

## Superintendent's Report for March 2013

### Happy Town Meeting Day!

#### Student/Staff Learning

1. The WCSU Math Committee held its first meeting on Thurs., Feb. 28 at Leland and Gray with Dr. Sharma consulting. The Committee established its Mission:

*Every child in the supervisory union achieves the numeracy skills (number concept, number sense, and procedural fluency with understanding in four whole number operations) by the fourth grade and then use the numeracy skills and spatial sense to be capable of learning meaningful mathematics appropriate to their grade level and beyond as advocated by Common Core State Standards in Mathematics.*

The WCSU Math Committee also established Immediate Action Steps:

- Begin to look at the intent of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for mathematics K-12 with focus, coherence, and rigor across the WCSU.
- Define and clarify the non-negotiable skills at each grade level.
- Look at the student assessment data (NECAP mathematics and MAPs) in light of non-negotiable skills at each grade level.
- Determine the criteria for knowing when students have mastered the non-negotiable math skills for every grade, e.g., "WCSU students know addition when they can/show \_\_\_\_\_."

Committee Members represent every school and grade level:

- K- Beth Hiner (Jamaica)
- 1 - Kelly Rounds (WCSU, Special Educator)
- 2 - Laura Hazard (Jamaica)
- 3 - Donna Sebastian (Wardsboro)
- 4 - Megan Richardson (Townshend)
- 5 - Mickey Parker-Jennings (Windham)
- 6 - Sue Neuman (Dover) and Gary Keiser (NewBrook)
- 7 - Ted Redfield (L&G) and Tim Hayes (Marlboro)
- 8 - Pat Pelton (L&G Special Educator) and Tim Hayes (Marlboro)
- HS- Chris Barton (L&G) and Dorinne Dorfman (L&G)

Laura Hazard facilitates the work of this committee.

2. Education Day at the Statehouse will be Wed., March 13. A number of organizations will be presenting informational activities for the legislators. These include Building Bright Futures (early education), the Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA), the Vermont Principals Association (VPA), and the Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA). In addition to informative conversations with legislators, I'll be there scooping ice cream for the VSA.
3. According to the latest national data available, Wisconsin and Vermont tied for the highest completion rate for graduating high school students in the nation (91%).
4. VT Representatives Carolyn Partridge and Richard Marek joined with VT Senator Peter Galbraith at Leland & Gray's all school assembly on March 4 to honor Ms. Tong Chen as Vermont's 2012 Teacher of the Year. She received a framed copy of

- the Concurrent Resolution of the House and Senate. The primary topic of this assembly was an excellent multi-media presentation: “Stand Up” for others who are being bullied or ostracized.
5. Last month I called attention to Secretary Vilaseca and the Governor advocating for a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) for every student in grades 7-12 with “embedded real life opportunities”. The new standards and procedure for renewing a VT educator’s license will require an individual professional learning plan (IPLP) beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Policy/Regulation

1. Citizens of Wardsboro unanimously approved the Board’s proposed FY14 Budget by voice vote at the district’s Annual Meeting on Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Backus was re-elected as Moderator. Mike Cusick was elected to the Board for a one-year term. Principal FitzSimons presented an overview of the budget plan and the accomplishments of her students and staff. The NECAP scores for Wardsboro’s students have improved dramatically over the past five years under Mrs. FitzSimons’ leadership. The assembled voters expressed their appreciation for her work and that of the school’s staff and students.
2. Over thirty voters turned out the Brookline Newfane Joint Contract Annual Meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 26. This meeting continued from the original one recessed due to a snowstorm and low attendance. The proposed FY14 Budget was approved by a wide margin on a voice vote.
3. Leland and Gray’s FY14 Budget was approved via Australian ballot by 69% voting in favor (147 to 67). All five union district towns supported the proposed budget. The total vote of 214 ballots cast continues a declining trend in voter turn out over the past nine years (477 cast in 2005).
4. The WCSU Board’s ad hoc committee is in the process of drafting language to revise the WCSU By-Laws to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the WCSU Board. The committee’s recommendations will be considered at the WCSU Organizational Meeting on March 27<sup>th</sup>.
5. At their meeting on February 27<sup>th</sup>, the RED Study Committee approved Articles to form a K-12 Windham Central Education District (WCED). They submitted the Articles to the State Board of Education (SBE) for approval. If the SBE approves the proposed Articles, a vote by the citizens of Brookline, Jamaica, Newfane, Townshend and Windham will follow after a number of public informational meetings. The vote to approve the formation of the WCED is tentatively scheduled for June 5, 2013.
6. Due to health concerns, Ray Proulx can no longer consult for the WCSU and WSWSU Joint Study Committee. Fortunately, the study will continue with VSBA Consultant John Everitt advising. This Joint SU Study Committee will meet with John on March 6 at 2:30 in Dover. We anticipate a report from this committee in April.
7. All operational school districts have adopted the mandatory policy F30: Bullying with L&G and Townshend still pending. Last month Wardsboro completed a thorough and lengthy review of all school district policies including new adoptions and rescissions as warranted.

## Finance/Accounting/Operations

1. The Vermont Legislature is likely to adopt a \$.94 residential tax rate for education and a base-spending grant per student (equalized pupil) of \$9151. Frank previously projected tax rates based on \$.92 and \$8957 respectively. The effects of these two changes tend to offset each other. For example, in Windham the result is a school tax reduction for grades PreK – 6 of about half a cent from Frank’s previous projections.
2. The WCEA Support Staff ratified the Master Agreement for 2012 -2014 by their vote on Monday, March 4. The next step in this process will be ratification by the WCSU Board as this bargaining agreement pertains to support staff contracted by NewBrook, L&G, and the WCSU. L&G and NewBrook Boards already ratified this agreement.
3. Questions and speculations abound regarding the federal “sequester” and how it affects our schools. I have nothing definitive to report, but will keep you posted when I receive information or direction from the VT Agency of Education. I don’t expect any adverse consequences for the remainder of this school year, but FY14 may present some challenges.
4. Repeated from last month’s report for public information: The State Commissioner of Taxes, Mary Peterson, has announced that a Homestead Declaration for resident homeowners is now required annually by April 15. Three forms are required and are available on line or at your town office:
  - 1) Homestead Declaration
  - 2) Property Tax Adjustment Claim
  - 3) Household Income Form

These three are due with your VT Income Tax filing. She warns that if you are late you risk losing the income sensitivity adjustment you may be due.

## Enrollment/Staffing

1. Jennifer Connor has given me notice that she will not continue as WCSU 21 Century after school programs for FY14. We all owe Mrs. Connor a round of grateful praise for her leadership and successful launch of Lafter activities for students in the seven schools participating. She will ensure a smooth transition for her successor who will officially begin July 1, 2013. A search for candidates and selection process begins immediately. Any interested persons should contact me for more information.
2. Leland and Gray’s enrollment will increase slightly in FY14 and is projected to hold steady through FY15. A significant decline in students is projected beginning with the fall of 2015.

## Calendar Dates

1. The Voluntary RED Study Committee will meet Wed., March 6th at 7:00 P.M. in the L&G Library. The Committee welcomes your questions, comments and suggestions.
2. WCSU Board Organizational Meeting will be Wed., March 27 at 7:00 P.M. Location TBA.

3/5/13 - sbj