Yorkville CUSD 115 and Education Association Make Changes to Improve Teacher Effectiveness

By: Martha Venetucci
Yorkville Education Association President and 4th Grade Teacher

“The times, they are a’changin”. People outside school walls- “reformers”, legislators and the like, impose many changes that directly impact teachers. It’s left to those of us responsible for educating students to find ways to move forward, despite these changes. This is not always an easy endeavor.

In Yorkville we firmly believe it takes “both sides”, union and district, to navigate through the changes, embrace the challenges and opportunities, all while continuing to provide the best possible education for our students. Yorkville Education Association and Yorkville CUSD 115 District Board and Administration have been committed to working together in these times of change. These trials and tribulations that we are put through cannot be overcome with dignity unless we put forth the effort and understanding for counter perspectives.

In his second year at Yorkville, our district’s superintendent, Dr. Scott Wakeley, continues to be very supportive of our teachers as the professionals they are. While our community continues to change and grow, the population of students is changing and growing with it. Working to find ways to advocate for our members, our association is continuously pursuing opportunities to improve teaching and learning in our district.

Taking significant steps, while consistently valuing professional development and improving teacher effectiveness, we have worked hard to negotiate a contract that values all parties, supports educators and benefits students.

Always looking for ways to offer incentives and provide compensation to reward teachers for continuing their own advanced education, we provide partial reimbursement for the costs of that continuing education. While this was an important part of the system, it was only one step. Both parties recognize that advanced education and continued coursework don’t necessarily increase teacher effectiveness or student achievement. As part of our most recent contract, we agreed to provide incentives for teachers who successfully complete National Board Certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

We recognize this intensive, reflective process is research-based and leads directly to improved teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Not only is it appealing that the times are changing, we have chosen to work together to move forward and improve, even amidst all of the challenges that come with it.

CANDIDATE FEE SUBSIDY APPLICATION EXTENDED UNTIL JUNE 15

Applications continue to be processed for the Illinois NBPTS Candidate Fee Subsidy that is currently available to 750 first-time Illinois candidates. The approved list of these candidates is continually increasing. For instructions and the fee subsidy application, go to the NBRC website.
**Unique Opportunity!**

Illinois State University offers the opportunity for teachers and counselors to complete the NBPTS process while earning six hours of credits. Balance your personal and professional commitments while participating in classes on the Illinois State University Campus or via an online course.

For more information, [click here](http://corestand.com/schoolshare/).

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**Evanston NBCT Unites Best Practice, Collaboration and Standards-Based Curricula**

When Rich Clark earned National Board Certification in 2009, he breathed a sigh of relief. “Becoming an NBCT was rewarding because it made me examine my teaching approach in a new light.” Clark insists that going through the program with two close colleagues was instrumental to his success. “I continually asked myself tough questions. Does what I’m doing accurately reflect the standards and promote best practice?”

Clark called on a number of educational experts, including Dr. Bobb Darnell and Harvey “Smokey” Daniels, and partnered with award-winning documentary filmmaker Dean Bushala to solidify the concept. In December they launched the platform [corestand.com](http://corestand.com) with the slogan “Teachers, Not Textbooks.”

CoreStand’s website is a place for educators to learn about the Core Standards with video tutorials, e-books, and other resources. Educators can then self-publish instructional materials aligned to the Standards. Clark envisions that NBCTs will lead the charge in shaping how the Standards are implemented nationwide. “The response has been tremendous. Through word-of-mouth alone, tens of thousands of teachers have been on our site.”

While joining corestand.com is free to individual teachers, the company’s parallel platform, the School Share network, offers school- and district-wide subscriptions that provide solutions leveraging collaborative tools to increase differentiation and vertical alignment.

To read the rest of this story or more information about CoreStand’s School Share network, please visit [http://corestand.com/schoolshare/](http://corestand.com/schoolshare/).