



## Lincoln Public Schools

Mary L. Sterling, Ph.D.  
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

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To: School Committee  
From: Mary Sterling  
Re: Plans for Institute Day, January 14, 2011

As has been true in the past, Institute Day will be an important opportunity for professional development to support our ongoing district goals. This year, the emphasis is on writing instruction in the morning and the use of technology in the afternoon.

The district initiative in writing began with professional development last summer and was accompanied by sessions in the fall. At this point in the year, the classroom teachers, special education teachers, and specialists will dig deeper into writing instruction by engaging in selected activities during Institute Day.

First, the whole faculty will hear a keynote presentation by Carl Anderson, a nationally recognized expert in teaching writing to students. His topic is: "Writing Conversations" and he will focus on the art of conferring with students, K-8, while they are working on a piece of writing. Then, Anderson will engage the staff in a more intensive learning experience in two break-out sessions, one with teachers of grades K-2 and one with teachers of grades 3-5 and ELA, grades 6-8. This session will be an interactive demonstration of various phases of writing conferences to support the student writer. Finally, Carl Anderson will lead a video-taped round table discussion about how parents can support the development of their children as writers. We will pursue several ways to make this video available to parents.

Teachers in grades 6-8 who do not teach English will participate in a workshop called "Short Writing for a Content Purpose." This session will be facilitated by Deb Sabin, director of training at *Writer's Express*, who has taught English Language Arts at the high school and middle school levels. Sabin will support and challenge content area teachers and specialist to use specific writing tasks to further student understanding of the subject matter in the content areas.

Faculty members who comprise the Special Education Related Services Provider group (social workers, school psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech/language pathologists) will attend a session on goal-focused therapy. The facilitator will be Nora Rushford, who teaches courses on social work at Simmons and is Deputy Director of Walker Partnerships, an organization that assists school districts in meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

Preschool teachers will work as a team to develop their skill in reading assessment at the beginning stages of literacy. This session will be led by one of their colleagues, Karen LoRusso, who has considerable expertise in administering the assessments we have selected to use for preschool students.

The afternoon sessions on technology have been planned by our team of Instructional Technology Specialists: Monica Albuxech, Cindy Matthes, Mark McDonough, and Lisah

Rhodes. In the fall, they surveyed the faculty to determine the needs and interests for technology learning among teachers in the district. Based on the results, they designed nine different offerings and offered them to teachers based on level of interest and expertise. Our specialists, along with selected consultants, will conduct the afternoon sessions.

Institute Day promises to be a day of inspiration and learning to prepare our faculty to engage and stretch our students as writers. It will also provide the kind of learning that teachers often ask for: hands-on opportunities to increase expertise in using technology to benefit their instruction and their students' learning.