

White Mountains Regional School District

Administrative Report to the School Board

February 13, 2014

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Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

New Administrative Assistant

I want to thank the School Board for agreeing to hire an Administrative Assistant to assist me at Central Office. Colleen Bosse has truly been a gift—she has helped me in countless ways to get many, many things done over the past two months.

Federal/State Projects

Title I Grant

After receiving more specific feedback than usual on our Title I Grant, Sherri Gregory and I submitted an extensive round of revisions to the grant. Several areas required additional research including:

- Requirements for homeless set aside, including meeting comparability requirements for schools not receiving Title I funds (i.e. WMRHS)
- Requirements for parent involvement activities
- Responsibilities of administrators involved in Title I grant
- Reviewing assessment data to determine Title I Staff needs for all schools
- Reviewing selection criteria

In addition to the grant revisions, we were recently informed by the NH Department of Education that they will be conducting an audit of our Title I program in May. Typically on-site reviews are conducted annually, but due to turnover at the NHDOE, our district has not had an on-site review for a number of years. The Title I teachers and I will be preparing for this on-site visit from January to May.

Title IIA Grant

Several professional development efforts are in the works and therefore we are requesting funds from the Title IIA grant to support these efforts. They may include, for example:

- Connected Math Program (CMP3) for Grades 6-8 teachers
- Interactive Math Program Training (IMP)—Year 3, Part II—for Grades 9-12 teachers
- Critical Skills
- Understanding by Design
- Foundations
- Next Generation Science Standards
- Learning.com
- Responsive Classroom

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)

- Although curriculum development work for the Arts is slated for the 2014-2015 school year, the teachers of Art and Music had time during our staff development days to work together on curricular issues across the district, including their role in supporting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).
- All of the New Hampshire Arts standards have been uploaded to the Planbook.edu program so teachers may use them for their online lesson planning. New national standards will be released in June 2014 and provide the focus for our curricular work for 2014-2015.
- The music teachers, and all the staff who have supported them, are to be commended for their hard work in organizing tremendous winter concerts. I am always amazed by the amount of energy and planning it requires to have all students performing well for often very large audiences.

Career & Technical Education

- Under Lisa Perras's leadership, the CTE programs have been carefully studied to determine next steps for the future of the program. In addition, initial curriculum work that needs to be completed has been identified.
- All of the New Hampshire CTE competencies have been uploaded to the Planbook.edu program so teachers may use them for their online lesson planning, with new teacher education standards and welding standards added more recently.
- CTE teachers continue to identify ways to support CCSS for both literacy and mathematics.
- The "Wheel" course, required of all incoming 9th graders, has provided a great opportunity for students to get to know the available CTE programs, among other offerings at the high school.

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

- Teachers in Grades K-12 are fully implementing the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy. There is evidence across the district that teachers have an increased confidence with these standards and students are engaging in activities that reflect these standards (e.g., increased research, increased use of nonfiction, increased use of technology to communicate, and more).
- Revisions to the K-5 ELA curricular documents were completed this summer, and the last of those revisions are being entered into the final documents. Most of the revisions involve removing NH state standards that are no longer relevant to the teaching of the Common Core State Standards for ELA.

- The CCSS for ELA/Literacy have been uploaded to the Planbook.edu program so teachers may use them for their online lesson planning.
- All K-8 teachers continue to receive support in implementing these standards during regular building-based grade level meetings that are facilitated by math and reading specialists. We believe this is a critical professional development support system for our teachers, regardless of whether a teacher is a veteran or new teacher.

Health & Wellness

- With Pat McLean's assistance, the guidance counselors, nurses, and Nora Beaton (who assists with implementation of our health program), identified "sensitive" topics addressed in Grades K-8 in the Great Body Shop. Teachers will have the opportunity to have these staff members support them in delivering these topics throughout the year.
- Along with science, the health curriculum is slated for development during the 2013-2014 school year. In partnership with Mike Curtis, Assistant Principal of WMRHS, we will be working with a team to articulate the district's health curriculum using both state and national standards.
- The NH Health and Physical Education standards have been uploaded to the Planbook.edu program so teachers may use them for their online lesson planning.

Mathematics

- Like English Language Arts, teachers in Grades K-12 are fully implementing the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics. There is evidence across the district that teachers have an increased confidence with these standards and students are engaging in activities that reflect these standards (e.g., increased emphasis on procedural and conceptual knowledge, increased use of mathematical practices).
- Revisions to the K-6 Mathematics curricular documents were completed this summer, and the last of those revisions are being entered into the documents. Most of the revisions involve removing NH state standards that are no longer relevant to the teaching of the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.
- The CCSS for Mathematics have been uploaded to the Planbook.edu program so teachers may use them for their online lesson planning.
- Additional curriculum development work continues for Grades 6-12 as we learn more about the CCSS expectations that have been pushed downwards (e.g., former Algebra I standards are now taught in Grade 8, and former Algebra II standards are now taught in Algebra I). New textbooks for Algebra I are slated for 2014-2015 school year.
- The high school is now fully implementing two rigorous and nationally recognized pathways for mathematics: Traditional Pathway (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II) and Integrated Pathway (Year I, Year II, and Year III).

Science Curriculum

- With the expectation to implement the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, teachers have definitely been actively engaged in learning more about these standards. All of the staff development days have provide teachers with time to study this document more closely with their colleagues and begin to make plans for teaching this content over the year.
- Based on the feedback we received from teachers, the science curriculum committee will focus their work from January to June on the following: 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.

