

Principals' Report

White River Unified District

June 16, 2020

COVID-19 Update:

We continue to plan for the in-person return to school in the fall as announced by the Governor. The WRVSU COVID-19 Task Force which includes two WRUD 2 teachers, 2 staff, 3 students, and 1 parent is working in sub-committees to provide direction for the SU's continuation of learning in response to the pandemic. Owen serves as our WRUD administrative representative. New guidance from the AOE is expected by the end of this week, with more detailed information to be provided in early-mid July.

With the easing of state-wide restrictions on recreational activities, WRVHS coaches have the green light to plan to engage student-athletes in small group, socially distanced drills over the summer. The Vermont Principal's Association (VPA) is following the lead of the state in regards to what activities will be allowed. Competitions and indoor gym activities remain off limits, and our fields and facilities remain closed to outside groups.

Preparations for addressing our buildings health needs continue. This includes additional signage, sanitation stations, ventilation, and adaptations to room and furniture needs. Thanks to David's connections, we have procured significant quantities of protective masks and sterile gloves for the fall.

Racial Equity:

On Friday, we shared our commitments to work for [Social and Racial Justice](#). Over the summer we will flesh out a plan to address this in the coming school year.

Staff:

- **Coordinator of Student Services:** A candidate was advanced to the Superintendent for approval as part of our part to replace the South Royalton Elementary Principal with a [WRUD Shared Leadership Model](#). We were very pleased with our candidate pool.

- **MTSS-A Coordinator:** A name has been forwarded to fill this position which will be responsible for analysis and implementation of data based interventions to address WRUD literacy and math needs. This was posted internally as current staff resources were reallocated through a shift in title and roles as part of the new shared leadership model.
- **Food Service Director:** We have moved to advertise more broadly for this position to expand the candidate pool.
- .50 FTE WRVMS Math Interventionist- We had interviews for this position earlier today.

Summer Retreat:

The WRVSU Administration will hold its annual 2 day summer retreat on July 28-29.

Summer Food Service:

We will continue to serve meals through the end of our Summer One Planet Program in the first week of August.

May 19, 2020

[WRUD Shared Leadership Model](#)

[Leadership Plan 2020-2021](#)

Andra, Reed, and Jamie met and discussed the model with South Royalton Elementary campus teachers.

[Letter](#) went out to faculty/staff /families and students communicating the model and asking for stakeholders to join the hiring committee.

Staff:

We have new resignations to report:

- Meeka Sands, Elementary Foreign Language
- Nancy Pejouhy, Math Interventionist

New postings are out for the Food Service Director position and the Coordinator of Student Services position.

[Letter](#) went out to all elementary families introducing Andra to South Royalton Elementary.

Food Service:

Is running smoothly. There are no plans to make any changes to our model before the end of the year. Current plans are to continue through June before transitioning to a summer plan based around the summer programs.

Summer Programs:

We expect to have 4 groups of up to 8 students in 4 separate rooms on the South Royalton Campus and 3 on the Bethel campus. Until we fully know how students will be using our facilities this summer and there is easing of the state guidance around the size of gatherings, our facilities and grounds will remain closed to the general public.

BEST Institute:

This grant funded professional development opportunity will happen virtually this summer. We have a group of 25 staff going from WRUD with teams from all 4 programs. Our collective focus will be aligning and strengthening our PBIS work prek-12 and promoting our team approach to student supports.

High School Graduation:

We need to sign diplomas. Can you come down to the office in South Royalton some time in the next two weeks to do this? Open office hours are 11am to 1pm, M/W/Fri or by appointment; you can email dburkett@wrvsu.org for scheduling.

Here is the [Graduation Announcement](#) that went out to seniors, staff and families to outline our current plan; there is a caveat on the bottom that plans are subject to change.

We are trying to keep the # of people involved to minimize everyone's potential exposure, however there is room on the "stage" for a board representative if you would like to see this. We are looking to hire a professional photographer to

Plans for Reopening in Fall:

We continue to review the latest guidance and projections re: opening schools in the fall. At this time it is not at all clear what this will look like. We are looking at the science and what this looks like in other countries and trying to develop best practices. Orders for items like PPE, sanitizer dispensers, and thermometers are being worked on.

