

## **YEAR END ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2015-2016**

### **School Improvement Plans**

#### **WILLIS E. THORPE ELEMENTARY**

Thorpe faculty and staff are committed to ensuring the success of all students, teaching and engaging a population reflective of a wide range of learning styles.

This school year we are focused on implementing the Writing Workshop model in grades kindergarten through five:

- In August 2015, Thorpe's teaching staff attended three days of professional development dedicated to learning how to effectively launch and implement the writer's workshop model.
- During the first half of the school year, Thorpe's teaching staff was engaged in an additional 40 hours of professional development, expanding their knowledge base of the writing program.
- During Thorpe's Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings, grade level teachers assessed student progress towards our learning goal and shared observations of patterns that emerged from the writing samples.
- Thorpe's Data Leadership Team developed a highly effective measurement tool to track student progress during each trimester for the three genres – narrative, informational and opinion. The tool utilized Excel spreadsheets enabling the data to be analyzed and used to plan future instruction.
- Teachers introduced the initiative to parents and shared students' writing notebooks during Open Houses and the Induction Night held in the fall.
- Thorpe teachers in Kindergarten to Grade Five implemented the Writer's Workshop model, each of the three trimesters. Pre and post assessments were completed by all students for each writing genre (narrative, informational and opinion), in order to measure growth towards the Student Learning Goal. Data collected as of this point, indicates that significant progress has been made towards reaching the goal.

Thorpe's second area of focus is to plan and organize school events and activities to acknowledge and celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Thorpe School in September 1966:

- Thorpe's School Council has met to explore various ways in which to reach out to former alumni, both teachers and students, via DCAT and local newspapers, to participate in the celebration.
- Danvers High School students will work with the Town Archivist to create a historical time line of the history of Thorpe School, as part of their Community Service Project required for graduation.
- Thorpe's Fifth Grade Student Council is organizing a contest in which all students are eligible to enter a T-shirt design commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

- A banner will be hung in the main lobby, celebrating the event, and is in the early design planning stage.
- A t-shirt was successfully designed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Thorpe in September of 2016. It shows Thorpie, the school's mascot, dressed in different attire reflecting how styles and trends have changed during the last five decades. The date October 13, 2016 was chosen to officially celebrate the 50th Anniversary along with the Grand Opening of the newly constructed Learning Commons. Several Danvers High School seniors fulfilled Community Service hours by working on Thorpe's Anniversary Committee. They created a survey which is on the school's website to gather information from alumni about when they attended the school and what they are currently doing. Flyers were posted in area businesses and a Connect Ed message was sent out to Thorpe families notifying them about the anniversary and alerting them to the survey on the website. Interviews of both current and former staff and students have been filmed by DCAT to be included in a slide show that will be presented during the October 13th celebration.

The third area of focus is the final phase of the construction of a 21st century Learning Commons:

- Regularly sent out communications to staff and Thorpe families informing them of the status of the building project.
- Construction began in November, 2015, including cutouts in walls that have connected the three classrooms, windows have been removed to be replaced by a double door leading to the outdoor classroom, a cement slab has been poured in the courtyard, walls have been cut out in preparation for a storefront main entrance, and other areas have been prepared for new entryways.
- Ongoing communication and meetings have been held with town officials and Danco Construction to discuss specific details of the project.
- A Fashion Show fundraiser, in conjunction with Thorpe's PAC, is planned for in March 2016, to raise money for the Learning Commons furnishings.
- More than one hundred students, along with members of Thorpe's faculty and staff, participated in the Fashion Show on March 4th at Danvers High School. The event raised more than four thousand dollars in ticket sales that went towards the purchase of new furniture for the Commons. It is expected to arrive before the start of the 2016-2017 school year and includes both round and rectangular tables, chairs, eighty-inch bookcases and a glass case to display student hobbies and interests. During April vacation, books and furnishings were moved from the "temporary" home of the library to the newly built Learning Commons. The doors of the new area opened for classes Kindergarten to Grade Five on Monday, April 25th. Danco, the construction company that built the Commons is donating a custom built Circulation Desk with a delivery date expected sometime this summer. Two Smart boards were installed, and a DEEP grant was awarded for the purchase of a collaborative media center for student work and research. The success of this entire project is a tribute to the collaborative effort between Danco, and town and school officials.