

Hi!

**Best wishes to you and yours for a joyous holiday season from the administration of PRSD!** We sincerely thank you for taking the time to read our weekly articles as well as your ongoing assistance and support in helping with our children's education. (If you are new to our list serves, past articles can be found on the PRSD website [www.prsd.org](http://www.prsd.org).) We sense the culture within our schools and communities strengthening and we will need this fortitude to get us through the difficult changes facing our country and the world at large. Our greatest asset will be in our long term planning and facing the realities of these world changes respectfully and responsibly. Alone we may achieve but together we will succeed!

May Peace, Joy, and Happiness surround you.....Enjoy the holidays.....The PRSD Administrative Team.

### **A Walk in the Middle School Hallway**

Walking in the hallways at school used to be an eerily quiet experience. If you peeked into a classroom you would see students sitting in rows quietly listening to a teacher. When the bell rang students would file into the halls and eagerly connect with friends to chat about plans after school or on the weekend. Once the bell rang again students would file back into classrooms, sit in rows and quietly listen to the teacher. It wasn't often that you would hear chatter about what they were learning.

It's been a year and a half since we have formalized our collaborative process using Professional Learning Communities. Teams of teachers specializing in different subject areas meet regularly to work on a common goal and engage in discussions about the learning needs, learning process and celebrations of learning for students. As you walk down the hallway during one of the early release afternoons, you see teachers engaged in PLC. Often sitting at desks arranged in a circle, you may overhear a data driven conversation about student learning, in another room you may hear the teachers having a lively conversation about how to identify whether students are learning and what evidence to look for in support of student learning, and in yet another room the

discussion may be about the development of a new teaching strategy. Perhaps the most exciting thing to see and hear however is the sharing of work. Teachers are sharing their lessons, asking colleagues for feedback on a lesson idea, and arranging to visit one another's classroom to observe a different style of teaching, a particular skill, and/or to help trouble-shoot a dilemma.

Now when you walk down the hallway in school it's noisy. You hear students discussing the main points to an article they have read, offering suggestions to one another about how to improve a piece of writing, or debating whether the results of an experiment proved a hypothesis. If you peeked into a classroom you would see that students are actively engaged in the learning process. They may be clustered at a resource area of the room, presenting their project to a small group, or sitting at desks arranged in working groups, and when the bell rings you can hear the continuation of what is being learned in the hallways along with chatter about what to do after school.

Formalizing the collaborative process has enabled our district to provide powerful learning experiences and prepare our students to become life long learners.