

## Superintendent's Message Tri-Creek School Corporation's Strategic Plan



Dr. Debra Howe

Upon joining the Tri-Creek family, the School Board and I made a commitment to begin a needs assessment with the purpose of developing a strategic plan. We sent out surveys and conducted interviews with approximately 50 administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, and community members. Discussions were conducted over three days as 33 people gathered to study the preliminary information. Six goal area targets surfaced from this study. The next step was to develop a mission, begin in-depth study of the goal areas, and gather additional input to determine trends for the district. To date, we have interviewed an additional 254 teachers, support staff, parents, students, and community members, gathered information from surveys from 555 stakeholders, and are currently surveying around 2000 students. While there is a lot to be proud of within our school district, there remain opportunities to improve. Topping our list of strengths are the caring, dedicated people within the district. Much has been accomplished through their efforts resulting in a school corporation with a reputation for providing students with a strong academic foundation. In essence, everyone wants schools where all students feel safe, feel special, and learn at high levels in all classes and at all levels and graduate prepared for career and college. The six goal areas we are working on, that we believe will provide the vehicle to accomplish this include: 1.) development of a collaborative, safe, and engaging culture and climate; 2.) alignment of all processes, programs, curriculum, instruction, and assessments; 3.) providing a literacy focused instructional program that is rigorous and relevant; 4.) embed technology as a learning tool; 5.) develop partnerships with all stakeholders to provide support and opportunities for students; and 6.) ensure that our graduates are prepared with the skills and exper-

ences to ensure career and college success. We expect all data gathering to be completed by the end of November and for the School Board to act on a recommendation for the strategic plan in their December meeting. Once the strategic plan has been approved, the district and schools will begin developing action steps and a timeline to accomplish the goals and strategies.

Exciting times are ahead and much can be accomplished when a dedicated group comes together with a focused and aligned purpose. At the very heart of this journey is the fact that we want to make sure all students learn, and support all students to higher achievement. To accomplish this we need the collective efforts of our Tri-Creek family and community. I look forward to working with all of you toward this goal.

*-Dr. Debra Howe, Superintendent*

## News From the President of the Board of School Trustees

The Tri-Creek School Board is very pleased to be moving forward in the process of developing a realistic strategic plan with goals and policies that reflect the input of the stakeholders of the Corporation. This process, begun in June, has been very valuable in our understanding of what is important to the success of our students and Corporation. The 6 basic goal areas have been defined. Each goal is currently being discussed to identify the steps needed to be successfully completed.

In response to the extra time needed to fully develop and define these various steps, the Tri-Creek School Board is changing the format of its monthly meetings. Beginning in November, the first scheduled Board meeting of the month will be used to conduct the "normal" business of the Corporation such as bill paying, personnel items, contract approval, etc. The second meeting of each month will be advertised as a "Work Session", which will allow the Board members to collectively discuss the policies and procedures needed to achieve success in the goal areas within a public setting. Both monthly meetings are open to the public and attendance of all stakeholders is welcomed. Public comment will also be welcomed during both meetings in allotted timeslots.

Recently, the Corporation held a "Listening Post" session at the high school whereby stakeholders were invited to comment on the goal areas. Many ideas and points of view were brought forward which will help the Board develop the best plan to implement the steps needed in each goal area. The School Board truly appreciated the comments of those present. Due to value of the information received in this meeting, the School Board and Administration would like to repeat this process in the spring. The School Board invites all stakeholders to attend the next "Listening Post" (date and time to be announced). Please do not miss this opportunity to directly interact with Board members and Administrators to bring your ideas and suggestions to our attention.

The School Board is extremely energized to work toward bringing these wonderful goals into reality. During this process, it has been very rewarding to see the depth of caring and dedication that exists within the Tri-Creek stakeholder community. Together, we can truly make the Tri-Creek School Corporation into one that will deliver exceptional learning opportunities to our students that will prepare them for their journey after graduation.



Doug Ward, President of  
Board of School Trustees

## Substitute Teachers Needed

Tri-Creek School Corporation is looking for substitute teachers. The ideal candidate would have an ability to work a flexible schedule depending on our need for substitutes. The wage is based on a person's education—High School Diploma: \$55 a day; Minimum of 60 semester hours of college: \$60 a day; Bachelor's Degree, but not in education: \$60 a day; Bachelor's Degree in education, but no license: \$60 per day; Current Indiana Teacher's License: \$65 a day. Apply at 195 West Oakley Avenue, Lowell, IN, or call 696-6661.



## You're Invited!

You are welcome to attend the Tri-Creek Board of School Trustees meetings. Meetings are held on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month unless otherwise noted. Beginning in November 2011 and continuing each month thereafter, the first meeting of each month will be an action meeting, and the second meeting of each month will be a study session—no actions taken. The meetings are held at the Administration Center, 195 West Oakley Avenue and begin at 7:00 p.m. The Board meetings for the 2011-2012 school year are scheduled on the following dates:

Action Meetings: November 10 ; December 15 (third Thursday); January 12; February 9; March 8; April 12; May 10; June 14.