April 21, 2020

Continuity of Learning Plan for COVID-19: For the past 4 weeks we have been devoting most of our time to developing the Continuity of Learning Plan called for in Governor Scott's orders. Our [WRVSU Continuity of Learning Plan \(CLP\)](#) was reviewed and has been approved and commended by the state. This Plan went into full effect on Monday 4/13/2020. It is a comprehensive look at our efforts to adapt teaching and learning to the current context. It also spells out how support services will be provided to students through our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and the new Distance Learning Plans being put into place for our Special Education Students.

Food Service: Another major effort has been maintaining food service through the pandemic in the face of health and safety concerns, as well as staffing issues. Last week we served just over 2300 meals (2/day X 5 days) in a Mon, Wed., Fri curbside pick-up model. Initially we were in daily meetings about this and now we meet every other day to process the latest guidance and plan ahead. We will continue the food service during the break on the Mon, Wed, Fri schedule. Additionally we have worked to get our students signed up for a new benefit of \$25-30/week per student for a direct [Electronic Benefit Transfer](#) if they qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch.

Communication: We have got our Wildcat newsletter back up and running. Our individual programs have been communicating regularly with families and last week we recorded a joint phone message that went out to all families. Each school has initiated positive, community building, school spirit activities to connect with our students. And we are expanding our capacity to engage students with slide shows and weekly video recordings.

WRVHS

Winooski Valley School Choice Cooperative: The net impact of this state school choice program is that one of our students was accepted to U-32 and we will be getting three new students. I wouldn't read too much into this data but the ratio of in/out is favorable. No money exchanges hands in this.

Events: There is a lot that remains up in the air but here are the highlights:

- **Graduation:** One way or another we'll come up with some community celebration of Graduation but will wait until May 8th for more guidance from the

state. We have not cancelled our tent yet and it remains on hold if we are able to hold our traditional ceremony on June 12th.

- **Spring Sports:** The Vermont Principals Association's Activities Committee met last Tuesday and delayed a decision on the cancellation of spring sports. A final decision will be made on April 30th. In the meantime our coaches have met with their teams virtually to keep up their spirits and fitness up so they will be stay engaged in classes and ready to play.
- **Spring Musical:** We are exploring rescheduling the spring musical an early summer date for if things return to normal in time.
- **Prom:** One idea some juniors have been talking about is a fall Prom which our graduates would be invited back for.

March 17, 2020

Coronavirus Response: As of March 12, 2020, there are no reported cases of COVID-19 among students or staff. We continue to follow the guidance of the Supervisory Union which is echoed by the Vermont Department of Health reminding students and staff to:

- Stay home when they are sick
- Frequently wash their hands
- Avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Cover their cough or sneeze with their sleeve or a tissue

In addition, maintenance staff have put an additional focus towards cleaning commonly touched surfaces with increased frequency. We have suspended field trips including the 8th Grade trip to Washington D.C and the 5th Grade Nature's Classroom trip to Maine. We were able to receive credits or refunds with both of these trips. We are reviewing school based gatherings on a case-by-case basis. Administration is working with the Superintendent's Office to review new information about COVID-19 as it is available from the Vermont Department of Health, Vermont Agency of Education and the CDC.

Professional Development: Each campus still has 1 session scheduled with trainer Alex Shevrin-Vinet re: trauma-informed practices. She will present a report to us at the end of the year when we will meet to discuss next steps.

Focus on May 11th in-service changed to prepping to support students out with illness and work with staff on Google suite technology that supports students work when they are out of the classroom.

Inservice: We adjusted our recent inservice focus with the goal of planning for potential teacher absence and/or school closure. Teachers made individual emergency substitute plans in the event that they will need to be out of school. Teachers also worked on creating a plan for a possible long term all school closure. We will share these documents if and when needed.

Elementary Staff are continuing their year long work in Literacy with Aimee Toth.

Bethel Elem & So Ro Elem: Both BES and SRE are looking into two specific math programs to align our campuses.

WRVMS: The WRVMS has recently finished the school wide reading of the book *The Benefits of Being an Octopus*, by Ann Braden. Ann's debut middle grade novel *The Benefits of Being an Octopus* was listed as one of NPR's Best Books of 2018, received a starred review from School Library Journal, and was described by Newbery award-winner Karen Hesse as "a compassionate look at poverty, hard choices, and defending one's right to be treated humanely." On Thursday, March 12th we hosted the author Ann Braden for a day long visit. Ms. Braden met with students in a full school assembly, by grade level, in classrooms and with individuals. Please visit Ms. Braden's website at your convenience. <https://annbradenbooks.com/>

WRVHS: The high school is selecting classes for next year. New schedule offers 8 classes to students, because of low enrollment issues this should be a plus for our elective course offerings. Here is the latest draft of our Program of Studies which outlines our course offerings.

