

White Mountains Regional School District

Administrative Report to the School Board

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Federal/State Projects

Title I Grant

The extensive revisions to the Title I grant have been approved and so we have been busy following through on a number of key activities:

- Purchasing intervention programs to ensure all schools have equal access to instructional resources;
- Reviewing and responding to homeless student needs with Pat McLean and Karen Keller (all homeless students are automatically eligible for Title I services);
- Reviewing Title I data to determine additional Title I staffing needs;
- Preparing for end-of-year parent involvement meetings and activities;
- Preparing for summer tutoring programs for Lancaster Elementary School and Whitefield Elementary School;
- Preparing spreadsheets for 2014-2015 Title I eligibility and selection process.

We have been notified by the NHDOE that our on-site visit for Title I will be postponed to the 2014-2015 school year. The work completed by the Title I teachers thus far has helped us to identify specific ways to strengthen the program.

Title IIA Grant

Several professional development needs have been identified and therefore we are requesting funds from the Title IIA grant to support these efforts. They include, for example:

- Investigations for Grades K-5 teachers (updated training to address CCSS for Mathematics)
- Connected Math Program (CMP3) for Grades 6-8 teachers
- Interactive Math Program Training (IMP)—Year 3, Part II and Year 4, Part I—for Grades 9-12 mathematics teachers
- Critical Skills Institutes
- Understanding by Design
- Language/Word Study with Foundations
- Next Generation Science Standards
- Learning.com
- Responsive Classroom
- Smarter Balanced
- NWEA (to prepare for updated, web-based version of this assessment)
- Standards-Based Report Cards for Grades 3-8
- DIBELS Next

Title IID

While the federal government no longer funds this grant, school districts may request that funds are transferred from other Title grants (e.g., Title IIA). I am currently in the process of writing a grant to fund two technology-related projects: 1) Purchase Learning.com which is a technology curriculum for K-8 teachers to use in the classroom, and 2) Purchase laptops for Grades 6-8 mathematics classrooms to use with the new Connected Math Program (CMP3).

Curriculum

Arts (Art, Dance, Music, Theater)

- New national standards will be released in June 2014 and provide the focus for our curricular work for 2014-2015.
- We continue to look for ways to increase access to the Arts across the district.

Career & Technical Education

- Under Lisa Perras's leadership, we are working towards clearer articulation of curricular documents for CTE programs.

English Language Arts (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing)

- Sara Aldrich and Lynn Emery, Reading Specialists for WES and LES respectively, have been teaching a course entitled, *High-Quality Tradebooks to Teach the CCSS for ELA/Literacy in K-8*. This course has been well received by a large number of K-8 teachers who are deepening their understanding for how to select high quality tradebooks and use these books to teach comprehension and vocabulary strategies effectively.
- This course was deliberately designed to assist teachers in using the new "bookrooms" we established last summer in each of the elementary schools. These bookrooms provide teachers with multiple copies of the "best of the best" of children's literature, including fiction and non-fiction informational texts.
- This summer, our hope is to finish the initial K-6 collection at the Jefferson Elementary School and expand each of the schools' collections to include more books that meet CCSS text complexity requirements and to address Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) topics.

Health & Wellness

- We continue to refine our list of "sensitive topic" as noted in my previous administrative report. We are currently developing a binder for principals so they are fully informed of how Great Body Shop addresses each of identified sensitive topics and how our district policies influence the detail with which some of these sensitive topics are addressed.
- We are taking a closer look at how to ensure health education is taught in Grades 5-8, especially with a departmentalized approach and no designated health course. While teachers have been resourceful in attempting to teach the curriculum collaboratively, our goal is to strengthen these efforts since health education is critical during the middle school years.

- As noted in my previous administrative report, the health curriculum is currently being prepared in partnership with Mike Curtis, Assistant Principal of WMRHS, using both state and national standards.
- The final version of the revised nutrition policy will be presented to the School Board Policy Committee on Monday, April 28, 2014. This policy generated considerable conversation across the district—including some misunderstandings—which has led us to think carefully about how to ensure all staff are made aware of the legislation that influences policy changes.
- We continue to look for ways to increase physical education activity during the school day, as recommended by the state's minimum standards.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

- We are getting closer to purchasing the EasyTech program from Learning.com. This program will provide K-8 teachers with the resources they need to ensure students are getting consistent technology instruction across the district and to increase teachers' awareness of the skills expected at each grade level.
- In addition, we are getting closer to purchasing the accompanying assessment tools for both students and teachers so we may monitor the acquisition of technology skills as well as their application to more sophisticated contexts.
- Since we first heard about the new state assessment (i.e. Smarter Balanced) that will be technology-based, teachers have expressed concern about our students' readiness to use technology skills during the test. In reviewing these tools with administrators and teachers, staff are excited to have these resources available to them to help students further develop their skills.

