

Hawthorn District 73

841 West End Court • Vernon Hills, Illinois 60061

Phone 847-990-4200 • Fax 847-367-3290

www.hawthorn73.org



Hawthorn District 73 Community-Wide Future Search Conference

February 25 to 27, 2010

Hawthorn District 73 will hold a Future Search Conference on February 25 through 27. The Conference will take place at Hawthorn Middle School South, 600 N. Aspen Drive in Vernon Hills (just south of Aspen Pointe).

What is a Future Search Conference?

A Future Search is an long-range interactive planning process used worldwide in diverse cultures to achieve shared goals and fast action. A Future Search Conference is a multiple-day planning meeting designed to facilitate cooperative goal setting that can guide an organization and its wider community for years. The meeting is designed to be task-focused and action-oriented.

The Hawthorn Future Search Conference will bring together 60 to 80 volunteers from a variety of organizations and experiences. The effort will build on the belief that people can learn about, respond to, and act upon public concerns when they are given the opportunity to discuss issues, identify problems and establish goals with their fellow citizens. During the Conference, key members of the community will work together to reach agreement on how to build an even better educational system responsive to all Hawthorn residents.

More specifically, a Search Conference is a highly participative, three-day planning process that involves people working together to build a shared vision and produce an action plan based on shared priorities for the future. Rather than rehashing present conflicts, a Search Conference emphasizes reaching consensus, finding common ground, and embracing future possibilities. The Search Conference requires participants to move beyond personal agendas and work with groups of diverse individuals for a greater good.

Who Will Attend the Search Conference?

Volunteers should represent all aspects of our school District and the wider Hawthorn community. Potential participants would be people who are community minded, willing to work on identifying solutions, able to articulate their thoughts, and who work well with others in small groups. In building this volunteer group, we will look to our local businesses, religious leaders, governmental representatives, private and public education experts, parents, non-parents, new residents, long-time residents, and any other interested individuals who are able to move beyond personal agendas and work with a group of diverse individuals for the good of all.

What Will Happen at the Search Conference?

The Search Conference will produce two outcomes. First, the three days of work will produce a prioritized list of goals and vision points to guide the future improvement of education. Second, the Conference will provide an opportunity for people to serve on action teams that will work with the Board of Education on accomplishing the goals as identified by Conference participants.

The Conference lasts three days and participants are asked to commit to being present and involved all three days. The conference will begin with a general overview for all participants, including a brief orientation to the process, an introduction to the District, a review of the agenda, and the ground rules for participation.

Beginning on the second day, participants will form small working groups that reflect the diversity of the

Learning for All – Whatever It Takes

Conference participants. These groups will focus on a number of topics, starting with the broadest perspective and narrowing to more specific issues.

Participants will be involved in analyzing the critical social, organizational and personal events of the past few years — events that have influenced the District we have today and will continue to shape the kind of school system we need for tomorrow. Discussions will focus on understanding the strengths and vulnerabilities of the current school system and move to the identification of those things which should be kept, those which should be dropped, and those which must be created for the District to be more successful. Groups will identify political, economic, social and technical trends that influence educational services.

The following is a list of potential discussion topics for Hawthorn Future Search Conference participants:

- Changes in the World Affecting Education in District 73
- Appreciating the History of School District 73
- Analyzing our Current Educational System
- Identifying a Desired Future for District 73
- Setting Future Goals for District 73
- Prioritizing Future Goals for District 73
- Plans for Implementing the Future Goals for District 73

How Will the Search Conference Make a Difference?

By engaging the entire community and establishing a shared sense of direction, the Search Conference will provide a rallying point for those committed to an education system that is innovative, affordable, focused on results, responsive, and able to keep pace with social, economic and technical changes. The Search Conference will make a difference because committed people sharing a common goal will work toward creating a better District. The Hawthorn Board of Education is committed to working toward that future.

Where has the Future Search Conference Been Implemented?

Other local school districts, including Kildeer District 96, have recommended this process, and reported positive results. *Thank you to District 96 for providing background information for our efforts.*

What Will It Cost?

There is no cost. There is no registration fee and all meals and meeting materials will be provided. Comfortable clothing is encouraged.

Where Can I Learn More?

www.hawthorn73.org – Information will be posted on the Hawthorn District website as it becomes available.

www.futuresearch.net – This website provides a general overview of the Future Search Method.

Future Search: An Action Guide to Finding Common Ground in Organizations & Communities by Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff (from Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1995 & 2000).

Daily Schedule

Thursday, February 25 from 4 to 8 p.m.

Friday, February 26 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday, February 27 from 9 to 11:30 a.m.

Learning for All – Whatever It Takes