



Illinois Valley High School

First Trimester Board Report 2010

Submitted by Jo Ann Bethany



In many ways, this has been a great start to a new school year. The senior class has strong, positive leadership and overall good attitudes toward school. The freshmen class is one of the best behaved that I have seen in the last nine years. Whether it is just the 'personality' of the class or because of the great foundation that is being laid by Evergreen and Lorna Byrne with PBIS, we are reaping the benefits. It is an absolute privilege to spend our days with these young people.

Even with all the stressors on the staff because of contract issues and budget uncertainties, the staff is cohesive and dedicated to the goals of the school. They show up each day, ready to teach kids and are receptive and responsive to making changes that will result in stronger academics and a better school climate. I continue to be humbled to be working with such great people who truly care about kids. One of my favorite quotes about teaching is: *If a doctor, lawyer, or dentist had 40 people in his office at one time, all of whom had different needs, and some of whom didn't want to be there and were causing trouble, and the doctor, lawyer, or dentist, without assistance, had to treat them all with professional excellence for nine months, then he might have some conception of the classroom teacher's job.* ~Donald D. Quinn

ATHLETICS

It has been a great fall season at IVHS. Moving to a 3A League has put all of our sports into a better position for winning some games. Each of the fall sports have had more successes this year than they have experienced for the last couple of years. Friday night, the 5th of November is our final home football game – Homecoming – against Lakeview. We are very hopeful for a win which will result in us going into the play-offs.

Our new AD, Casey Alderson, is doing a fabulous job of filling the shoes of Mark Higgins. Casey is enjoying being at a small school. After the first couple of weeks, he shared with me that he knew he was going to enjoy it; he just didn't realize how much. He is beginning to build relationships with coaches, students, and families and the "blue and white" is becoming "red and white". He has found the difference between teaching at school with 1800+ students and one with 375 students to be a refreshing change.

NEW STAFF

In addition to Casey, we have two other new teachers. Erica Butler is teaching science. Her passion for her subject and for kids is evident. She has quickly built relationships with students and does everything with excellence. Megan Brown is our new Title One teacher and is teaching both math and language arts. She also has done a fabulous job with the new Freshmen Forum class. This is a new class for us and its focus is around study skills, test taking skills, career exploration, and how to succeed in high school. Megan has basically had to put this curriculum together and has worked long hours to do so. All 9th graders are in the class this first trimester. We are hopeful that this class will help reduce the failure rate of students.

We also have a new classified employee at IVAC. Jerry Luke is working with both middle and high school students at the alternative center. He cares deeply about students and most especially those who have struggled to be successful. His positive attitude and strong belief in the possibilities of students to change is a great fit for this program.

ECMC SCHOLARS AND MENTORING

Our final round of ECMC scholars were picked last spring. We have 20 ECMC scholars in the 11th and 12th grades who are eligible to receive a \$6000 scholarship when they graduate. Alternates are chosen in case a student moves, does not graduate, or does not go onto postsecondary education. Vickie Whebbe, from the ECMC foundation, came to visit the scholars in October. Her goal was to meet them and to answer any questions they might have. The students represented our school with amazing dignity and passion for their education. I was very proud of them. Each scholar and alternate has a mentor who meets with him or her on a monthly basis to discuss goals and planning for the future. This grant targets at-risk youth who have one or more factors that may interfere with them going on to college. Many of these kids do a direct turn-around in their education when they are picked as scholars. GPAs, attendance, and the rigor of course selections all go up once these kids know that someone else believes in their possibility. It is my goal to gather data on all the previous 30 scholars who have graduated to see where they are with their education.

DUCK DERBY and TONY THE TIGER

We feel truly blessed to be the recipients of a \$20,000 check from the Rotary from Duck Derby 2010. Thanks to the work of Mark Higgins with the Derby and the Rotary over the last few years The Rotary has promised 25% of the derby profits to IVHS for this last year and two more years. They do not want us to be the only high school in the county without an all-weather track. The Booster Club is looking at hiring a grant writer as even with this commitment from Rotary for approximately \$60,000, we still have a long way to go.

LATE STARTS

The two two-hour late starts continue to be valuable time to work together as a staff. The September one was largely spent working on our school improvement plan and doing a needs' assessment. During the October late start, Gary Enoch did an outstanding job of presenting the new information on reading work samples. Since the class of 2012 must pass the essential skill of reading, the reading work sample will offer another way of meeting that standard. It is our expectation that all teachers – not just Language Arts teachers – will be prepared to offer multiple opportunities for students to submit reading work samples.

PBIS / PRIDE CLASS

PBIS is becoming a part of our school culture. We are definitely learning that "if you teach them what you expect, they will rise to the occasion." We are fortunate to have Kirsten Valenzuela teaching a new class this year – *Positive Communication and Intervention with PRIDE*. Students in this class are helping to prepare videos that teach expectations. They are also working to build a more positive school climate through fun competitions. The reception from the students to the work of this class has been outstanding.

Our PBIS Student of the Week program is hugely successful. Over and over, we hear from parents and students how excited students are to be honored in this way.

PARENT CONNECTIONS

We have had three opportunities to connect with parents this year: Freshmen Orientation, Open House, and Parent Teacher Conferences. While we are seldom able to get over the 50% turn-out rate with parents, each opportunity to make those connections is valuable. We did see the parents of 173 students at conferences – or about 46%. That is about the same percentage as we used to see over two days, so most teachers do feel pretty busy most of the time. We are going to make it a goal to get the parents of at least 225 students here for the conferences during 2nd trimester.