

From The Director's Desk . . .



Larry Wells,
CSO Director

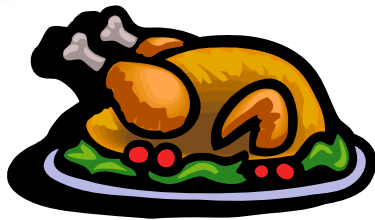
A Season To Be Thankful

Consequent to the holiday season this issue of the FSU/CSO newsletter covers the months of

November and December. Across this great nation of ours, many families will ponder the subject of Thanksgiving. Many families will also honor their beliefs by celebrating or participating in activities specific to their respective cultures.

We encourage you to use the time off during winter break for relaxation and rejuvenation. This is also an opportunity to reconnect with friends and family. These activities can have energizing effects and may enable one to return to this work that we love with renewed energy and vigor. It is with recognition of the significance of the season that the FSU/CSO wishes you and your families a joyful season. We look forward to your continued efforts on behalf of the children attending your respective academies.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Wells".



The Nation's Report Card

America's public school students are doing significantly better in math since *No Child Left Behind* took effect in 2002. Reading scores show continued improvement, but at a slower pace than math according to recently released results from the *National Assessment of Education Progress* (NAEP) 2007 examination of fourth and eighth grade students.

The NAEP is the yardstick used to measure learning in each state across the country. It compares the performance among states, urban districts, public and private schools, and student demographic groups.

Highlights of the NAEP test, also known as the Nation's Report Card, show that:

- Math scores continued an upward trend in 2007 in grades 4 & 8, with increases in 4th grade more pronounced.
- At grade 4 & 8 the percentage of students performing at or above Basic and Proficient levels in math were higher in 2007 than any other previous assessment year.
- In reading, the average scores improved for both 4th & 8th grades, particularly among lower and middle-performing students.
- The average scores in math and reading for both 4th & 8th grades were higher in private schools than those in public schools.

So often the educational news is negative with much finger pointing, and that can be discouraging for those who put their hearts and souls into teaching day after day. We thought that it would be a nice change to report positive news for a change! For more information on NAEP, please visit: www.nationsreportcard.gov.

CSO Holds Professional Development for Boards, School Leaders, and Curriculum Directors

Board Leadership Conference II

On October 19-20 Board members came to the Radisson Hotel in Lansing for the Fall Board Leadership Conference II. Board members representing 15 of FSU's 17 academies were in attendance. Besides sessions led by CSO staff members, Ann Fillingham from the Dykema Law Offices in Lansing served as a presenter speaking on school facility finance. We thank all those who attended the conference, and based on your evaluations we are already at work on the Board Leadership Conference III !



Professional Learning Community (PLC)

The first PLC of the year was held November 6th at Webers Inn in Ann Arbor. The PLC's are an opportunity for school leaders, curriculum directors, and assessment specialists to stay informed about current practices and requirements in the assessment of students and schools. Elizabeth Elliot from the Michigan Virtual University Learn Port was a guest presenter. Twenty-six staff from twelve of FSU's charters attended the event. The next PLC will be held again at Webers on January 8, 2008. Call Suzanne Finney (231) 591-5805 for more information.





HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

From all of us at the CSO, we wish you and yours a very happy holiday season.



Front Row (l to r): Deborah Snider, Suzanne Finney, Mindy Britton, Sue Impellizzeri. **Back Row:** Jim Ridders, Ron Rizzo, Larry Wells, Larry Lindquist, Jimmie Rodgers, Ed McKeehan, Art Willick, Bob Hamet

CTA Teacher Named Captain of US Korfball Team

Aaron Kenemer, 5th grade teacher at Creative Technologies Academy in Cedar Springs was named the Captain of the U.S. Korfball team. The team competed in the World Korfball Championships in the Czech Republic October 31 through November 11.

Korfball is a coed team sport similar to the game of basketball, but with no dribbling, only passing. The baskets do not have backboards to assist the shot maker. The US team placed 13th out of the 16 team field, but Kenemer is pleased with the team's performance. "We had a really great experience, we were underdogs going into the World Cup to begin with", said Kenemer. "The Dutch rule in the sport and the U.S. will only continue to improve." Congratulations to Mr. Kenemer and the U.S. team for their efforts this year!



Aaron Kenemer



School Improvement Corner

By Suzanne Finney
Academic Assessment Specialist

School Improvement: Maintaining Focus in an Environment Abounding with Distractions.

If we took a poll about the most pressing needs in any school, we would get a variety of answers, but hopefully a common thread among them would be student achievement.

Focusing our work around the achievement needs of our students is one that takes constant vigilance from all levels in the school and community. Veteran's Day brings to mind an example of what can happen when focus is lost. During the Battle of Britain in World War II, Hitler had a goal to destroy the Royal Air Force (RAF). Germany's resources far outweighed Great Britain's, and the RAF was just three weeks from defeat. Then, one German pilot got off course and bombed central London, and the RAF retaliated and bombed Berlin. Hitler ordered the London Blitz in revenge and veered the entire Luftwaffe off the original focus. This diversion allowed the RAF time to recover its strength and Hitler lost the Battle of Britain.

If we are to be victorious in our efforts, we dare not lose focus. The School Improvement Team representing all stakeholders is the champion of increasing achievement for all our students. Once student achievement data (assessments included) has been studied and the goals and strategies agreed upon, they need to be resourced and supported with vigilance. Our students' futures are depending upon our tenacity. May it be said of us "never has so much been owed by so many to so few." Thank you RAF, you changed the course of history!

Until next time. . .

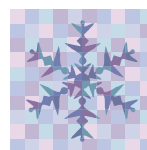
CPD 1020 E. Maple Street
Big Rapids, MI 49307-1676

Phone: (231) 591-5802
Fax: (231) 796-1448
Email: rizzor@ferris.edu

K-8 Charter Schools: Closing The Achievement Gap

The U.S. Department of Education has published a new guide titled: *K-8 Charter Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap*. The guide examines factors contributing to charter schools' successes which include a mission-driven focus, innovative academic programs, positive school culture, and partnership with families. You can download a copy of the report at:

[www.ed.gov/admins/comm/choice/
charterk-8/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/admins/comm/choice/charterk-8/index.html).



Please Note

The CSO will be closed for winter break from December 21 through January 2, 2008. We'll see you in the new year!

FSU Mission

Ferris State University will be a national leader in providing opportunities for innovative teaching in career oriented, technological and professional education.