Mathematics

- Jen Bulson and Mark Pribbernow, Math Specialists for WES and LES respectively, have been teaching a course entitled, *Building Number Sense Through Common Core Mathematical Practices*. Like the literacy course described above, this course has been well received by K-8 teachers and is designed to deepen teachers' understanding of how numbers work, especially in the context of operations, so they may assist students in acquiring the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.
- The Math Specialists and I meet weekly by phone to discuss the progress we are making to improve mathematics achievement and instruction in our district. Of particular concern is providing teachers with professional development opportunities that deepen their understanding of the mathematical concepts (including how these concepts develop across grade levels) and mathematical practices. These discussions are helping us to shape summer professional development opportunities for K-12 teachers.
- We are preparing to have the middle school and high school team meet to further discuss the transition from middle school to high school mathematics, including Algebra I as an option for 8th Grade students, the role of Math Fundamentals and other interventions, and the two pathways for studying mathematics (e.g., traditional and integrated).

Science

- The Science Curriculum Committee traveled to Boston, MA to attend the National Science Teachers Association conference! It's been some time since teachers have been given the opportunity to travel as a group to a national conference and benefit from the tremendous knowledge and resources available at such conferences. The 14 participants, representing Grades K-12, were incredibly enthusiastic about their experience and are currently preparing to share what they have learned with their colleagues.
- Todd Lamarque, Principal of LES, is currently teaching a course entitled, *Teaching Physical Science Using Next Generation Science Standards*. Physical Sciences have been identified as an area of concern in our district and a dedicated team of teachers in Grades 5-12 are delving into the complexities of physical science under Todd's animated teaching style. By focusing on the physical sciences in Grades 6 and for next year, Grade 9, and expecting all science teachers to weave in the physical sciences in their teaching of life and earth space science, we are seeing resurgence of interest in this area of science.
- As noted in my previous report, we are also working on the following items: 1) Identifying professional development needs, 2) Completing inventory of science equipment and supplies, 3) Identifying resources to support the teaching of NGSS, and 4) Identifying steps for articulating the district curriculum.

Social Studies

- The curriculum development work for social studies, like the Arts, is slated for the 2014-2015 school year. Mike Berry, who has agreed to co-facilitate this committee, will be working with me to plan this work for next year.

Technology, Engineering, and Research

- Candidates for the full-time Technology, Engineering, and Research position are currently being reviewed with the hopes of re-establishing this course of study as part of the core academic program in Grades 7-8.
- Curriculum work with the technology and engineering education standards needs to be scheduled, especially in terms of their implications for our middle school program and their relationship to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

World Languages

- No additional updates.

Assessment

Smarter Balanced—Spring 2015 Testing

As noted in my previous report, we will be taking the new state test, Smarter Balanced, in the Spring of 2015. In preparation for this test, teachers are beginning to do some in-class exercises in Grades 3-11 as a way of introducing students to the new Smarter Balanced test items. We believe that taking the Smarter Balanced test will be like a marathon and in order to do well, we believe students must be taught not only the content and thinking skills required to be successful, but the endurance and stamina needed to stick with more complex tasks.

Smarter Balanced—Field Test

During the months of March, April, and May, three of our schools (JES—Grades 4 and 5, LES—Grade 7, and WMRHS—Grade 11) were selected to participate in the Smarter Balanced Field Test. With rather thick binders in hand, a district team studied numerous documents and videos to ensure schools were prepared to administer the Field Test.

Thanks to the assistance of our principals, our Math and Reading Specialists, selected teachers, and Central Office staff (including Kathy Dubois for data entry, Jeremy Noyes for all IT issues, and Colleen Bosse for preparing all training materials), we have successfully completed this testing in nearly all of the schools.

We have learned a great deal in the process and believe this experience will put us in a better position for next year. While parts of the tests proved to be challenging for some students, students were well-prepared to face many of the technology requirements. In addition, our district's technology infrastructure—thanks to Jeremy Noyes and Joe Orlando—proved to be flawless.

End-of-Year Testing

May and June are the time period when we conduct end-of-year testing including DIBELS Next, and for all K-6 students, NWEA for all K-10 students, and AIMSweb for selected students. In addition, May is the time of year when we administer the state NECAP Science test.