We have received \$25,000 in grant funding to explore how we might privately fundraise to expand our high school music rehearsal space. Here is the [grant request letter](#).

Our student support team is developing a plan for delivering educational services to high school students who might otherwise be served in off-site alternative programs. We are exploring how we might realign staff and redesign curriculum to meet the needs of a small group of students (6-8). We are hoping to identify a dedicated room in the building to provide a home base for these students and this program.

Facilities:

Coronavirus Cleaning

South Royalton: Our facilities crew added

Bethel:

Preschool: The results of the PK Survey are in with 33 parents responding. Expanded survey results can be found at [THIS LINK](#). A summary of findings from the respondents are:

- 82% live in South Royalton and 18% live in Bethel.
- 55% are not interested in a summer program
- 19% are interested in a six week, full day summer program
- 16% are interested in signing up for certain days of the week during the summer
- 60% are interested in a full-day school year program for 4 year old children.
- 17% are interested in a full-day school year program for 3 year old children.
- 17% are interested in an extended day program during the school year.

Andra and David plan to meet with Carrie McDonnell, One Planet coordinator to explore ways to collaborate around PK programming and to meet with the business office to discuss fee structures and personnel costs for expanded school-based programming.

Upcoming Events:

All outside groups have been notified: Out of precaution to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 in our community, we are restricting the use of school facilities on both the Bethel and South Royalton campuses to official academic and athletic school groups for the foreseeable future. Examples of school groups include school classes, school sanctioned performing arts groups and school sanctioned athletic groups. All other groups that may or may not have arranged a building use permit will not be able to use school facilities at this time. We regret the inconvenience this may cause but this action is taken to keep our community safe.

The high school postponed its Job Shadow Day for all 9th graders until late spring or fall if necessary.

February 18, 2020

Professional Development: Staff met with trainer Alex Shevrin-Vinet on our Friday ½ to further our trauma-informed practices.

Elementary Staff are continuing their year long work in Literacy with Aimee Toth.

WRVMS: We have been working on our WRVMS Vision. After a year and half of creating the WRVMS we feel we are ready to synthesize our work into a vision with an action plan specific to our part of the WRUD. We have agreed on four tenets - **Citizenship - Ownership - Relationship - Scholarship** The faculty has begun wordsmithing actions that will define these tenets. The students will be led through the same process with Scott Thompson of the Tarrant Institute for Innovation in Education. We just had our last PICO ski and boarding program.

WRVHS: The high school staff approved a new schedule to address student, staff, and parents concerns. We will offer 8 classes to students, 4 times a week. There will be 7, 52 min periods per day and 3 Learning Blocks.

The Junior Class sponsored a semi-formal Valentine's Day dance on Saturday 2/15. Winter sports regular seasons are coming to an end and we will be headed into playoffs soon.

Facilities: Both campuses have taken steps to mitigate concerns around elevated lead levels in some of the faucets at school. Following guidance from the State, all affective taps were turned off and/or restricted from use for drinking and cooking. Families at both campuses were notified of the issue in writing. Again, following guidance from the State, plans have been made to replace the affected faucets as this is the most likely source of elevated lead levels. This work is expected to take place over February vacation. The cost of this work will be reimbursed by the State per statute.

Preschool: Andra and David met with WRVSU Preschool Coordinator Jan Crow on February 14th to discuss options for expanding preschool services at the Bethel and South Royalton campuses. We discussed how Sharon Elementary School is providing preschool and aftercare. We also discussed options for expanding the WRVS preschool program such as after school care, vacation care, and summer programming. We decided the logical next step was to explore the summer programming option. Next steps include surveying parents to gauge interest and researching labor costs for such a program.

Upcoming Events: The high school is working on a Job Shadow Day for all 9th graders on Friday, April 10th. This is an integral part of our Personal Learning Plan work that helps students identify career interests and learn about corresponding pathways. WRVMS One Act Play was performed on Friday February 14 and Saturday February 15.

January 21, 2019

Staff: Megan Burnham has been hired as a nutrition assistant to replace the South Royalton kitchen staff that departed in December.

Budget: The principal's meet again at 9 am on January 21 to continue work on the FY21 budget.