Study Sessions: November 22 (Tuesday); January 26; February 23; March 22; April 26; May 24; June 28.

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Ms. Sandra K. Goss, Fiscal Coordinator  
Mrs. Patricia Howard, Transportation Supervisor  
Mr. Alan Fox, Head of Maintenance  
Mrs. Judith K. Knight, Food Service Director

### Phone/Fax Numbers

Superintendent's Office.....	696-6661
Fax.....	696-2150
Lowell High School.....	696-7733
Fax.....	696-0042
Lowell Middle School.....	696-7701
Fax.....	690-2620
Three Creeks Elementary School.....	696-5740
Fax.....	696-3051
Oak Hill Elementary School.....	696-9285
Fax.....	690-2621
Lake Prairie Elementary School.....	696-7541
Fax.....	690-2616

## Congratulations to LHS Graduate, Brittney Godbolt, and LHS Teacher, Laura Zea

Since 1989, Independent Colleges of Indiana, Inc. has sponsored "Realizing the Dream," a program funded by the Lilly Endowment. This program has been designed to recognize the first-year achievements of first-generation college students and to highlight the role that teachers, counselors, coaches, and other mentors may have played in the encouragement of these first-generation college students. Lowell High School graduate Brittney Godbolt has been selected by the University of Saint Francis as its "Realizing the Dream" recipient. She, in turn, has identified Lowell High School health careers teacher Laura Zea as the educator who was most influential in her decision to attend college. Mrs. Zea received a \$1,000 professional development grant as a result of this honor and was honored with other teachers and students at a banquet on November 5, 2011, in Indianapolis. Congratulations to both Brittney and Laura!

## LHS Classes Sponsoring Blood Drive

The Lowell High School Health Careers and the Anatomy classes and their instructor, Laura Zea, are sponsoring a blood drive with the American Red Cross on **December 13 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the high school.** If you would like to schedule an appointment to donate blood, please contact Laura Zea at 219-750-1573. Appointments can be made at any time.

## Parent's Corner

### Be a reading family

Regular reading at home will help your child read school materials (handouts, textbooks) more easily. Set aside time each day to read to your youngster and for him to read on his own. Also, Listen to him read to you, and let him see you reading. Make sure family members have library cards—and take regular trips to get new books. *Idea:* Post "wish lists" of books your family wants to read. Then, cross off each one as you finish it.



### It's a Math Fact!

Learning math facts is more fun when your youngster makes a game out of it. Here is an activity he'll want to do again and again:

- Together, draw tick-tac-toe grids and write a multiplication problem ( $8 \times 7$ ,  $3 \times 9$ ) in each square. To play, choose a box, solve the problem correctly, and write an X or O on top. The first player to get three Xs or Os in a row wins.

*Excerpts from Home & School Connection, January & February, 2011*

## Technology Department Update

In my short time with Tri-Creek the Technology Department has been working hard to make great strides in both updating our existing technologies and seeking out new ones to continue to make our technology program the best that it can be. Some of the major updates that we have rolled out so far include:

- A district wide high-speed wireless network that is capable of supporting a mobile device for every student, teacher, and staff member. Our new network includes an access point in nearly every instructional area and currently covers 99% of our campus. We have opened our networks up to support teacher and student-owned devices as well.
- A professional development program that provides an iPad to over 80 participants who are engaging in social networking, project development, and professional learning communities. So far our unique program has been featured in the NWI Times and has garnered questions from other schools around the area and the country.
- A renewed focus on updating classroom technologies including the expansion of interactive whiteboards. We are currently working with SMART Technologies to see how we can best provide SMART Board interactive whiteboards to classrooms as soon as possible.
- Major changes to our district Google Apps system, including tools for e-books, ELL/translation, web site development, and student media production. In the future we will be looking at using Google Apps to provide email and other communication services for students and staff members.
- A multitude of other building projects including new science laptop labs at our elementary schools, a GPS tracking system for our buses, increased network speeds, and changes to our district security policies to make them more classroom friendly.



Some of the upgrades that you can expect to see rolling out in the next few months include a new district web filter that will open more opportunities for students while continuing to keep them safe, a revamp of our phone system, a new trouble ticket tracking system, and a major update to our district website among other projects. As we continue to push forward I always appreciate your thoughts, suggestions, questions, and support – together we will continue to do great things!

*By Jay Blackman, Director of Information & Education Technology*

## Truancy Prevention Poster Contest Winners

In the spring, one hundred and sixty students from Three Creeks Elementary School and Oak Hill Elementary School participated in an Truancy Prevention Campaign Poster Contest. Three Creek's Elementary School fourth-grader Skylar Johnson's truancy prevention poster was chosen as the winner. Her truancy prevention poster appeared on the Lamar billboard near the Lowell Fire Station. Lauren Williams was the Oak Hill Elementary School winner.