Common Assessments

The high school developed and administered common mid-term assessments in January and will be developing common finals for the end-of-the-year. Teachers who teach similar courses (e.g., Algebra I) are expected to design a common assessment for all students to take to ensure state standards are being assessed and that there is consistency in content across similar courses. The results of these tests will continue to be discussed by department teams as a way of further refining instruction for students.

Standards-Based Report Cards

As noted in my previous report, the K-2 Report Cards were revised and simplified for the first quarter. In addition, grade level booklets were created to provide parents with a resource for understanding the standards teachers are expected to teach in these grade levels.

In addition, the teachers in Grades 3-5 and 6-8 have continued to explore the pros and cons of standards-based report cards for their grade levels. We are currently investigating a possible professional development opportunity this summer for teachers to learn more about this approach to reporting.

Instruction

Critical Skills

A Critical Skills Institute will be provided to teachers at the end of June for teachers who have not previously attended this Institute. These institutes have positively influenced how teachers plan for teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Planbook.Edu

As noted in my previous report, all teachers were expected to use this tool as of January 2, 2014 with lesson plans shared with principals on a regular basis. We continue to monitor teachers' feedback regarding their use of this tool and provide guidance where needed.

Understanding by Design

We hope to provide Understanding by Design Institutes this summer so teachers may further develop units of study, especially in the areas of mathematics, science, and other subject matter.

Scheduling

Issues related to scheduling changes continue to be addressed including departmentalization of Grades 5-6, establishing designated writing blocks, increased commitment to intervention blocks, consideration of technology education in the core vs. unified arts, Algebra I in Grade 8, honors interactive math, math and reading fundamentals, and more.

WMRHS Library Media Center/Room 106:

The newly renovated Library/Media Center and Room 106 have proved to be wonderfully flexible instructional spaces that encourage collaboration and the use of technology.

Instructional Programs and Materials

- **Discarded materials:** As we approach the final months of the 2013-2014 school year, we are preparing information to guide teachers who are ready to discard old materials from their classroom. Instead of "discarding" materials in a designated spot, teachers are asked to box up like materials with a label indicating their name, title of materials, number, and reason for discarding. This process has saved considerable time and ensures instructional materials that are currently being used do not get thrown away accidentally.
- **New materials:** This is the time of year when we begin to prepare purchase orders for new instructional materials. Several priority areas include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Finish purchasing initial collection of K-6 Leveled Bookroom for JES;
 - Expand the K-8 Leveled Book rooms for JES, LES, and WES to ensure sufficient literary and informational texts that are tied to CCSS and NGSS;
 - Purchase selected NGSS kits for K-8 teachers to ensure they have the resources they need to teach, especially for the most challenging units of study;
 - Purchase new textbooks for selected high school mathematics and science courses;
 - Purchase Foundations kits for K-3 classrooms to ensure foundation language skills are being taught systematically.

Professional Development

We continue to have numerous professional development opportunities available to teachers including the following:

Monthly Special Interest Groups

Monthly Special Education Meetings

Monthly Mentor/Mentee Meetings

Monthly Title I Meetings
 Monthly Health & Wellness Meetings
 Monthly Comprehensive Guidance Plan Meetings

Monthly Grade Level Meetings

District Grade Level Meetings - Grades K-2
 District Grade Level Meetings - Grades 3-5
 District Grade Level Meetings - Grades 6-8
 District Grade Level Meetings - Grades 9-12

Courses

Book Study - Teaching the Critical Vocabulary of the CCSS – Grades K-6
 Building Number Sense through Common Core Mathematical Practices – Grades K-10
 Executive Functioning in the Classroom – Grades K-12
 Teaching CCSS: Literacy Across the Content Areas - Grades 5-12
 Teaching Physical Science Using Next Generation Science Standards - Grades 6-12 Using High-Quality Trade Books to Teach the CCSS for ELA/Literacy – Grades K-8

Curriculum Work

Science Curriculum Committee
 Select Life Skills Curriculum & Materials Aligned with CCSS

Other PD Events:

CIGNA Staff Wellness Seminars
 Google Drive, Intro to Google Sites and Google Calendar
 Google Sites Training
 Planbook.Edu Ongoing Support and Training
 Tools of the Mind - Preschool Staff
 Teacher Effectiveness
 Bus Driver Certification
 Smarter Balanced Preparations

Communications & Committee Work

- School Board Curriculum Committee
- School Board Policy Committee
- DLT Meetings
- Meetings with Principals
- Meetings with Math and Reading Specialists
- Grade Level Meetings
- Staff Curriculum Committee Meetings
- Communications with Staff, Parents, and Community Members