ON COMMON GROUND

Dufour, R.E., Dufour, R., & Eaker, R.
Solution Tree, 2005
$23.07/ 272 Pages

This book includes twelve essays that contribute to the concept and framework of professional learning communities (PLC) along with providing practical strategies for development of just such communities. Each essay clearly achieves its purpose to assist educators in creating a culture of collaboration where the emphasis is not on what teachers teach, but on what students learn and how they are able to achieve at higher levels. Richard Dufour makes the case for the purpose of PLC, which is to ensure that students learn through the process of educators creating a culture of collaboration that focuses on results and accountability. “The rise or fall of the professional learning community concept depends not on the merits of the concept itself, but on the most important element in the improvement of any school – the commitment and persistence of the educators within.” (p. 42)

Douglas Reeves offers practical suggestions for educators who engage in common standards of learning for their students. He links the importance of standards, assessment, and accountability to PLC. He believes that standards-based curriculum must be rational, relevant, focused, with frequent common assessment, and exceptional delivery by the leadership and teachers.

This book is very practical and provides affirmation of the work schools are doing in the Archdiocese of Hartford by promoting PLC. I fully agree with the authors in their view that indicate teachers should have a more prominent role consistently in creating instructional programs to ensure a higher level of student learning, and that school leadership needs to model learning. In reading this book, it is clear that the success of each generation of students will depend not only on the knowledge of researchers, but also upon the collective experiences, shared commitment and wisdom, and purposeful actions of educators who shape students’ school experiences.
CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Dom Forino, the 8th grade teacher for 43 years, at Holy Trinity School, Wallingford, who was featured on WVIT and in an article on their website for his philosophy on and commitment to education in conjunction with their series called Education Nation.

St. James School, Manchester and St. Martha School, Enfield for achieving the prestigious National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award by the United States Department of Education.

TRANSITIONS:

Reverend Marcin P. Pluciennik, who has been appointed by Archbishop Henry J. Mansell to serve as Chaplain at East Catholic High School.

Reverend Robert Schlageter, O.F.M., Conv., who has been appointed by Archbishop Henry J. Mansell as Pastor of St. Paul Parish/School, Kensington.

The Eastern Province of Brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross, has elected Brother William J. Zaydak, CSC as the Provincial Superior.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Jacob Caralander, a seventh grade student at St. Martha School, Enfield, for his speedy and complete recovery from a serious illness.

William Conklin, the husband of Cathy Conklin, a fourth grade teacher at St. Rita School, Hamden, who passed away on Friday, September 3, 2010. May Bill Conklin’s soul rest in peace!

Harold "Bucky" Dentler, the father in law of Maureen E. Kerrigan, President of the Foundation for Catholic Schools, who passed away on Thursday, September 9, 2010. May his soul rest in peace!

Antonio Izzo, age 25, the brother of Lino (Pasquale) G. Izzo, Director of Admissions at Notre Dame High School, West Haven, who passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, August 29, 2010 following a tragic car accident. May the soul of Antonio Izzo rest in peace!

Sztaba, Peter Stanley Sr., the brother-in-law of Richard Puskarz, who passed away on Saturday, September 25, 2010. May the soul of Peter S. Sztaba rest in peace!

International Students: It is important to report any changes in students’ home stay arrangements to Larry Duffany at the Office of Catholic Schools to ensure proper reporting of student status to the Department of Homeland Security.
Asbestos Awareness Sessions: In compliance with AHERA regulations, an asbestos training session must be held for all custodians/janitors/maintenance personnel/school administrators, who may have occasion to come into contact or deal with asbestos found in the schools. A session has been planned for the New Haven Vicariate on Thursday, October 21, 2010, at Notre Dame High School, West Haven, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Please email lnelson@adh-ocs.org by October 15 if you plan to attend.

Criminal Background Checks: All newly hired personnel should have had fingerprints taken and sent to the Office of Catholic Schools. Principals are reminded that the fee is $74 and are asked to review the cards for completeness.