The rainbow-themed design with the message, "Be Cool. Come to School" won out over several entries in the anti-truancy campaign sponsored by residency and attendance compliance officer, Ronna Lukasik-Rosenbaum. In September, Dr. Howe, Superintendent, and Ronna Lukasik-Rosenbaum, presented Syklar with a miniature replica of the billboard. Skylar's and Lauren's poster designs were also made into t-shirts that were distributed to their fourth-grade classes. The contest was funded through an Indiana Department of Education Learn and Serve Grant.



The fourth-grade class from Three Creeks wearing the Truancy Prevention Poster T-shirts.



Ronna Lukasik-Rosenbaum,; Skylar Johnson; Julie Nomanon, Sarah Taylor, and Melissa Leckrone, 2010-11 3rd Grade Teachers; Connie Bales, Principal; and Dr. Howe at the recognition.

## Tri-Creek School Corporation and Lowell Police Department Receive Funds from Department of Justice Office Secure Our Schools Program

Tri-Creek School Corporation and Lowell Police Department have been awarded a grant for \$131,492 from The Department of Justice Office of Community Policing Services through the Secure Our Schools program.

SOS Program funds law enforcement agencies to work with local schools to promote student safety and security.

The funds will be used for training of faculty and staff at all schools in the Olweus Bullying Training which will include the Cyber Bullying Curriculum. The grant will also allow the district to purchase monitors and security cameras for the high school, color infrared cameras for the school buses, video server for the school bus cameras, and 24/7 digital camera systems for school buses.

## Reducing Health Care Costs

### First in a Series

Employers throughout the country are experiencing double digit increases in their health care costs. Health care costs are exceeding \$2 trillion dollars per year and continue to escalate. Prescription prices for drugs still under patent protections (as opposed to generic medications) are about 35% to 55% higher in the United States than they are in other countries. (Source: Congressional Budget Office)

Employers have to educate their employees on how to get the most economical bang for their buck. The attitude of everyone should be how can we save money by using our health care benefits.

### Prescriptions Name Brand vs. Generics

Generic means that the patent has expired on the name brand drug and is now available to be copied. Some of the changes that are made by the drug companies to the name brand drug will be to change the shape, size, color, or add an inactive ingredient which doesn't affect the overall performance of the drug.

When visiting your family doctor for either your checkup or because you're sick, and he prescribes a prescription drug, ask your doctor if a generic is available instead of the name brand. The difference in cost could be substantial. For example, if you're a diabetic and take Byetta, the cost to your insurance company is \$405.84 per script, whereas, Glimepridie which is a generic only costs \$1.90 per script. Januvia costs \$227.80 per script and Humalog costs \$213.96 per script. Other diabetic generics are Metformin at \$7.83 per script or Glyburide at \$10.71 per script.

Name brand Advair Diskus which is a Bronchial Dilator costs \$380.31 and Singulair costs \$153.15 per script, whereas, a generic version Proair costs \$7.27 and Ventolin costs \$28.65 per script.

So you can see how with proper education, you can help your employer reduce drug costs.

### Wellness Programs

Another area you can concentrate your efforts is on a Wellness Program. There are various programs that you can incorporate into a Wellness Program. Such as, blood tests which would identify potential health problems, flu and pneumonia shots to reduce absenteeism and substitute costs, walking clubs to get people to exercise, and weight loss clubs to name a few. A Wellness Program could identify health problems before they become real expensive to correct.

By Thomas J. Dykiel Ed.D., Business & Personnel Manager

## Substitute Bus Drivers Needed

Tri-Creek School Corporation is looking for substitute bus drivers and substitute bus assistants. These are good jobs for moms as they give them the same schedule as their children. Substitute bus drivers must have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL), and training is provided. The wage is \$58.98 per day. Training is also provided for substitute bus assistants. The wage is \$9.08 per hour. Apply at 195 West Oakley Avenue, Lowell, IN, or call 696-6661.



## GPS Units Installed On Buses

The mission of the Tri-Creek School Corporation Transportation Department is the safe transportation of students to and from school. As such, our mechanics have been installing GPS units on the entire fleet of fifty-one school buses. The tracking devices are capable not only of locating the buses should one break down away from home, but also of checking the stop locations, idle times, speeds, and times of the buses. The units are also able to generate multiple reports.



These units were purchased from Synovia, Inc. out of monies from the 2009 General Obligation bond issue. These units provide us with one more tool to keep our students safe and secure.

## Important Dates

<b>Nov. 24-25</b>	Thanksgiving Break (no school)
<b>Dec. 19-30</b>	Winter Break (no school)
<b>Jan. 16</b>	Martin Luther King Day (no school)
<b>Jan. 20</b>	End of First Semester
<b>Jan. 27</b>	Report Cards sent out
<b>Feb. 13-Mar. 9</b>	ECA Assessment Window (late winter)
<b>Feb. 17</b>	No School
<b>Feb. 20</b>	President's Day (no school)

To access the full calendar, please go to the Tri-Creek School Corporation web site at <http://tricreek.schoolwires.com> and click on "View Calendar."

