ALOHA! Below are the updates for this week.

**Saturday Professional Development**
Remember that our 1st quarterly professional development session is this Saturday - 8:30am - 12:30pm at Castle High School library. PLEASE BRING YOUR NOTEBOOK FROM THE SUMMER INSTITUTE.

**Food for Thought:**
"Writing is thinking on paper."
Source: William Zinsser

**MYAccess!**
There appears to be some confusion, on both teachers' and students' part, about the use of MYAccess! Below are a few things that should help to clarify things.

What: Supplemental computerized writing program

Why: To increase:
1. students' writing proficiency; and
2. students' writing time

How: Teachers assign prompts and students respond (either as an in-class or out-of-class activity).

Clarification: Students need to press the "save work and finish later" if they did not finish their piece and as a protective measure in case the computer shuts down or closes them out. Unfinished work to finish later--is NOT counted as a submission.

Below are several design components to consider prior to giving students the assignment and to use MyAccess more effectively.

Prompt Features that need to be set up:
- **Amount of submissions:** How many times will you allow students to review and revise? Once students reach that number, they will no longer be able to revise.
- **Features:** What type of tools do you want students to have as they write their prompt? You will need to set up these features, such as spell check and thesaurus. Do you want students to receive a score based on the Six Writing Traits, just a holistic score, or both?
- **Feedback:** What is the reading level from which you want the feedback? 6th, 7th grades, grade level? Is the feedback based on all the traits or just the ones you have taught?
• **Final due date:** How long will this prompt be available for students to review and revise? Once the date ends, students will not be able to access the prompt and revise their work.

It would be helpful if we could all use the same protocol/directions when describing the MYAccess assignment. In this way, all students would have consistent directions. If you need assistance with setting up prompts or have questions, please contact us.

**TOWL**
Here are Dr. Smith’s thoughts for the week.

Hmm, not anything really new this week. The phonetic spelling pattern continues (sight words are still a struggle for many). The sentence structure issue also continues - mainly run-on sentences (most don’t have that many, but almost all have at least one).

Many stories seem like they are building to something, but students seem to run out of time before they can write the entire story. Therefore, we get some rich story development going that we really want to read, but they end abruptly, and have little (sometimes nothing) to do with the picture prompt - yet. Of course that yields lower scores in the content area section because many of the items depend on the story having an end, and having something to do with the picture prompt.

That’s all for now...

Aloha, Julie

**Quarterly Newsletter to Parents**

Next week we will be writing the Writings on the Wall Brief for your parents. If there is anything you would like to contribute, please let us know by Wednesday, September 22, 2010.

*It’s not where you start that matters, it’s where you finish!*