Virtus Sessions: There are two Virtus Sessions currently scheduled for October. One is scheduled for October 8 at Quinnipiac University, Hamden. School personnel from the Greater New Haven area are invited, and must register directly with Quinnipiac University by contacting Vince at 203.582.5351. A second session has been scheduled at St. Maron Church, Torrington, on October 26 at 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Ornaments: Governor M. Jodi Rell is encouraging kindergarteners to help decorate the Governor’s Residence this holiday season by creating homemade ornaments for the children’s tree. This tree will be on display during the Governor’s Annual Open House and is the highlight of the Open House. The children and their teachers should use their creativity and imagination to decide what they will be making and how! Please send two ornaments to the Governor’s Office, at 210 Capitol Avenue, Room 102, Hartford, CT 06106, no later than November 12. The Open House is scheduled for December 3 and 4 from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., and December 5 from 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Archbishop’s Annual Columbus Day Breakfast: The Most Reverend Henry J. Mansell, Archbishop of Hartford and the Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools (FACS) invite you to attend the Archbishop’s Annual Columbus Day Breakfast on Friday, October 8, 2010, at Anthony’s Ocean View, New Haven, at 7:30 a.m. Proceeds from this breakfast will benefit the Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools to provide scholarship grants for students attending the Catholic elementary schools in the greater New Haven area. The guest speaker is Anthony J. Cernera, Ph.D., President, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield. The emcee is Christopher M. O’Connor, FACHE, President and CEO, Saint Raphael Healthcare System/Hospital of Saint Raphael, New Haven. Please join us in supporting this event by purchasing a sponsorship, table, or individual ticket(s), or by placing an ad in the program book. For more information on how to participate in this event, please contact: Shirley Ziolkowski at 860-761-7499 or sziolkowski@facshartford.org, or the Executive Director, Cynthia Basil Howard at cbhoward@facshartford.org.

New England Chief Administrators of Catholic Education (NE CACE): The annual Professional Development Day for presidents/chief administrators and principals will be held November 4, 2010 at the Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary. Registration information was sent via email.

The Prayer of the Month, written by Reese Gallagher, a fifth grade student at St. Bridget School, Cheshire, will be featured on the Office of Catholic Schools’ website for October.

Fathers and Teenage Sons: The third annual Connecticut Catholic Men’s Conference at the Oakdale Theater, Wallingford, is scheduled for October 23, 2010, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Join over one thousand other men from Connecticut as they listen to spiritual, dynamic, and highly motivational speakers. These include Doug Barry, the co-host of EWTN Life on the Rock and founder of RADIX, and Rev. Donald Calloway, who turned his life around after a troubled youth, and became a priest. Back by popular demand, speaker, Mike Cumbie, teaches the faith using his gift of humor; laugh and learn while listening to his new inspirational talk for this year. Information and tickets can be found at www.ctcatholicmen.org or 203-623-2973.
The day’s events will also include an adoration chapel, the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and conclude with a Mass celebrated by Archbishop Mansell, along with the bishops from the Bridgeport, Norwich and Stamford dioceses. It’s a great opportunity for fathers and teenage sons to spend a day together sharing their Catholic faith.

**Catholic Educators’ Conference 2010:** The theme for this year’s Catholic Educators’ Conference is *The Gospel in Cyberspace: Evangelization and Catechesis in the Digital Age.* The speaker will be Sr. Angela Ann Zukowski, MHSH, the Director of the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives at the University of Dayton. If principals have not yet responded with their lunch counts, please do so immediately. In the next few days principals who have supplied a lunch count will be receiving name tags, an agenda, and the list of those educators who will be recognized for milestone anniversaries or who have completed the course of studies for adult faith formation.

**Faith Formation Courses:** On line registration for the seventh cycle of courses in faith formation through the University of Dayton is now open through October 20. Classes begin on October 24; of the required courses, five are being offered online during cycle seven: Catholic Beliefs, Sacraments, Old Testament, New Testament and Survey of Catholic Social Teaching. Teachers are reminded that until they complete the required courses, they should only be selecting from the list published by the Office of Catholic Schools.

**Family Life Series:** Administrators and Religion Coordinators from all elementary schools are invited to attend a Family Life Presentation by Dan Mulhall, the National Catechetical Advisor of RCL Benziger, and former Assistant Secretary for Catechesis and Inculturation for the U.S.Conference of Catholic Bishops, Department of Education, Washington D.C. on October 14, at the Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary. Two sessions are being offered; 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Please RSVP to either Valerie Mara at vmara@adh-ocs.org or Jane Person via her postal invitation.

**E-Rate Report Summary:** E-rate Report Summaries are due to Valerie Mara at vmara@adh-ocs.org by October 22, 2010. Details of the report can be found on the Administrators’ Login site of the website at www.catholicschoolshartford.org. All schools are eligible for e-rate regardless of student economic data. Specific telephone bill discounts are determined by the number of families that meet the established criteria.

**Connecticut Private School Summit:** The second annual Connecticut Private School Summit will be held on April 14 and 15, 2011 at Sacred Heart University. While there is no cost to schools for this event, Title IIA funds may be used for hotel accommodations for those who acquire travel expenses. Learn from the top experts in the field of education, receive books authored by the presenters, and collaborate with colleagues throughout the state at this spectacular professional development event for elementary and secondary school teachers and administrators.

