Dr. G. Brian Toth, Superintendent of Schools

The Impact of the Partnership of the
Bellwood-Antis School District and the Penn Literacy Network (PLN)

The Penn Literacy Network (PLN) professional learning opportunities have provided the avenue for our district to integrate literacy strategies to increase student engagement that has led to increases in student achievement. Our staff learned and continues to learn approaches to help them establish literate school environments that are grounded in communication, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration - concepts that are aligned with the Common Core Standards. Our staff learned and implemented these instructional techniques long before the Common Core existed because of the impact of PLN professional learning.

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening are the foundations of the PLN classrooms. Students of all ages need to understand how speakers and writers arrange words to communicate meaning in all areas of study. To do this, they need to learn and use the conventions of literacy employed in a variety of content area subjects. Instruction based on identifying and analyzing how speakers and writers put words together enhances students' command of the content. Additionally, students need to investigate and connect content in all subject areas to the real world. The PLN professional learning for teachers has developed a focus for instruction, in all content areas, rooted in literacy.

In all curricular areas, students need to develop a repertoire of learning strategies that they consciously practice and apply in increasingly diverse and demanding contexts. Skills become strategies for learning when they are internalized and applied purposefully. When students are able to articulate their own learning strategies, evaluate their effectiveness, and use those that work best for them, they have become independent learners.

PLN has brought this to Bellwood-Antis students and staff. As a result, for Bellwood-Antis School District students, "Success Is the Only Option."