the school to identify data, information, evidence, and/or documented results that validate a school is meeting each of the seven standards. A synopsis of the process is listed below.

1. State office notifies the school at the beginning of its accreditation renewal year that it is time for a QAR visit.
2. School administrator identifies three dates to hold the QAR visit and notifies the state office.
3. School completes an online registration via the AdvancED website and updates its' school demographic information.
4. School improvement team begins assessing school's performance in meeting the standards as identified by the quality indicators.
5. School completes the Standards Assessment Report (SAR) and submits it to the state office at least 6 weeks prior to the review team visit.
6. QAR team reviews the completed SAR and the school hosts a one day visit. The review team chair provides a summary of the team's findings.
7. State Committee reviews recommendation of the review team. The Committee takes formal action and forwards decision to the national office.
8. The National Accreditation Board is convened to review the state recommendation and makes a final accreditation determination.
9. The school is notified of the accreditation decision.

For additional details, please contact the state office.

A Systems Approach to School Improvement

Many schools face challenges to student achievement including high poverty rates, weak school-family relationships, high student mobility, and low family literacy. Regardless of these constraints, educational professionals can make a difference by taking a systems approach to improving student performance through District Accreditation. The process is based upon the Accreditation Standards for Quality School Systems which are aligned with research on the factors that impact student performance and were developed with expertise drawn upon by educational professionals and researchers.

District Accreditation recognizes that increasing student achievement involves more than improving instruction. It is a result of how well all the parts of the education system – the district, the school, and classroom – work together to meet the needs of each and every student.

The standards form the foundation of District Accreditation and apply the three pillars of accreditation: high standards, continuous improvement, and quality assurance. Through the district accreditation process, the entire school district is aligned to a comprehensive framework that lays the foundation for continually improving student achievement and district performance.

For more information on accrediting your school district, contact the Illinois state office or go to www.advanc-ed.org.



Special Recognition: 100 Years of Continuous Accreditation

At the annual North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) held in March, 2008 at Chicago's Marriott hotel, nine Illinois schools were recognized for maintaining 100 years of continuous accreditation.

Dr. Mark Elgart, President/CEO of NCA CASI, who recognized these schools, commended them for their achievement. "Achieving 100 years of continuous accreditation is an exceptional accomplishment. The staff and school community at these buildings deserve our highest praise for their ongoing pursuit of quality and excellence." Please join us in congratulating them for their outstanding accomplishment.

1. Bloom High School, Chicago Heights
2. Duquoin High School, Duquoin
3. Harrisburg High School, Harrisburg
4. Hinsdale Township Central High School, Hinsdale
5. Maine Township East High School, Park Ridge
6. Mattoon High School, Mattoon
7. Morgan Park High School, Chicago
8. Proviso East High School, Maywood
9. Tuscola High School, Tuscola

Save the Date

Professional Development Survey

The 2008 – 2009 professional development calendar for Illinois NCA is currently being developed. In order to ensure that we meet your learning needs, the state staff would like your input. Please assist us by completing the 2008 – 2009 Professional Development Plan Survey by June 13, 2008. It is available electronically at

<http://IllinoisNCA.uillinois.sgizmo.com>

You may elect to complete a paper copy. If so, return it to our office by mail or by fax to:

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North Central Association
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Champaign, IL 61820
FAX: (217) 244-1132



New Assistant State Director

I am pleased to tell you that Becky Densmore-Stoll has joined the NCA state office staff. She has over eighteen years of experience in leadership and organization development which includes coordination and administration of performance improvement initiatives.

Becky commented, “I am excited to be joining NCA. The accreditation process helps schools’ focus on data collection to assess their effectiveness in delivering quality education, and then build in continuous improvement. As a result, they can deliver world class education to our youth.”

She holds a master degree in organizational development through Eastern Illinois University. Becky is also certified in Whole Brain Technology (WBT) and Criterion-Referenced Instruction (CRI).

Previously, Becky was employed with a global consulting company where she assisted clients to enable them in global transformations efforts.

Take Note

The spring edition of *SchoolNotes* introduces a new section, **Take Note**, to distinguish schools that are applying the three pillars of accreditation: raising student achievement; engaging in continuous improvement; and building quality into their educational delivery systems.

Each edition will feature a school that has been nominated by NCA’s Leadership team. Once nominations have been received by the state office and approved by the staff, an email notification will be sent to the school informing the administrator of the recognition. The state office staff will work with the school’s leadership team in order to develop the article.

Schools receiving this recognition will be sent a certificate along with a press release that can be published in their local newspapers, newsletter, websites, etc. to get the word out to their stakeholders so that everyone in the community can ‘take note.’

Susie Morrison, Illinois State Director, commented, “It seems that in today’s world there are many who are quick to point out the short comings in our schools, but few who are willing to look for all of the goodness that our educators deliver day in and day out. We must take the time to recognize and celebrate Illinois schools and educators that are delivering quality education and enriching the lives of the children they serve”.

The first school to be recognized in this section will be published in the summer edition of *SchoolNotes*.



Peer-to-Peer Practice

A peer-to-peer practice is a description of interventions, strategies, programs, or activities that have been identified by a school and resulted in improved student achievement. It includes practices that support classroom teachers, schools, and/or districts in their efforts to improve student learning.

Beginning in the summer edition of *SchoolNotes*, an ongoing feature of the newsletter will include examples of peer-to-peer practices that schools have implemented which have helped them increase student performance. Contact Becky Densmore-Stoll at bstoll@advanc-ed.org or 866-292-1781 if you would like to submit a Peer-to-Peer practice to be published in the newsletter.

The AdvancED Resource Network is currently developing a searchable database to include peer-to-peer practices from around the globe. Schools are invited to submit practices by going to www.advanc-ed.org/resourcenetwork and clicking “Submit a Practice.” *NOTE: You must be an accredited school or be a candidate for accreditation in order to submit a practice.*

Announcements

- Coalition for Illinois High Schools 3rd annual conference is scheduled for June 16 and 17 in Bloomington. The theme for the conference is *Leadership and Learning: Connecting the Dots*. Go to the following URL for a registration form. http://www.nca.uillinois.edu/ProfDev/High_School_Challenge.2008.pdf
- In order to help preserve the environment, the state office is looking for ways to “Go Green.” As such, we are in the process of building a database that contains the names of schools that would prefer to receive electronic information rather than paper copies. To be added, contact Amy Blue-Short at (866) 292-1781 or by email blueshor@uillinois.edu.
- If you have school news and would like for it to be considered to be included in the Illinois NCA newsletter, ***School Notes***, contact Becky Densmore-Stoll at bstoll@advanc-ed.org.

Accreditation Corner

Schools Receive Accreditation Under the New Standards

The state office received notification from the National Accreditation Board that 13 Illinois schools have earned accreditation this spring. These are the first schools that have undergone internal and external scrutiny using the new standards and quality indicators.

They are:

- Al Raby School for Community and Environment, Chicago
- Benito Juárez Community Academy, Chicago
- Crane High School, Chicago
- Jones College Preparatory High School, Chicago
- Kelvyn Park High School, Chicago
- Lane Technical High School, Chicago
- Lindblom Math & Science Academy, Chicago
- North-Grand High School, Chicago
- Northside College Prep School, Chicago
- Prosser Career Academy, Chicago
- Senn High School, Chicago
- Steinmetz High School, Chicago
- Sullivan High School, Chicago

The education professionals at these schools are to be congratulated for their significant accomplishment. Please join us in doing so.



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