**Math Tips:** Paradigm shifts are necessary to increase student achievement in all mathematic areas from preschool through high school. The good news is that these shifts do not require extensive professional development, more expenses, or additional math course work. A few instructional shifts in how teachers plan, implement, and assess students in math can be powerful to narrow the chasm between what we know and what we do in the classroom. The following seven shifts are an effective place to start:

1. Incorporate ongoing cumulative review into the classroom everyday
2. Adapt what we know works in our reading programs and apply it to math instruction
3. Use multiple representations of mathematical entities
4. Create language-rich routines
5. Build from graphs, charts, and tables
6. Embed mathematics in realistic problems and real-world contexts
7. Make "Why?" "How do you know?" "Can you explain?" classroom mantras.

(Source: Accessible Mathematics, Steven Leinwand, 2009)
Workshop for Parent Ambassadors: The Fall Workshop scheduled for Wednesday, October 13 (4:00 – 6:30 p.m.) at the Archdiocesan Center, will provide schools with further training for their all-important Parent Ambassadors. John Cooper, a well respected consultant with the Institute of School and Parish Development (ISPD) will present a session on enrollment management tailored to those parents who engage in recruitment on behalf of Catholic schools. Administrators are asked to encourage all of their Parent Ambassadors to attend. Please extend the workshop invitation to school board members and advancement volunteers as well. All are welcome to benefit from the rich experience Mr. Cooper offers, having worked with hundreds of Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the United States in the areas of enrollment management and marketing. RSVP’s are requested to School Advancement via dnewell@adh-ocs.org by October 4.

Periodic Inquiry and Source Report: The updated version of the Periodic Inquiry and Source Report for 2010 – 2011 has been posted on the Administrators’ Login for your convenience. It has been revised slightly for ease of use, and the next submission is due to Anne Clubb via dnewell@adh-ocs.org by October 4. We strongly encourage you to continue tracking your inquiry sources in order to gauge the success of both Archdiocesan and local marketing efforts.

Census Email Request The Marketing Committee of the Archdiocesan School Board will be sending “E-blasts” recommending best practices in the area of Catholic school marketing, and they would like to distribute the messages to all those involved in the enrollment management process. Therefore, when completing the school census reports, administrators are asked to please include the email addresses of Advancement volunteers. Likewise, if anyone on your local board is interested in being included on this email list, please contact Cathy Donahue at Cathy@DonahueStrategyGroup.com or Anne Clubb at aclubb@adh-ocs.org.

Super-Charge your Advancement Effort: Check out the Marketing Toolkit available at www.catholicschoolshartford.org.

2009-2010 Compilation Reports due October 1: Compilation reports for elementary schools, prepared by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), are due on October 1, and are required to comply with NEASC accreditation requirements.

Final Elementary Budget Template for 2010-2011 due October 1: This template and supporting documents have been posted to the Administrative Login page of the Office of Catholic Schools’ website. Please DO NOT use any earlier versions of the Final Elementary Budget. If you should have questions or any problems downloading this data, please contact administrative assistant, James Giangreco, at 860.242.4362, ext. 2653. Send completed Final Elementary Budgets by October 1, 2010 to Ken Przysiecki, CPA, at kprzysiecki@adh-ocs.org.

Final High School Budgets for 2010-2011 due October 1: Please submit your Final High School Budget to Ken Przysiecki, CPA, Director of School Finances at kprzysiecki@adh-ocs.org by October 1.

Cash Flow Report: This new report is required on the 15th of each month beginning October 15, 2010. These reports should be prepared on The Cash Flow Template for 2010/2011. The template, a Cash Flow Exhibit, and explanatory instructions (“Basics when doing a Cash Flow Report”) can be found on the Office of Catholic Schools’ website, under Administrators’ Login, Secure Downloads, Finances. Downloading the instructions for your Business Managers will be imperative if they did not participate in the Cash Flow conference call workshops provided in August.
School Board Workshops for Finance and Strategic Planning Committees: The Office of Catholic Schools is facilitating a number of workshops in the coming months that are very relevant for local school board members. On November 1, there will be two board workshops held concurrently, one focused on finance and the other on strategic planning. The meeting begins with Mass at 4:30 p.m. in the Chapel of the Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary. Both workshops will take place at 5:00 p.m. and will include a light supper. Registration forms are available on the Administrators’ Login, Secure Downloads, Organization. Please respond to Karen Tyler at ktyler@adh-ocs.org by October 22, 2010.

Characteristics of Effective Boards: Two characteristics of effective boards are that they set clear and measurable objectives and hold their members accountable. At its September 20, 2010 meeting, the Archdiocesan School Board finalized the 2010-11 Objectives for each of its committees and designated accountabilities monitoring progress toward the Common Threads goals. A summary of actions taken by the Archdiocesan School Board is available in the Boards section of the Office of Catholic Schools’ website.