SRES: We are pleased to announce that 3rd grade teacher Monica Farrington gave birth to a healthy baby boy last week. Monica's class is being taught by Carrie Cooker, one of our most dependable substitutes, in her absence. Our teachers are continuing with their literacy training with coach Aimee Toth. Aimee joined us for a faculty meeting on the 21st, we are taking part in district wide literacy training on Friday and Aimee joins us again for targeted coaching sessions on January 28th.

BES:

WRVMS:

WRVHS: We are planning for our spring Personalized Learning Plan season. 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students will be building on their plans in grade appropriate ways as developed by our staff last summer with the help of a grant. We will be kicking off with our 9th grade in the coming weeks as we start talking about courses for next year and their future pathways. We will be offering a job shadow day experience for all 9th graders later in the Spring.

Upcoming Events: This coming Saturday, 1/25 our WRUD teams will be playing for Cancer Awareness. Starting at 10 am in the gym on the South Royalton campus all 8 of our basketball teams are scheduled to play; 4 MS teams and 4 HS games. The WRVHS Boys Varsity team plays the final game at 7 pm v. Woodstock.

December 17, 2019

Staff:

We have received a letter of resignation from Willy Walker effective 6/30/2020

Budget:

All four principals have followed up their faculties during the current budget freeze to reassure them that classroom needs will be met during this period.

Communications:

Our school newsletter continues with back issues archived in [THIS FOLDER](#).

Professional Development:

Ten faculty and staff members were trained in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention on December 13th.

<https://www.crisisprevention.com/Blog/September-2016/5-Things-You-Need-to-Know-About-CPI>

We had all WRUD faculty attend a half day training on trauma training with outside experts on December 13th.

<https://unconditionalllearning.org/author/shevtech/>

Facilities:

On the Bethel Campus we are combining the two Preschool classrooms into one room in the elementary wing. We are moving the middle school Restorative Classroom into the former Preschool located off the gymnasium and near the shop.

Events:

- Each of the four programs at White River Valley School held successful winter concerts this month
- The South Royalton Elementary School PTO held a Spaghetti Dinner & Raffle fundraiser on December 12th to raise money for future PTO events.

Co-Curriculars:

The first WRVMS home basketball game will take place in Bethel on Wednesday December 18th at girls at 4:30, boys at 5:30.

The Wildcat Bowling teams Saturday December 21st, 1:00 pm at Randolph Valley Bowl.

November 19, 2019

Budget:

- **2019-20:** Budget Freeze implemented. Tara shared the YTD Expenditure Report for the first four months of the year and the WRUD have reviewed and made coding corrections. Funds are in the process of being encumbered to help project year end balance. It is an on-going project to identify inaccurately coded items to get a better handle on actual budget line item expenses.
- **2020-21:** Tara is working on first draft of next year's budget proposal. Principals are analyzing class sizes to determine where there are student-teacher ratios that could be more sustainable.

Communication:

- The second volume of the Wildcat's Tracks newsletter began publication on November 7th. Kate George of the South Royalton campus is compiling news from all four of our schools on a weekly basis and publishing the newsletter in digital format via BlackBoard. Issues will be archived in [THIS FOLDER](#).
- Work continues on website updates. Select pages are being updated and content is being made more uniform across the site.

Facilities:

Both our buildings were inspected this past month by VSBIT; Tara sent you copies of these reports on 11/5/19. We have begun implementing the low to no-cost recommendations. We will be seeking cost estimates on the more expensive items and develop a long term plan to implement them. Implementing them all together next year would entail significant increases to next year's operations budget.

Events:

- Halloween Parade and PBIS Assembly at South Royalton Elementary
- First dances of the year were held at WRVMS and WRVHS on Friday, Nov. 1.
- Veteran's Day assembly was held at BES.
- Veterans Day Seminar: High school staff organized a special Veteran's Day learning opportunity on our half-day, Nov. 6th. Students learned about the holiday in their advisory groups (TAG) before interacted with 9 veterans from our community in a 75 min. Panel discussion. [Click here for photos.](#)
- Parent Teacher conferences happened for all students on both campuses this past week.

