

Superintendent's Report for September/October 2013

The leaves are surely showing off this fall.

Student/Staff Learning

1. At the annual retreat meeting in August, the WCSU Executive Committee approved revisions of the goals of the *WCSU Strategic Plan*. This document will now direct and guide our work together to see that every student graduates career and college ready. (Note: Unfortunately, the full WCSU Board could not establish a quorum at this meeting.)
2. The NECAP scores in Science from last spring are now released. I will summarize the results for all our schools later this month. On June 25, 2013, the State Board of Education adopted the Next Generation Science Standards. Vermont is the sixth state to approve these new standards.
3. This fall marks the final year of NECAP exams in English and mathematics for grades 3 – 8 and 11. Dover is exempt because the school was approved to participate in a pilot round of the new Smarter Balance (SBAC) exams. All Vermont public schools will use Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium exams for the first time in the spring of 2015.
4. The literacy coaches from each elementary school met for two days of Fountas and Pinnell training on October 2nd and 3rd. Margaret Crosby from Lesley College led these workshops. She reminded the eight teachers and three principals attending that “you are a great resource for each other.” To summarize the professional learning, we were asked to reflect on “How and why are genre studies important in developing writers (that is every student to become a writer)?”
5. We regret that our mathematics teacher training has been postponed until later this year. Dr. Mahesh Sharma sent his regrets due to illness.
6. Instrumental music is alive and growing across the WCSU. Michael McKinney reports that he has 53 new elementary students this year and 51 instrumental music students returning from last year.
7. I enjoyed making the rounds to all schools during opening week. We got off to a remarkably smooth and uneventful start to the school year. The pirate made a surprise visit to all elementary schools on September 19th. This was international Talk Like a Pirate Day - my favorite day of the year! Polly, the parrot, sat on Long John Silver's hook for some students.

Policy/Regulation

1. I attended the Governor's Pre-Summit Conference on Pre-K Education with experts and teachers in the field in late September. The purpose of these conferences across the state is to improve Pre-K instruction and services. The collaborative early education group will propose legislation to the Governor and Legislature in January.
2. Emily Long and I met with our counterparts from neighboring supervisory unions to discuss a boundary study by the Windham Southwest SU. The AOE gave permission for WSESU to hire an interim superintendent (Richard McClements) for one year

WCSU will ...place students at the center of our decision-making.
...build trust and respect by acting ethically, transparently, and with integrity.
...operate as a community of learners, committed to developing the skills and capabilities of all.
...collaborate, share and seek creative solutions.

- pending the outcome of this study. The WCSU is a partner in this study.
3. The RED Study Committee proposed the creation of a Windham Central Education District K-12 (WCED) for the five union towns of L&G. Four information meetings were held for the voters leading up to Australian ballot on Oct. 8 to consider the proposal. Based on a legal objection from the Attorney General to Article 12 of the proposed WCED Articles of Agreement, the State Board of Education (SBE) canceled the Oct. 8 vote. The SBE then approved a revised Article 12 to address the AG's objection. The RED Committee will now seek the SBE's approval for a vote on June 3, 2014. The next Committee meeting will be Wed., Nov. 6 at L&G at 7 pm. All members of the public are welcome. For the latest information, please see <WCED.windhamcentral.org> or the link from www.windhamcentralboard.org → "Proposed WCED."
 4. All schools have completed, or are retuning, their fire and crisis drill procedures as required every September.
 5. On October 10th, the ATM will approve the action steps and professional learning necessary to achieve the goals of the *WCSU Strategic Plan*. School Action Plans should be linked in some direct way to these action steps and goals of the *WCSU Strategic Plan*.
 6. Rebecca Holcomb is appointed by Gov. Shumlin to succeed Armando Vilaseca. The official date for this transition will be announced soon, but I anticipate this to be around the first of the year.

Finance/Accounting/Operation

1. We changed the WCSU-wide insurance policies (property, general liability, auto, boiler & machinery, workers compensation, employee bond) from Peerless to VISBIT starting July 1, 2013. The VISBIT bid was \$13k lower than the Richard's Group representing Peerless Insurance.
2. The professional auditors spent the better part of last week in our office conducting eight separate audits. They will return later in October to complete their work. Vermont law now requires a professional audit of every school district *annually*. We are lobbying to return to the previous "every three years" requirement.
3. As required by the Department of Labor, we notified all employees by email of their health insurance status and possible options available under the Affordable Healthcare Act. These notices included anyone employed by either the WCSU or of our school districts. This includes all school board members. Print and save your notice for future reference.
4. The FY15 budget development process will begin in late October with the WCSU Executive Committee Meeting to consider compensation for non-union WCSU employees. The previously scheduled Oct. 23 meeting has been rescheduled to Oct.30. The agenda will be emailed to all board members prior to the meeting.

Enrollment/Staffing

1. The number of special education students continues to increase particularly at the EEE and pre-K levels.
2. Claire Johns (no relation) is our new Human Resources Coordinator. Claire is working 20 hours/week filling a position that was full time last year. Some of the HR

workload has been redistributed among other staff in an effort to contain our personnel costs. Alison Hescocock is now the contact person and runs background checks for all substitutes and volunteers. Deb Mears takes care of the background checks and paperwork for employees working in our after school programs. Samantha Bovat oversees the implementation of our new electronic professional development request for reimbursement system. The WCSU is going paperless using a secure online approval and database system, My Learning Plan.com, for all licensed employees.

3. We are most fortunate to have found two highly qualified Speech & Language Pathologists to meet our students' needs for this fall. Please welcome Holly Nardone from Wilmington and Erika Connor from Marlboro to our supervisory union. They are filling the positions of Carol Fritz and Dr. Uma Balakrishnan who recently retired on June 30, 2013. We thank Carol & Uma for their many years teaching some of our youngest students how to speak and express themselves more clearly.

Calendar Dates

1. WCSU Board Executive Committee Meeting has been rescheduled to Wed., Oct. 30 at Leland and Gray 7 p.m..
2. The Voluntary RED Study Committee will meet Wed., Nov. 6 at 7:00 P.M. at L&G. Room location: TBA.

10/7/13 - sbj