

Astro Blast

Week of December 14-20



Next Year at Carr (1/16/17-1/20/17)

Monday	MLK Jr. Day	No School
Wednesday	Staff Meeting	Library
Thursday	Parent Meeting	8:30, 6

It's hard to believe that we are already moving into 2017 and only have a few weeks until the end of the semester. I am so honored to have been a part of the Carr staff in 2015 and 2016, and I know that we have done significant and meaningful work. I am really looking forward to 2017 and all of the successes our students will continue to have.

With the FPM (Federal Program Monitoring) audit still in mind, in addition to our personal desire for continuous professional growth and development, we know that to best serve our students, we need to meet them where they are. Because our students are varied in their skill levels in general and in specific topics, proficiency-based learning allows our students to reach aptitude in a learning objective before moving on. While we don't have proficiency-based learning in place, we can start taking steps in that direction by having our students work in small groups depending on specific skill levels. I had the pleasure of observing Ms. Wieland recently. In her classroom, there were three different groups. While one group worked on ixl, a second group watched videos about exponents, and she worked with a third group herself. As I mentioned in the past, MAP's Skills Navigator also has this type of process in place though it is not as self-directed as other programs. Our students' access to myOn gives Language Arts, and content area teachers a way to direct students to specific projects or groups of books. Actively Learn has similar groupings and independent work available to students. These programs are new to all of us, so please reach out to your fellow department and grade-level team members as we all learn together.

As I mentioned in the past, the district is moving towards proficiency-based learning as well. In January, our teachers will be invited to join district and ALA staff to create a map for each subject and grade level of what is needed to create proficiency-based learning for our students. As you continue to consider the audit questions, consider for the new calendar year and the new semester what enhancements you would like to work on in your own teaching. How can other staff help to reach the professional goals you have set for yourself in 2017? What can you offer to your Carrleagues? I would love for many of you to be a part of the district-wide group that shapes proficiency-based learning at Carr and at Santa Ana Unified.

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FPM Questions:

- 1) How do you differentiate instruction for varying student needs?
- 2) What determines the type and frequency of instructional strategies you incorporate into your lessons?
- 3) How often do you assess your students? How do the results of your standards-based assessments shape your instruction for all sub-groups of students?
- 4) What do you expect students to learn? How do you know when they have learned it? How do you respond when they do not learn? How do you respond when they already know it?
- 5) Describe how you support academic language acquisition and incorporate meaningful writing instruction specific to your academic discipline into your core content lessons throughout the year.

Thank you to Mr. De Santiago, Ms. Tomala, Ms. Miranda, Ms. Hutchens, Ms. Cox, Ms. Nobel, Ms. Mendoza, Ms. Vidrios, Ms. Urizar, Mr. Eduad, Mr. Qafaiti, Ms. Poderoso, Ms. Magruder. They administered the test one-on-one to over 400 students. This has helped us identify the correct intervention these students need to help them improve their reading skills. For the most part, students did much better on the Core Phonics test than their MAP and STAR tests indicated. We have identified students who will be taking a highly intensive intervention program and a second group that will participate in the Rewards Program in their Social Studies Classes. The materials have been ordered and we should have them when we come back from the break.

Despite or maybe because of the rain, I have heard from many many students that the Carr-nival was a success! Thanks to Ms. Cox for once again organizing this event, and thank you to the entire staff who made it possible. Our students loved every aspect of the Carr-nival with the game trucks being the most popular activity but the dance, food, laser tag and free games all being favorites too. The students who were not able to go to the Carr-nival were reflective in the survey and realized that they needed to improve their GPA and work habits in order to be successful in the future. I know they can and will achieve their goals.

December 23rd is Ms. Miller and Ms. Hinshaw's last day here at Carr Intermediate School. I am very grateful for their willingness to put their very enjoyable retirement on hold to come and help us. They have been a great deal of help and a source of knowledge and wisdom. I am eternally indebted to them for their help and support. It is really nice to know that Mrs. Maldonado will be returning when we come back from the break. Ms. Frias has a few more weeks after that, but we

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will soon be up to full speed. Mr. Tang has been stellar during this long, long run up to our holiday break. His humor and willingness to jump in and get things done are refreshing.

I want to thank the entire staff for the commitment, dedication and hard work they put in every day all year, especially this week, with the rain, the carnival and the hectic schedule! When you see and hear how we touch students' lives, it puts the daily grind and challenges into perspective. Yesterday many staff members participated in delivering SOS Christmas baskets. Thanks to Mr. DeSantiago who organized the program, 22 families received Christmas gifts including toys and bikes for the kids, gift cards and food. At the Carr-nival, I had the pleasure of speaking to a former student of Ms. Hefner (Lathus) who had come to visit and tell her how much he appreciated what she did for him many years ago. I have said many times that teaching is the most difficult job in the world. As educators, we all make many emotional investments in our students. That is the reason it is so difficult, so draining and yet so rewarding. Teachers change lives, one student at a time! Thank you for being wonderful professors and caring persons. It is my privilege to work with you. I hope you take advantage of the break to spend time with your loved ones, rest and rejuvenate yourselves. The rest of the school year will come quickly.