

October 2016

It has been a very busy and productive September. I have attended 13 School Board and Act 46 Study Committee meetings during the month. I have been able to visit each school and meet with each principal at least once, and most twice. I attended the SouthEast Superintendent's meeting in Springfield and the Vermont Superintendents Association quarterly meeting in Berlin. All of these meetings have allowed me to continue to get a picture of how each of our schools operate and fit into our supervisory union, Southeast Vermont, and the State as a whole.

Our work in our schools continues to revolve around our focus Continuous Improvement Plan for the year. We are working on our core foundation of instruction in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The Grade Level Teams have been hard at work "unpacking" the common core standards and sharing successful instructional strategies.

We are reviewing our Title One plan after receiving feedback from the state. We are being advised that our strategies are spread "too thin" and that we need a more systematic and coordinated effort to strategically allocate resources to maximize impact on student learning. Evidence and data on student learning are paramount.

Our very own NewBrook 3rd grade teacher, Nicole Plympton, was named the Rookie of Year by the Vermont Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

Principal/Teacher, Mickey Parker-Jennings, received a grant for new soccer equipment for his entire school from www.donnorschoose.org.

Jamaica citizens voted to stay in the Leland & Gray Union and Jamaica, Wardsboro, and Leland & Gray had complimentary facilities inspections provided by VSBIT.

The negotiations committee will have its first meeting October 12th and the ACT 46 Study Committees are rolling right along.

Director of Special Education

It's hard to believe the first month of school ends on Friday. This has been a whirlwind month for special education services.

We've had an unprecedented increase of students move into our district over the summer, as well as new referrals from our elementary schools. The total number of

students is 24. The breakdown is as follows; 0 to 3 years (3), EEE (1), Elementary (6), Middle/High School (7) and new referrals from the elementary schools (6). Many of these new students come to us with very significant and complex disabilities. I must commend my special education staff for their commitment and hard work to ensure that these new students' IEPs and educational placements are in compliance with IDEA.

WCSU is not alone regarding these unanticipated numbers of new special education students. Our neighboring Windham County SUs are experiencing the same increase in numbers (some even more so) and more and more of these students have high needs.

Aside from these increasing special education numbers, our schools especially our teachers, are experiencing an increase in students who have been exposed to trauma. These students can exhibit many challenges in the school environment. This is a phenomenon that classroom teachers are dealing with throughout Windham County SUs.

Which is a segue into my next update; my fellow Windham County Special Education Directors and I are hoping to collaborate with the National Family Institute of Vermont (NFI) in creating a Trauma Informed Schools' cohort that addresses the needs of these students.

Our first step is to offer an initial workshop that provides our schools an overview of how to work with traumatized students in the school environment. Therefore, this coming Tuesday, October 4th at Mount Snow, David Melnick, Director of Outpatient Services at NFI, Vermont will be conducting an all day workshop on this subject. I am pleased to report that every one of our schools are sending staff members, 23 in all. The workshop is full and all Windham County SUs are sending staff members as well. This is a great first step.

Lastly, my fellow Windham County Special Education Directors with the support of our superintendents are collaborating with Landmark College with two exciting projects. Landmark College has just submitted a grant application to the Thompson Trust that includes two important components for our learning disabled students. First, one of the components of the grant is for Landmark to offer an ELO-STEM week long (2 sessions) summer program for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade learning disabled students. Second, the grant also includes a component to help fund a Dual Enrollment proposal between our high schools and Landmark College for learning disabled high school students who want to attend college after graduation. We're hoping to hear if Landmark has been awarded the grant by mid November.

Respectfully submitted

Abigail Dillon - Director of Special Education

Business Manager

In addition to the regular routine of payroll, accounts payable and financial reporting the business office has attended to:

- Audit prep
- Coordinating facility safety inspections
- RFP's
- Attending vital trainings around the healthcare transition and workers compensation
- Solar opportunity discussion
- Budget preparations for WCSU, L & G, and SPED

Director of Curriculum

Planning Professional Development for Leadership Team

- Instructional Practice Guide - using tool, observing teaching (video)
- Root Cause Analysis - Follow up from a professional reading. Step 1 - identifying potential causes throughout our SU
- CFG - Title I & IIA requirements
- Support for WCSU Strategic Plan (GLAMS, Data, Math Discussion)

Consolidated Federal Grant (Title I & II Investments)

- NCLB Letter - completed. Desk monitoring from AOE - now in compliance
- Created a template for assessment & evaluation for grant
- As needed, meeting individually with administrators to review Title I investments

Mentoring Program

- Majority of mentors are matched with proteges
- Welcome packets, handbooks and contracts have been mailed out.
- First meeting is October 6 for mentors

Math Coach Position

- Revised job description for math coach
- Math Residency
- Data meetings

Instructional Coaching

- Classroom visits - observation of instruction and curriculum (all schools)
- Math and ELA Committee work underway

Technology Director

I can't believe we are already into our first month of school.

I want to start out by thanking all of you for your patience and understanding as we transition into the new. This first month has been quite an interesting challenge, but I think the team has shone beyond expectations. Of course, it has not been without its lack of sleep and other challenges.

Cathy has been my bedrock for Windham Central's IT needs. Especially when it comes to setting up all of the systems and accounts across the district...Google Apps, MLP, Report Cards, MAPS, SBAC, equipment, reminding me of things... While I am busy training Dale and Assad, Cathy is busy picking up the pieces I was leaving around. I cannot express how grateful I am to have her here. We would not be where we are right now without her.

Dale is coming up to speed and is now getting the hang of the job. The pace of requests has not slowed, especially with the very large increase in the use of Chromebooks, but now that Assad has been on board for the past couple of weeks, the workload has started to level out between them. I really appreciate Dale's willingness to go above and beyond to help make this all work.

Assad is finally starting to feel at home. After a couple of weeks of a seemingly non-stop barrage of students and adults, he still appears to be at ease and wanting to do more. He has taken on the task of setting up barcoding all of the IT assets. This will help us to track this equipment better than we do now. This task includes setting up of barcodes on the student and Staff ID's, which will make tracking use of equipment easier as well.

Once all this training dies down and equipment needs wane, we will be able to focus on our mission a bit more of training the teachers and providing instructional support in a more personalized way.

The new Leland and Gray 911 phone system is ordered and will be up and running by the new year. This will provide every classroom a direct line to emergency services and each will be assigned their own number so that emergency services providers will be able to go directly to the location needed.

The upgrade to the security cameras at Leland and Gray is almost complete. There are 3 new exterior cameras. One on the exterior of Dutton Gym, one on the front entrance and one on C-Level parking lot. There are two being installed on C-Level. One in the Planning Room and the other at the Cafeteria outdoor entrance. There was a delay over the summer because of an inadequate piece of equipment in the Dutton Gym. That has been replaced and all is looking good. The new system will have it's own IP address that will be able to be access on the web. This way emergency services will be able to view these before they arrive, if need or time dictate.