

Superintendent's Report for April 2013

Happy April Fools! (...a little late)

Student/Staff Learning

1. Because all of WCSU schools qualify for school-wide Title I funding, every principal is required to report to the public on the HQT (highly qualified teacher) status of the school's teachers. The latest data available from 2011-2012 indicates that 100% of the instruction in our elementary schools was provided by highly qualified teachers. Leland and Gray achieved a 98% rating because a single current events class was taught by a teacher who was HQT for history but not social studies as the NCLB Law requires. For the 2012-2013 school year, I am pleased to report that L&G and all elementary schools provide 100% of classes (courses) with highly qualified teachers.
2. On Saturday, April 6, staff from NewBrook, L&G, and the WCSU enjoyed bowling for Windham County's Big Brothers Big Sisters Program. Our WCSU teams filled four lanes. The ten o'clock hour we bowled raised more the \$7,000 in donations from all teams.
3. I attended the all members Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA) Meeting on April 4 in Berlin. My colleague from the AOE, Mary Beth McNulty, presented the new core standards required for a Principal or Superintendent Professional License. Vermont's new standards are based on national standards (ISLIC) adopted by a majority of states. Vermont joins with forty other states that require an internship *and* required graduate courses to earn an initial Level I Principal's License. As Chair of the VT Standards Board for Professional Education I had the pleasure of fielding many critical questions from the audience. The greatest concern raised was the lack of reciprocity in accepting educator licenses issued by other states.
4. I spent "Education Day at the Statehouse" (on March 13), lobbying legislators to support universal access for all children to Pre-K education. Everyone agrees on the importance of early learning as a valuable public investment in the future success of our students, but funding is the real question. Unless we suggest specific ways to support this cause without reducing the earned income tax credit or busting the budget, this bill will not pass. Contact your representative with your suggestion.
5. I also attended a Senate Education Committee considering leveling the regulatory playing field for public and independent (private) schools in Vermont. A special study committee is likely to research this issue over the summer months.
6. It is "likely" that the "Fair Share" (agency fee for unions) will pass both houses. VSA and VSBA are lobbying for the bill to include some trade off that would compensate school boards for this loss in professional bargaining. Send your suggestions to Emily, Rich, and Steve Dale, Executive Director of VSBA. There is still time to amend the bill in committee.
7. Middle School Midnight Madness co-sponsored by L&G, West River Thrives and supported by Tobacco Free Schools, will be held Friday, April 12th, to kick start the vacation. This event will help educate our students on the effects of tobacco and other drugs on our brains. The evening will include a presentation, a potluck dinner,

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exciting activities, a dance, and a movie. Parents are expected to attend from 6-7:30 and to bring an item for the potluck. Students will stay until midnight. A permission slip is required.

Policy/Regulation

1. The changes proposed by the WCSU Board's ad hoc committee on by-laws were approved by Board vote at the WCSU Organizational Meeting on March 27th. The Board did not make a decision regarding proposals to change the voting representation on the WCSU Board if in the future a RED were formed. The Board requested all school district boards to consider the various voting proposals and recommend one. The Executive Committee will meet on April 24 to receive and consider the boards' recommendations. They hope to make a decision and inform the RED Study Committee. The Executive Committee will also complete the Superintendent's annual evaluation on the 24th.
2. At their meeting on March 6, the RED Study Committee voted to withdraw the proposed Articles of Agreement to form a K-12 Windham Central Education District (WCED) previously submitted to the State Board of Education. I immediately emailed this decision to Armando Vilaseca, Secretary of Education. He has confirmed the RED Study Committee's action.
3. By late April or May I anticipate a report from John Everitt, the Consultant for the WCSU and WSWSU Joint Study Committee.
4. All operational school districts have adopted the mandatory policy F30: Bullying with the exception of Townshend (anticipated for April 8). Adopting this policy in all school districts has taken nearly a year. The deadline was January 1, 2013.

Finance/Accounting/Operations

1. The WCEA Support Staff Master Agreement for 2012 -2014 was ratified by the WCSU Board on March 27 and is now signed by all parties. This agreement covers support staff at NewBrook, Leland and Gray and others employed by the WCSU who may be working with students in your school. The employees affected will receive their increased compensations and retroactive payments in April.
2. The latest advice regarding the federal "sequestration" includes cuts ranging from a low of 2% to somewhere between 5 – 10% depending on the federal program. We will certainly have to reduce our Title I investments for FY14, but until we receive definitive numbers no decision(s) regarding any cuts will be made. Our current school year (FY13) remains unaffected. Frank and I will be cautious about making contractual commitments based on the FY14 Budgets that depend on federal grants (including Title I).

Enrollment/Staffing

1. Applications for the WCSU 21st Century Director for after school activities closed on March 22. We reviewed letters of interest, resumes and supporting documents from nearly 50 applicants. An initial round of interviews in person, by phone or Skype narrowed the competitive field, but the selection process continues. I hope to make a decision before Spring Break.
2. Wardsboro's student enrollment is projected to remain rather flat in the high 50's for

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the next four years. Townshend's will decline and then hold in the low 80's. All other elementary schools appear to be holding pretty steady at present levels for the predictable future.

Calendar Dates

1. The WCSU Executive Committee will meet Wed., April 24, at 6:00 P.M. at the Jamaica Village School. (The Jamaica Board meets at 7:00 P.M.)
2. The Voluntary RED Study Committee will meet Wed., May 1, at 7:00 P.M. in the L&G Library. The Committee welcomes your questions, comments and suggestions.
3. WCSU Board Meeting will be Wed., May 22, at 7:00 P.M. at L&G.

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