



Special Edition: Your Schools

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District 205 Restructuring Update **Urgent!**

On Tuesday, January 29, 2008, the building Principals, District Administration, the President of the Faculty Association, the Executive Director of the Faculty Association, Math and English Area Instructional Leaders and the District's Representative from the South Cook Intermediate Service Center 4 (SCISC4) had a one hour and twenty minute phone conference led by the ISBE lead restructuring consultant and his staff. The message from ISBE via the teleconference was very clear; District 205 is to achieve Safe Harbor this year and make positive progress this year or we will (not may) lose decision-making rights for our schools. The State Board has mandated District 205 undergo governance as its sole means of Restructuring. Therefore, the immediate critical issue is that District 205 must improve 2008 Prairie State Achievement Test Scores.

Please know the Board of Education, Faculty and Staff of District 205 takes the District's current situation very seriously. During the teleconference, very important questions and suggestions were addressed from parties on both sides of the issue. However, no matter what the District said about why our schools did not show improvement, the State replied, "It does not matter because District 205 has been failing students for the last five years." The State wants substantial change and it wants it **now**. This latest communication from ISBE creates an **urgent** need for all stakeholders to continue to work together collaboratively.

This process is being guided by the Illinois State Board of Education with strict timelines and requirements. In order to comply with new State deadlines, District 205 is reconciling the information from Restructuring meetings held in the fall with the critical issues presented by the State. ISBE has given District 205 a new timeline to resubmit a District Improvement Plan (DIP) as well as School Improvement Plans (SIP). The DIP must be completed by February 29, 2008 and the SIP must be submitted by March 15, 2008. Moreover, per federal guidelines under NCLB, the District must also submit a comprehensive Restructuring plan by April 1, 2008 to the Illinois State Board of Education. ISBE has extended the deadline to April 30, 2008.

District 205 will continue to engage all facets of the community as we move forward in this **urgent** process. Continuous updates will be available on the District website, Building Level Parent Advisory Committee Meetings and other building/district led community meetings, as well as the mail. In order to ensure that we meet all of the required timelines we have developed a new Strategic Planning Process to guide us. The District will create writing teams and design teams that will work together to identify strategies to include in our strategic plan and complete the writing of the plan. On the next page the teams are explained. These teams will work intensely over the next few weeks to create and write the plans. Parent involvement on the teams is critical to our success. Though only a few will serve on the team, we will update you on our progress through out the process.

Over

District Writing Team

The District Writing Team (DWT) will consist of each building's writing team. The DWT is responsible for the creation of the District Improvement Plan (DIP). The Writing Teams will gather information from the Design Teams and school teams to create the DIP. All DIP and SIP plans are reviewed by each building's School Leadership Team and the District Leadership Team.

Thornton Writing Team

The Thornton Writing Team will be composed of 3 teachers, including one special education teacher, the principal, parents, students, ISC4 Rep., and an AIL Rep. This team is responsible for writing the school Restructuring plan and the School Improvement plan. They communicate with the district writing team so that all plans align. The team will use recommendations from design teams to create plans.

Thornridge Writing Team

The Thornridge Writing Team will be composed of 3 teachers, including one special education teacher, the principal, parents, students, ISC4 Rep., an and AIL Rep. This team is responsible for writing the school Restructuring plan and the School Improvement plan. They communicate with the district writing team so that all plans align. The team will use recommendations from design teams to create plans.

Thornwood Writing Team

The Thornwood Writing Team will be composed of 3 teachers, including one special education teacher, the principal, parents, students, ISC4 Rep., and an AIL Rep. This team is responsible for writing the school Restructuring plan and the School Improvement plan. They communicate with the district writing team so that all plans align. The team will use recommendations from design teams to create plans.

Design Teams **The areas of focus** **identified by the State**

School Schedule **Design Team**

This team is currently established and is investigating a school schedule that would allow students the ability to take all the classes they need to master before State exams, allow teachers time within the day to analyze student work and student data together so that they can respond to student needs.

Curriculum Design Team

This design team will focus on the academic rigor of the math and literacy curriculum.

Professional Development **and Pedagogy**

This team will focus on providing professional development that will improve the pedagogy of teachers in the classroom.

Data and Reflection

This team will focus on what data teachers need to track and monitor student progress as well as how to support teacher's use of that data during the school day.

Special Education

This team headed by the director of Special Education will focus on aligning District 205's Special education program to State expectations.