
As we move toward the end of the first quarter at the High School and approach the half-way point of the first trimester at our Elementary Schools, we can look back over the 31 days of October and see how far we have come in several important areas. We respectfully submit to you this brief summary of some of the things coming from the Office of the Assistant Superintendents.

Grants

Last month we discussed The Coronavirus Relief Fund (CVRF) grant, from which all of our schools were allocated funds. By mid-October, we had completed the grant applications for all seven of our schools and submitted them to the State, which is administering the funds for the Federal government. On 22 October 2020, we received word from the state that the grant had been closed and that the deadline (October 23) would be extended. Sam and Scott are keeping tabs on this grant and will continue to provide the State with whatever additional information they may require. We've also put any spending from the grant on hold until we have the definitive word on the status of the grant.

Professional Learning (PL)

With the Coronavirus pandemic continuing, the State offered school districts the opportunity to modify their teacher evaluation models, allowing for some "Flexibilities" in the implementation of teacher evaluation. Specifically, the State allowed districts to focus their teacher evaluation models on students' social-emotional well being and their engagement in school activities. As required, we met with the regional Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC), which decided to use the flexibilities for this school year. We've been engaged in an ongoing dialog with members of PDEC about appropriate teacher professional goals under the flexibilities. We met with Bena Kallick and Allison Zmuda to discuss teacher goals and corresponding indicators that would provide information to teachers (and administrators) about students' learning, both social-emotional and academic. Bena and Allison were tremendously helpful in crafting goals that do not put added data collection requirements on our teachers and help them to see how the Habits of Mind need to be contextualized to make them meaningful. In addition, we are discussing the observation and feedback process that will accompany the flexibilities. Some of the observations will be conducted via Zoom or Google Meets to help maintain the cohorting that occurred in each of our schools.

The upcoming November PL time will be dedicated to a few key activities. We will be providing time for teachers to meet in content-area teams to connect with colleagues, reflect on and potentially revise plans that were made before school began. We will also be ensuring that teachers have the opportunity to work on professional goal development in collaborative teams. Finally, time will be provided for teachers to work through the Region One Distance Learning Playbook (see more on this below).

Our teachers are happy to be in school (hybrid or full day) and to be able to interact with our students across the Region. We are continuing to make plans in case of the need to pivot from our current learning models to an all distance learning model, which is work that began over the

summer. Week-at-a-glance templates, which were created with a team of teachers during the summer, have been used to help parents to support students at home during periods of distance learning. More recently, we created a “Distance Learning Resource” for teachers to use as they prepare for and participate in the full distance learning model. Modeled after The Distance Learning Playbook (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2020), the guide includes items specific to Region One, including our grading practices and curricular expectations. The guide is being put on EduPlanet, our online teacher learning portal, so that it is available to all teachers.

We have been working out the plans for our last Regional Professional Learning Day, which will be focused (as it traditionally has) on curriculum. The PL day is scheduled for 4 January 2021. We have surveyed the teachers of the “specials” to determine their specific needs and will be tailoring the day to meet the learning needs of the faculties in all areas that will ensure that we have a “guaranteed and viable curriculum” (Dufour & Marzano, 2011) for all of our students. Our guaranteed and viable curriculum will include both strong and rigorous academic expectations and important social-emotional learning activities so that we graduate students who exemplify the tenets of our [“Portrait of a Graduate”](#).

Support for Families

Our reopening plan included a desire to provide students’ caregivers direct training on the computer programs that their students will be using, both in school and in the event that students are engaged in distance learning. The first set of trainings, two on using Seesaw (by Beth Johnson from NCES), two on Google Classroom in the Elementary Schools (by Pam Sangster from Salisbury Central School) and two on Google Classroom aimed at high school parents (by Scott Fellows of HVRHS) occurred during October. The attendance was small, but the sessions were recorded and are posted on the schools’ websites. We will continue the parent training with sessions on PowerSchool and troubleshooting technology problems in November.

Assessment

Much of the administrative staff and a number of teachers have been involved in additional training in the use of EduClimber, our data warehouse system, that will allow us to analyze both current data and historical data to look for trends that will point to the need for professional learning. We have also attended EduClimber sessions focused on using EdClimber as a place to track interventions used with students who are struggling with academic or social-emotional skills. Since EduClimber includes data for all of our students, including grades, standardized test scores, behavioral incidents, and attendance, Student Assistance Teams (and SRBI/MTSS Teams) across the Region will be able to create targeted interventions for students that should help them to get them back on track. Additionally, FastBridge, our Regional mathematics and English/language arts screener, provides teachers with specific interventions based on a student’s scores on the various components of the screener. The FastBridge data will be loaded into EduClimber, making a well-rounded intervention space for teachers, counselors, and the Assistance Teams at each school.

Instructional and Content-Area Coaching

After our instructional coaches met with Mandi van Dellen, we met with her to debrief the sessions and to determine our next steps to create a working instructional coaching model. We identified two trends across the comments from the coaches and Mandi: (a) a lack of time to be involved in the coaching process and (b) the need to shift views of coaching from "remediation" to "connection and collaboration." We discussed those concerns with Mandi and will make use of them when we meet with the coaches.

In the meantime, our Regional Math coaches, Danielle Krueger and Kristi Pramuka are producing a [monthly math memo](#) featuring tips and tricks for math teachers at all levels. Kathy West, our Regional Science coach, is also working closely with the new science teachers in the Region on NGSS. Also, our coaching team at the High School is continuing to offer the "Coaches Corner" before the start of school every Wednesday, which allows faculty members to share their expertise and ask questions in a non-threatening virtual environment. These activities suggest that the coaches are already finding ways to reach out to their faculties and we could not be more impressed with their performance in this important role!

Hiring

Finally, the Coronavirus pandemic has made hiring extremely difficult. We were able to fill two positions that had been created by late teacher resignations and still have two positions in Special Education to fill. We are, however, happy to report that we have recruited several additional substitutes, mainly through word of mouth, and look forward to their joining us to fill in for teachers as we approach cold and flu season.

EL Programming

Celina Huber submitted her written [report](#), highlighting her work with our English Learners.

Career/Work Experience Program

Dr. Mary O'Neill submitted her written [report](#), highlighting her work in the Career Experience Program.

Respectfully submitted.

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