

## *February 2008*

### *Collaboratively Speaking*

They say that timing in life is everything. I don't think that there is a public school educator in the Commonwealth who would disagree with that adage as the February vacation week looms on the horizon. As a Superintendent, I used to occasionally ponder the merits of changing the school schedule to be more similar to that of the independent schools and have a March vacation instead of the February and April school vacations. A persuasive argument can be mounted that frequent breaks in the instructional calendar are not beneficial to student academic growth. Nonetheless, my gut and instincts told me that the learning cycle of our students was often more greatly influenced by other factors not the least of which were physical and mental fatigue as well as health related issues. The Principals with whom I worked would share anecdotal data, and in some cases corroborated by the school nurses, that suggested that the flu season peaked sometime around Ground Hog Day and that a break was a necessary health imperative. I also recognized that during the seven weeks from January to mid February, our bodies and spirits as educators as well as the students whom we teach often reached a point at which the "so-called well" became extremely dry. Fortunately good sense prevailed and our calendar remained the same. Thus next week offers you the opportunity to recoup your energy, refresh your spirit, and engage in your personal interests. Puxatawney Phil has declared that the onslaught we call winter will continue but know that the end will be that much closer when you return later this month. Enjoy the week ahead and use it as it was intended as a time to relax, reflect and regenerate. The journey from January to February is an arduous one so enjoy next week's respite. You have earned it!! Best wishes, Steve

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Reminder- our next and final session with Paul Harrington is scheduled for March 7.