

**Glen Ellyn School District 41**

Shannon Walston Cross, Principal of Abraham Lincoln Elementary School

Dear Lincoln families,

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year! I simply can not believe that we are nearing the end of summer. I hope you and your family enjoy had an amazing summer and enjoyed the warm weather, a baseball game, a bike ride, a great book, a splash in the pool, lake, ocean, gardening, time with family and friends or whatever your hearts desire. Summers seem to go by faster and faster every single year, so enjoy! I wanted to take this opportunity to once again share with you our exciting plans and changes for the 2009-2010 school year.

Behind the Scenes/History and Background: At Lincoln, our shared/collective vision/goal is:

“TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO ENSURE HIGH LEVELS OF LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS IN LITERACY AND MATH”.

Over the past few years we have been working as a staff to create the foundations of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) within our school. Educational research consistently recommends a few best practices for improving instruction and student learning. A professional Learning Community model is considered to be the foundation for improving instruction and achievement for ALL kids regardless of where they fall on the continuum of learning.

Characteristics of a Professional Learning Community or (PLC):

- Shared mission, vision, values, goals
- Collaborative teams focused on student learning
- Collective inquiry into "best practice" and "current reality"
- Action orientation
- Commitment to continuous improvement
- Results orientated

PLCs allow staff to work in collaborative teams to continually analyze and improve classroom practice to ultimately impact student learning. It harnesses the best thinking of a team of teachers into a unified, powerful effort in order to meet the individual needs of all students. In a PLC, it is believed that all staff owns all kids, regardless of label, special services, classroom teacher or grade level. We are collectively responsible and own all children and we work together collaboratively and intentionally, to ensure this ownership. Teams of teachers meet weekly to discuss "best practices" and their implications for student learning as they learn and grow together.

PLCs empower teachers to work together to develop essential curricular outcomes, assess student achievement, select instructional materials, plan special projects, participate in peer observations, team walk-throughs, coaching, and pursue professional growth opportunities. These are all "behind the scenes" changes that will be occurring over time on our teams at Lincoln.

What does this mean for me and my child(ren)?

In the fall, we will implement a new schedule that better aligns our time in order to meet the individual reading needs of our students. This schedule will allow for grade level teams and specialists to work together collaboratively and harness the best thinking, knowledge, skills and expertise of each team member in meeting the needs of our students. The collaboration will occur while the students are in art, music, PE or the library. This will be the first time that teachers have had the opportunity to meet together and collaborate in teams during the school day. In the past this has been done as teachers volunteered to give up their lunch, or have before or after school time in order to meet.

In addition, we have built into our daily schedule 35 minutes of "targeted learning time" (TLT) in the area of reading in grades 1-5. During this time, grade-level teams and Lincoln staff members will provide focused reading intervention and enrichment for all students in a flexible, fluid and ongoing manner based on individual students need. It is our hope that in future years, we add math TLT as well. However, for the 2009-10 school year, we are focusing solely on reading.

While these changes are significant for the way we teach, most of them will not be particularly noticeable to parents or even to students.

Abraham Lincoln Elementary School, 380 Greenfield Avenue., Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

What's changing...	What you can do and should know...
<p>We have built in 35 minutes of daily "Targeted Learning time" for grades 1-5. During this time, grade-level teams and Lincoln staff members will provide focused reading intervention <u>and</u> enrichment in the area of reading that best meets the needs of each individual student regardless of where they fall on the continuum of learning.</p>	<p>Your child will be working with a variety of teachers and grade level peers during this time. If a child grasps the essential reading outcomes, they will be stretched and enriched during "TLT" and if they need intervention or additional time and support, they will receive it. "TLT" will be ongoing, fluid and flexible in nature based on individual student need.</p>
<p>We will make full use of our instructional day and we need your help!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction will begin promptly at 9:00 am every morning. This includes Art, music, PE, gifted, special education and some grade level targeted learning times. • Announcements will now take place at the end of the school day and students will begin to dismiss at 3:25. 	<p>Please help us maximize our instructional time by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting your child to school before 9:00. (Students are able to walk right into their classroom at 8:50 every morning). • Please talk to your child about the importance of going directly to class upon arrival. This will provide plenty of time to get organized and start the instructional day at 9:00. • Help your child organize belongings and homework before coming to school so that he or she comes to school ready to have fun learning!
<p>Our Lunch/recess time is changing:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lunch will begin at 12:00 and end at 12:50</p> <p>Instruction will then begin promptly at 12:50. This change was very helpful in making our complex schedule work to best meet the needs of our kids.</p>	<p>Note to parents of Kindergartners: 11:40 a.m. – Instructional day ends and students begin to prepare for dismissal through their classroom doors. 12:00 p.m. : LUNCH/RECESS for students in 1st-5th. 12:35 p.m. – PM Kindergartners begin to arrive and enter through their classroom doors. 12:45 p.m. – Kdg. Instructional day begins; this means that students are in their classrooms and learning begins. Please note the time gap between lunch/recess for grades 1-5 and district wide kindergarten hours. If you also have an older child who goes home for lunch, this is something to be aware of as you plan your logistics. We are hoping that by communicating this information early and frequently, it will provide you with time to plan accordingly.</p>

Team Lincoln is committed to sharing, owning and doing whatever it takes for our kids. I could not be more proud and honored to be the Principal of a school in which the entire school community and staff pull together, make sacrifices, give and take and do whatever it takes all in the name of our kids. Thank you for helping us by doing your part to ensure we are successful.

It is my hope that I have provided you with a summary of our "Lincoln Vision" and plan for next year without overloading you with too many details. Team Lincoln is excited, ready, willing and able as we embark upon this journey together to best meet the needs of our students as we learn and grow together.

We look forward to seeing you at "Meet and Greet" on August 25th from 2:30- 3:30.

Have a wonderful and safe summer,

Ms. Shannon Cross,

Shannon Cross

Principal of Abraham Lincoln School