

# Heading south for study

## Orange teacher going to Panama

Nancy Lasher, a fourth-grade teacher at Rosa Parks Central Community School, will make a return trip with Montclair State University's Professional Resources In Science and Mathematics and The Rainforest Connection to Panama for a second year.

Lasher, who works with PRISM on a part-time basis, spent a week during 2011 planning and participating in various conferences on topics, including "Introduction to the Rainforest and the Panama Canal." Lasher said she also had the opportunity to meet with scientists and researchers from around the world who were conducting research at Barro Colorado Island, the only American property in Panama. The Smithsonian Institute owns the island for Tropical Research; every person who travels to the island must have permission from the government.

Lasher is scheduled to leave on Feb. 10 and will be on the island through Feb. 20. While she will be in contact with Parks-Central students during the trip, Lasher said more schools likely will be added during her stay on the island as part of the Rainforest Connection. She said the organization provides videoconferences to schools locat-



Photo Courtesy Orange School District

Nancy Lasher, left, a teacher at Rosa Parks Central Community School in Orange, reviews information with a colleague during her research trip to Panama in 2011. Lasher is expected to return to the country in February.

ed in states including New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Texas. The group also has conferred with students in Canada, Belize, Panama and New Zealand.

In preparation for the conference with the fourth grade, students at Parks-Central will study the rain forest, said school officials. When

Lasher returns, students will create a news broadcast, during which they will include information learned through the conferencing.

Before returning home this year, said Lasher, she would like to see the Panama Canal.

Lasher has worked with PRISM, a program that serves school dis-

tricts to improve science and mathematics teaching, on a part-time basis for the past four years. She is considered a science specialist and will conduct workshops for the organization. She is also in the process of attaining a certificate for Middle School Science and PRISM has helped to fund her work.