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Intense and worth the effort

DELAWARE VOICE
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As this school year kicks into full gear, I am excited to be back in the classroom with a whole new group of students - new names to learn and distinct personalities to discover. It is also energizing to be back in the school building with my fellow colleagues, armed with new and different lesson plans and ready to put our Vision Network training to work.

One of the most valuable professional development initiatives I have been involved with is the Vision Network, a group of 25 schools that are implementing many Vision 2015 recommendations. The Vision Network trainings are intense, yet worth it. They provide an opportunity for participants -- including school leaders, teachers, parent-advocates, and community representatives --to join forces and focus on supporting student achievement.

Being a part of the Vision Network has been an invaluable experience for me as an educator in several ways. For example, it has helped to strengthen my professional relationships within the building. I have had the opportunity to work with colleagues that I typically would not work closely with, and seeing each others' hard work and intellect first-hand has furthered our mutual respect and appreciation. The Vision Network has also helped me build connections with other education professionals throughout the state. I have met so many wonderful people and learned so much about other districts and schools in Delaware, and the opportunity to learn from them and with them has, for me, created a sense of "in-this-togetherness" that is empowering and energizing.

What I see as the most significant benefit, however, is how Vision 2015 and the Vision Network have changed the atmosphere at St. Georges. Our school has truly become a community of learning. The entire staff has embraced the training and related initiatives because they see the connection between our instructional focus and the initiatives. They see the purpose, and they see the results. That total "buy in" is evident in the halls, in the classrooms, in the lesson plans, and in the expectations. In turn, the students see that the faculty is a unified team working for their success. Not only do students benefit from the reinforcement of strategies and procedures, they also see their teachers working together, consistently, for their success. They see that we communicate, and they see that we care. Because of this, they care; they work harder because they see we are working hard for them. For the faculty, seeing the results that prove students are learning and seeing them work harder for us motivates us to trust and embrace the Vision Network more and more. And so the cycle continues, each time becoming more powerful and more beneficial to all of us - educators and students alike.

The Vision Network has helped all of us at St. Georges discover our true potential, and we look forward to continuing to grow with the Network in the future.
