

Superintendent's Report for May 20, 2015

Student /Staff Learning

1. The Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) tests are being taken online by all students in grades 3 through 8 and Juniors at Leland and Gray. This spring's SBAC is the first time Vermont's students experience adaptive testing designed to give them, their teachers and parents a more accurate snapshot of their mastery of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in mathematics and English language arts. Matt Martyn reports the very few technical problems reported in administering these new tests have been successfully resolved. Everyone (including teachers, principals, parents and board members) who has taken the SBAC observes that this new test is challenging our students to apply what they know, requiring higher levels of problem solving in a computer desktop environment. If you have not experienced SBAC, I encourage all members of the public to take the pilot test items available online. Enter SBAC in your search engine to find the link.
2. Congratulations to the select students who have been accepted for L&G's Journey East Program of studies for 2015-2016. This group will tour and perform in China next spring.
3. The WCSU Math Committee has posted grade level "non-negotiable" expectations for student learning along with benchmark assessments and supporting instructional resources online for all teachers to access via Google docs.
4. In February, teachers reported on student progress for the first half of the school year using the common elements of the WCSU Elementary Report Card. Every school formatted this report based on the K-6 CCSS to uniquely reflect the identity of each school. Students and parents will receive these report cards as we close this school year. This reporting system will ensure equivalent assessment and reporting of student achievement in math and language arts for all WCSU elementary schools. It will also enable parents to compare their student(s)' achievement over time. I want to thank all the school representatives serving on the WCSU Report Card Committee.
5. Looking forward to the 2015-2016 school year, we now have the SBAC (3-8 & 11) annually and WCSU Report Card (K-6) semi-annually indicating student growth vis a vis the CCSS over time. For local formative assessments our elementary schools use MAPs or AIMSweb to focus our instruction on specific standards for small groups of students. Every school will continue to require students to complete research, performance, and field study projects. I anticipate that these assessments—the measures that parents and boards can use to monitor student progress—combined with students' PLPs will guide and direct our School Improvement Plans and the WCSU Strategic Plan.

Policy and Regulation

1. Samantha Bovat has completely revised and updated PK enrollment forms for parents and pre-K providers to support 10hrs/wk of education for 3 and 4 year olds. Parents may choose to send their children to any publicly approved Pre-K this fall. The WCSU is implementing this state initiative (Act 166) one year early to provide an

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- opportunity for our youngest students to set a solid foundation for learning.
2. Multiple Pathways (Act 77) and VT Education Quality Standards call for Personalized Learning Plans (PLP) for every 7th grader this fall. At Leland and Gray, a student course —Education Law and School Reform— enabled students to study this issue, help design the elements of PLPs, and spread the word among students and parents. They also presented their work to the public at a recent Board Meeting. Some of these students will help provide feedback and direction to the administration and teachers on the implementation of PLPs. L&G plans to have PLPs for all students in grades 7-9 this fall, once again leading the way for other high schools in Vermont.
 3. The Jamaica and Townshend School Boards have appointed two board members from each town to continue discussing the merits of combining resources to build a new school to serve both towns. They welcome any interest from Wardsboro or Windham in pursuing this idea. H.361 does provide some financial support and incentives for consolidation of school governance, but we need to look into the requirements to qualify. The small school grants are a critical consideration.
 4. On May 20th, I look forward to attending the VSBA/VSA jointly sponsored Board Chair and Superintendent Training with Rich Werner (WCSU/Dover), Stephanie Amyot (Jamaica), Joe Winrich (LGUM/HS) and the entire Marlboro School Board (Jen Carr, Douglas Korb, and Celena Romo). I appreciate this commitment and support of our team to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by the recently adopted education bill (H. 361 as amended). We will be hearing about the details of this law at the workshop and conference.

Finance/Accounting/Operations

1. Last Thursday, the NewBrook Board awarded the bid for the solar panel installation on campus. Bud is working with the assistance of the NewBrook Energy Committee to complete the details of the construction contract and new metering agreement. Dover has contracted a similar project and anticipates construction to begin shortly. I encourage other school districts to consider signing net metering agreements with either of the private investors owning these installations. There can be a significant savings on your electricity bills by committing long-term to these alternative energy source providers.
2. Negotiations with the WCEA for a successor Support Staff Agreement will begin 5/20. Townshend and/or Jamaica employees may decide to join the bargaining unit, but there is no decision at this time. We hope to conclude these negotiations in time to issue all remaining contracts for employees by June 1.
3. Budget reports for FY16 are due to the AOE on June 1. Bud will submit these reports as required. He is meeting with Dover on May 26 to assist with their submittal.
4. Bud sent out an RFP for auditing services reporting on FY15. Several firms have expressed interest in submitting bids. The deadline is May 22.

Enrollment/Staffing

1. Congratulations and many thanks to Ted Redfield, Tina Shakespeare, Arlene Hanson, David Ahern, Tom Russell, Sue Biolsi, and Gary Keiser who are retiring this June. Their combined years of service teaching our students exceeds the century mark.

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2. WCSU School Enrollment data:

School	As of October 27, 2014	As of May 19, 2015
Dover (PK-6)	112	108
Jamaica (PK-6)	64	68
Leland and Gray (7-12)	353	347
Marlboro (K-8)	78	78
NewBrook (K-6)	122	121
Townshend (PK-6)	79	81
Wardsboro (PK-6)	58	62
Windham (K-6)	20	20
	886	885

Total for WCSU including all tuition students is a little over 1000.

Informational Items

1. The full WCSU Board will meet May 27 @ 7:00 P.M. at Leland and Gray.
(6:30 for an Executive Session re: Superintendent's Evaluation)
2. The WCSU Board Planning Retreat Meeting is Wed., September 23rd with location TBA.

5/20/15 - sbj