- Given the guidance provided by the NGSS, two changes were made to our course sequence:
 - At the middle school level, physical science is taught at Grade 6, life science at Grade 7, and earth space science at Grade 8.
 - At the high school level, we have shifted the physical sciences to Grade 9, left life sciences (i.e. Biology) at Grade 10, and moved earth space science to Grade 11. Students participating in an accelerated track will have increased opportunities for more lab-based sciences.
- The Next Generation Science Standards are currently being prepared to be uploaded to the Planbook.edu program so teachers may use them for their online lesson planning. The company uploaded an abbreviated version of these standards and we are preparing a more complete document so teachers have access to all of the standards.

Social Studies

- The curriculum development work for social studies, like the Arts, is slated for the 2014-2015 school year. However, Mike Berry, who has agreed to co-facilitate this committee, will be working with me to plan this work for next year.
- Teachers are eager for this work to begin since we have not purchased instructional resources for teachers for most grades in K-8 for many years (Grade 4 is a recent exception).
- The NH state standards for social studies have been uploaded to the Planbook.edu program so teachers may use them for their online lesson planning.

Technology, Engineering, and Research

- 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).
- The technology education standards have not been uploaded to the Planbook.edu program so teachers may use them for their online lesson planning.

World Languages

- Latin is proving to be a successful elective with some students hoping to take a second semester.

Assessment

NECAP Testing Results

We have just received our Fall 2013 NECAP results: In general, our performance as a district has remained stable in reading, dropped in math, and increased in writing:

- For Reading: 81% of students at Proficient and Above (Last Year: 81%)
- For Mathematics: 67% of students at Proficient and Above (Last Year: 71%)
- For Writing: 57% of students at Proficient and Above (Last Year: 52%)

These results represent the aggregate performance of the district with each building demonstrating different profiles (e.g., some schools did not see a drop in math while other schools did see a drop).

While we recognize it gets more difficult to demonstrate substantial gains every year, we believe the hard work of teachers and students and supporting families confirms that we are continuing to make progress and that we have more work to do.

Smarter Balanced

In the Spring of 2015, we will be taking the new state test: Smarter Balanced. In preparation for this test, we are preparing 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.

Mid-Year Testing

January is the time period when we conduct mid-year testing using DIBELS for all K-6 students, AIMSweb and NWEA for selected students, and other tests that are required (e.g., ELL testing). Teachers are currently reviewing this data during data meetings to make decisions about how to adjust their instruction for the rest of the year.

Common Assessments

The high school developed and administered common mid-term assessments in January. Teachers who teach similar courses (e.g., Algebra I) were 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 be discussed by department teams as a way of further refining instruction for students.

K-2 Report Cards

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.

Instruction

Critical Skills

Teachers have greatly valued the opportunities they were given to be trained in critical skills through Antioch College; they continue to apply what they have learned from this training and they have expressed an interest in doing more advanced levels of training. While the consultants from Antioch are not continuing their work in our district this year, there has been some conversation about more advanced critical skills teachers providing support to their colleagues.

Planbook.Edu

Last spring we explored an electronic tool called Planbook.Edu which provides teachers with an opportunity to prepare their lesson plans online. After conducting a series of presentations, reviewing feedback from teachers, setting up the accounts, uploading standards for teachers to

access, and providing a series of trainings (by Amy Parsons and Isabelle Kleinschrodt), many teachers have been actively using this tool since the beginning of September.

Planbook.Edu makes it easier for teachers to plan their lessons by allowing them to copy and paste parts of lesson, move lessons forward (e.g., when a snow day takes place), repeat activities for the year, and more. In addition, this tool makes it possible for teachers to attach documents, video-clips, and more needed for their lessons. Moreover, teachers may share lesson plans with their colleagues or with the secretary if a substitute is there for the day.

All teachers were expected to use this tool as of January 2, 2014 with lesson plans shared with principals on a regular basis.

Understanding by Design

Last August 2013, we provided training opportunities for teachers to learn more about how to design effective instructional units, using the Understanding by Design model. This model guides teachers to select the knowledge, skills, and understandings associated with state standards, to develop performance tasks and other assessment tools to monitor students' progress, and to create instructional activities that will foster this learning. A larger number of teachers were involved with this training, have been using this information to develop science and other types of units, and have expressed an interest in ongoing support.

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:** With Colleen Bosse's assistance, we have weeded through lots of discarded materials and have tried to find homes for many of these resources.
- **K-8 Leveled Bookrooms:** Last summer we purchased resources to establish K-8 leveled bookrooms; these resources have proved popular as teachers increase their use of high quality fiction and nonfiction in their classrooms.
- **Intervention materials:** Last summer we used Title I funds to ensure our K-8 schools had equitable intervention resources to provide supplemental services. This process required a detailed inventory, ordering and processing new materials, and setting up materials to ensure they are easily accessible.
- **New high school textbooks:** A number of high school courses received new textbooks this year, which have been greatly appreciated by teachers. We are currently reviewing our

needs for next year, including new math textbooks for Algebra I and Algebra II, and textbooks for different science classes.

- **Connected Math Program, Edition 3 (CMP3):** Teachers in Grades 6-8 are implementing a new math program called CMP3; this program is aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and challenges students to apply what they are learning to real-life situations. While the program has required some adjustments—especially in terms of the teaching and learning of mathematics—teachers and students are beginning to appreciate the changes and challenges this new program presents.

Professional Development

We 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
 Social Studies 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

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