

9-15-09

Somehow we have already been in school for 3 ½ weeks! Despite some of the challenges we experienced with construction, the year has gotten off to a fabulous start. The energy and excitement I see everyday demonstrates your support and encouragement as you send your children off to school. You will have an opportunity to meet with your child's classroom and special area teachers at our Curriculum Night on Sept. 21, 2009 at 6:30. I know we are all very busy, but I hope you will take the time to join us on the 21<sup>st</sup>. We ask that students remain at home for this event so you may give your full attention to the information being shared.

The ABC's are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to educational abbreviations and acronyms. As you join us for our Curriculum Night, you may find, as many parents do, some of the acronyms used by educators to be confusing. Here's a quick look at some of the most common terms put together by the National Association of Elementary Principals:

**NCLB (No Child Left Behind)** is the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). It is a federal law that was designed to improve student performance and make schools, school districts, and states more accountable for students' success or failure. While NCLB is in place nationwide, it continues to be a topic of discussion and debate among educators, parents, and legislators.

**AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress)** was established under NCLB as the measure that states must use to show that their schools and school districts are effectively working to meet basic state standards for math and reading, as well as for attendance and high school graduation. Each state has its own system for measuring school progress, often involving statewide testing. State education departments may intervene if a school does not make AYP for two years in a row. The law also enables parents to transfer their children to a different school or obtain tutoring if their school's test results continue to be substandard.

**ELL (English Language Learners)** is a broad term used to describe students whose second language is English – that is to say children who are raised in homes where the main language spoken is not English. ELL is now being used as a term to replace other, more specific, categories, including students with limited English proficiency (LEP), second-language learners (SLL), and English as a Second Language (ESL).

**IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)** was created to help ensure that children who have special needs, such as dyslexia or autism, are able to receive a free public school education that meets their needs.

**FAPE (Free appropriate public education)** is one of the hallmarks of IDEA – that American children, regardless of their disability, are entitled to a public school education.

**IEP (Individualized Education Program)** is a personalized educational plan created for students who have been identified as having specific educational disabilities. An IEP is a

team as well as an educational program. IEP team members include the child's classroom teacher and special education teacher, the parent(s), a public agency representative, other educational specialists as is appropriate, and in some cases, the student. Working together, the IEP team ensures that the child receives the education and services necessary for progress and success.

**RTI (Response to Intervention)** is a multitier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. Students' progress is closely monitored at each stage of intervention to determine the need for another method of instruction and/or intervention in both general and special education.

Many states also have "named" tests and programs to gauge students' progress. Here in Illinois we use the **ISAT (Illinois Standards Achievement Test)** which is given in the spring of the year to 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Everyone takes the math and reading tests, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade also are tested in writing, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade is tested in science.

If there are any other acronyms that you would like more information about, please let me know. I appreciate your willingness to stay informed about your child's education and programs at Homestead or within the Oswego #308 district. Together we will continue to ensure that each student develops the capacity to thrive.

Remember to take some time to read with or to your child and play some math games on a daily basis!