Retiring School Board Members: The Nominating Committee of the Archdiocesan School Board would welcome the opportunity to consider local board members with expiring second terms as members. Please contact Jim Obst at jimobst@optonline.net.

NOW DUE
- Notification of Personnel Hired due within one week of hire to Larry Duffany at lduffany@adh-ocs.org
- 2010-2011 Advancement Plan due to Anne Clubb at aclubb@adh-ocs.org
- High School Choir Participation in the Cathedral of St. Joseph, Hartford, due to Dale R. Hoyt via gkeene@adh-ocs.org.
- International Student Status Report, due to Larry Duffany at lduffany@adh-ocs.org, fax 860.242.8693, or U.S. mail
- Elementary School Principal School Improvement Goal Form due to Maria Maynard at mmaynard@adh-ocs.org or Sr. Kathleen Fitz Simons at kfitzsimons@adh-ocs.org
- Elementary and Secondary Handbooks due to Maria Maynard at mmaynard@adh-ocs.org or Sr. Kathleen Fitz Simons at kfitzsimons@adh-ocs.org.
- Recognition of Teachers’ Service for the Catholic Educators’ Conference, due to Larry Duffany at lduffany@adh-ocs.org
- 2010 Curriculum Commission Application Form Deadline due to Valerie Mara at vmara@adh-ocs.org
- Elementary and Secondary Textbook Inventories due to Valerie Mara at vmara@adh-ocs.org or via postal mail

OCTOBER
1 Online Annual School Census Report completed and posted to the Office of Catholic Schools website
1 Elementary School Principal Archdiocesan-wide Goal Form due to Maria Maynard at mmaynard@adh-ocs.org or Sr. Kathleen Fitz Simons at kfitzsimons@adh-ocs.org
1 Elementary School Final Budget (2010-2011) due to Ken Przysiecki at kprzysiecki@adh-ocs.org
1 High School Final Budget (2010-2011) due to Ken Przysiecki at kprzysiecki@adh-ocs.org
4 RSVP to Fall Parent Ambassador Workshop due to School Advancement via dnewell@adh-ocs.org
4 Periodic Inquiry and Source Report due to School Advancement via dnewell@adh-ocs.org
8 Registration Deadline for NE CACE Administrators’ Professional Day via Kathleen Simpson, Diocese of Fall River at ksimpson@dfrcec.com
15 Elementary School Monthly Cash Flow Report due to Jim Giangreco at jgiangreco@adh-ocs.org
15 Registration for Asbestos Awareness Session due to Inelson@adh-ocs.org
22 Registration for School Board Workshop for Finance and Strategic Planning Committees due to Karen Tyler at ktyler@adh-ocs.org
22 E-Rate Parent Survey Summary 2010 Report for participating schools due to Valerie Mara at vmara@adh-ocs.org
25 2010 Annual Report – High School Information due to Anne Clubb at aclubb@adh-ocs.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER
3 Respect Life Mass, Cathedral of St. Joseph, Hartford, 2:00 p.m.
6 Catholic Secondary School Presidents, Principals and Superintendents of Schools Meeting, Xavier High School, Brother James Conference Room, Middletown. 8:45 to 10:30 a.m.
7 New Elementary Principal Meeting, Office of Catholic Schools, 9:30 – 3:00 p.m.
8 Archbishop’s Annual Columbus Day Breakfast, Anthony’s Ocean View in New Haven, 7:30 a.m.
8 Virtus Training, Quinnipiac University Student Center, Hamden, 5:00 p.m.
11 Columbus Day (Holiday – OCS Closed)
13 Fall Workshop for Parent Ambassadors, Dining Room, Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, 4:00 – 6:30 p.m.
14 RCL Benziger Family Life Presentation, Alumni Lounge, Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, Alumni Lounge, two time options: 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. or 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
19-20 Catholic Educators’ Conference, St. Paul Catholic High School, All day
26 Virtus Training, St. Maron Church, Torrington, 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.
27 Archdiocesan High School Consultations, Office of Catholic Schools, between hours of 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

NOVEMBER
1 All Saints Day
1 School Board Workshop for Finance and Strategic Planning Committees, Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, Bloomfield, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
2 All Souls Day
4 NE CACE Administrators’ Professional Day, Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, Bloomfield, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
9 Archdiocesan Curriculum Commission Meeting, Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, Bloomfield, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
11 Veteran’s Day (OCS Open – Schools Closed)
16 Curriculum Conversations, St. Dominic School, Southington, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
18 National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) Principals’ Appreciation Day
19 Archdiocesan School Board Committee Reports due to Executive Committee via gkeene@adh-ocs.org
24 Elementary and Middle School Professional Development Day: The Roles of Professional Educators and Support Staff in Marketing, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cromwell, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (Registration begins at 8:00 a.m.)
25-26 Thanksgiving Holiday (OCS Closed)