

## Superintendent's Report for January 2013

### Happy New Year!

#### Student/Staff Learning

1. As first reported last month, our professional learning continues for mathematics and language arts K-12: specifically, Fountas and Pinnell training for literacy coaches for two days last week, and mathematics for K-2 and 3-8 later this month.
2. Next week I will send letters of appointment to teachers serving on the WCSU-wide Mathematics Committee. The purpose of this committee is to provide support, advice, and insights to improve math instruction next year as we transition to the Common Core Standards (2015). Representatives from every school who serve on the Mathematics Committee will be consulting with Dr. Sharma. The committee's work begins in February.
3. Good nutrition correlates positively with student learning in schools worldwide. I am pleased to report that 44 out of 60 Wardsboro's students took advantage of the first federal hot lunch served January 2, 2013. These meals are prepared at L&G's kitchen by The Abbey Group Food Service and served hot. With Marlboro implementing a pilot lunch program, all WCSU schools now provide a federally subsidized hot lunch for their students (Windham excepted). Not too long ago only Dover and L&G provided this nutritional support program.
4. Another essential support for student learning in our schools involves personal safety and emotional security. Our principals have reviewed their school's crisis and drill plans. Led by WCSU School Psychologist Tom Daughton, the WCSU Crisis Team was called to action or consulted re: three student incidents last year. This team collaborates to provide the immediate and continuing counseling support such incidents warrant. Our schools' behavior and education support teams are having a positive effect on the lives of our children every day.
5. I urge you to take up the Superintendent's (my) evaluation at your next board meeting. I understand Emily Long has emailed the evaluation form to all members of the boards. Please direct any questions regarding this process to Emily.

#### Policy/Regulation

1. As you may have been reminded by a recent report in the Reformer, the state's new bullying policy is in effect starting January 1, 2013. My administrative team will follow the legally required procedures in this policy pending your board's vote to adopt the model F24.1 Bullying Policy. A number of boards have discussed, warned and/or adopted this new policy that defines bullying as "*repeated over time, directed at a particular student, **and** intended to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate*".
2. The boards have made terrific progress in reviewing and updating their policies in 2012. Apart from this new bullying policy, the WCSU, Brookline-Newfane, Dover, L&G, Stratton, Wardsboro, Windham, and Winhall are all up to date. Jamaica, Marlboro, and Townshend are continuing to review, revise and rescind some older policies, but have mandated policies in effect.

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...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.

3. When the WCSU Board met last December 5, they appointed an ad hoc committee to review the WCSU By-Laws and explore ways to make our notable number of board meetings at the SU and SD levels more efficient and effective. The committee will meet on February 7 @ 6 P.M. at my WCSU Office and intends to bring recommendations to the WCSU Organizational Board Meeting on March 27<sup>th</sup>.
4. The four school boards continuing with the RED study considered the draft Articles of Agreement at their December meetings. The Townshend Board voted to support these Articles for the RED Committee's Meeting on Wed., January 16, 7 P.M. at L&G. The Jamaica Board invited the public to a special meeting, Tues., Jan. 8 to field questions and suggestions re: these proposed Articles. The Brookline-Newfane Board plans to share copies of the Articles with citizens attending their next two meetings on Jan. 31 and their Annual Meeting on Sat., Feb. 9, 10 A.M. at the NewBrook Firehouse. Pending approval of this draft of the Articles or recommended revisions by the boards, the RED Study Committee will submit the Articles to the State Board of Education. State Board approval is required before each town can proceed to vote on forming a K-12 RED by Australian ballot.
5. Emily Long, Laura Sibilica (for Rich Werner), and Ken McFadden represented the WCSU Board at their first Joint SU Study Committee meeting with three Windham Southwest representatives on December 13 at Dover Elementary School. Steven Dale and John Everitt from the VSBA facilitated the discussion and advised the committee. The Committee has obtained the consulting services of Ray Proulx who will report on possible areas of cooperation after conducting interviews and further research.

## **Finance/Accounting/Operations**

1. The budget approval and school district warning season continues with the pressure of publishing deadlines unabated. The scramble in the WCSU Office to meet these multiple deadlines and legal obligations is always exciting and full of surprises. Later this month Frank and I intend to share a summary of all twelve proposed school district budgets. Notably, NewBrook's combined school budget is level funded at 0% increase over this year. This is primarily due to a number of students with IEPs transferring out of district or graduating to L&G. NewBrook is also noteworthy for the lowest equalized per pupil spending in the WCSU: \$11,701 for Brookline SD and \$11,696 for Newfane SD.
2. Concluding two years of negotiations, the WCEA/WCSU, Brookline, Newfane, Jamaica, L&G, Townshend and Wardsboro Master Agreement has been ratified and signed. I want to publicly thank the members of the WCSU and WCEA Bargaining Teams for their professional advocacy and wisdom to resolve their differences in good faith. This three-year Agreement in effect from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015 calls for annual total increases in "new money" for teacher compensation of 2.0%, 2.8%, and 3.0% respectively. We anticipate that teachers covered by this Agreement will see their paychecks reflect these changes late this month. Keep in mind that all employees will experience an increase in FICA deductions of 2% as the "tax holiday" to stimulate the economy expired on Jan. 1.

## **Enrollment/Staffing**

1. Projected enrollment numbers are included in your proposed FY14 Budget details prepared by Frank. We will include these in a summary of budgets across the WCSU later this month.

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2. Staffing at the head of Vermont's Agency of Education remains unchanged by the Governor for this year. Congratulations to Armando Vilaseca. As Secretary of Education he will serve for one year and lead a nationwide search to find his replacement. The good news for Winhall is that Dan French is likely to continue as Superintendent of Bennington-Rutland South for FY14 when they will join that SU.

## Calendar Dates

1. The Voluntary RED Study Committee will meet Wed., January 16, at 7:00 P.M. in the L&G Library. The Committee welcomes your questions, comments and suggestions regarding their work.
2. WCSU Board Organizational Meeting will be Wed., March 27 at 7:00 P.M. Location TBA.

1/6/13 - sbj