- Our ECO program was highlighted:
<https://tjie.w3.uvm.edu/blog/middle-school-is-not-a-building/#.Xc7wW1XYrIW>
- The Bethel Campus preschool was awarded the [7th Generation Nap Mat Grant](#)-saving us \$900.00!
- WRVHS Fall Production *The Importance of Being Earnest* takes place on November 15th and 16th at 6 pm on the new Wildcat stage.
- BINGO fundraiser for the 8th Grade Washington D.C. trip Bethel Campus Friday November 15

Co-Curriculars:

- Planning for the WRVS Spring Musical begins this week. Director position to be under contract soon. Hoping to find a way to involve middle school students. Looking at the possibility of a homegrown production to keep costs down.
- Winter Sports Parent Night for middle and high school in So. Royalton gym on November 22 at 6 pm. Dietician Alison Filepp to present nutrition information for our student-athletes and their families.
- Winter Sports start after Thanksgiving, including new offering of Indoor Track. Open gyms have started twice a week at the high school.

October 15, 2019

District Goals: These are our [unified 2019-20 Administrative Goals](#). We are working on specific action items starting with the districts' MTSS program. As these action steps are completed we will share them with the Supt. and Board for further discussion and refinement. Here is the short version:

Goal 1: WRVSD Forming/Identity

Goal 2: WRVSU Strategic Plan

Goal 3: WRVSD Administrative Team Building

Goal 4: WRVSD Program Development

Inservice Work:

- September 18: ALICE- active shooter training (Both campuses)
- October 9: SU-Wide on the South Royalton
 - Raising Readers: Literacy Initiative: Fountas and Pinnell work with Aimee Toth (Elem)
 - Proficiency Based Learning (PBL) - Act 77 system development MS & HS
- October 15: Trauma Informed Teaching training with [Alex Shevrin Venet](#) (South Royalton) (Was in Bethel last month)

Update on Math Committee: Looking at 4 possible programs and will piloting them this winter on both campuses as well as visiting other schools who are using the programs. We are hopeful to begin partial implementation in the fall for grades k-2.

Class Size Optimization: We are looking at our average class sizes and looking to staff according to VT's Education Quality Standards which state:

“Classes in grades K-3, when taken together, shall average fewer than 20 students per teacher. In grades 4-12, when taken together, classes shall average fewer than 25 students per teacher. The total class roll of a teacher shall not exceed 100 students, except where the specific nature of the teacher's assignment (such as in certain art, music, or physical education programs) is plainly adaptable to the teaching of greater numbers of students while meeting the educational goals of the program.”

Andra and David are working with their faculties to design configurations with the following guidelines:

K-2 minimum of 15 with max of 20

4-5 minimum of 18 with max of 23

Enrollment as of 10/15:

[Tuition and Enrollment Report](#)

Homeschool Letter:

[Homeschool letter](#)

Facilities:

- Update on the Bethel heating system
- New stage curtain installed in South Royalton. (Fall Sampler Concert held on Oct. 3rd; First play *The Importance of Being Earnest* will be held on 11/15-16.)

Staffing:

- Indoor Track Coach position posted; Nordic ski coach resignation tendered.

September 17, 2019

- **District:**
 - **Welcome Bethel Hires**
 - **Inservice Work**
 - Raising Readers: Literacy Initiative: Fountas and Pinnell work with Aimee Toth
 - Proficiency Based Learning (PBL) - Act 77 system development
 - Shared WRUD Vision & Goal Work - All WRUD staff at Bethel on 8/27.
 - Trauma work with Alex Shevrin Venet
 - ALICE- active shooter training

- **Update on Fire Suppression System (Royalton Campus):** Efficiency Vermont was called. There may be a small (\$500 +/-) rebate on electrical controls for a new hood but no rebate on the hood itself. The Fire Marshall was called. He will advise us on whether a fire suppression system is needed. This depends on the type of cooking that is done.

- **Update on Math Committee:** Representative K-5 teachers from both campuses met on September 9th to begin the process of identifying and implementing an agreed upon instructional design (materials and methods) in Mathematics that meets the needs of WRVS students. The meeting was very collaborative with teachers agreeing to meet throughout the 2019-2020 school year in order to identify an instructional design for the 2020-2021 school year.

- **Update on Music Committee**

The 4 WRUD music teachers will be working with Tony Petricola this year to audit our program and flesh out our music standards.

- **Update on Website**

Created staff responsibility for updates on a weekly basis. David Wells will be the point person on this project.

Facilities:

- New roof complete at South Royalton
- Asbestos removed in cafeteria and two classrooms
- Dry well rehabilitation to remediate recurring spring basement flooding
- South Royalton stage curtain coming soon TBD; vendor lost measurements adding a 5 week delay.

Staffing: (New Hires recap for 2019-20)

- MTSS Coordinators: Sandy Tracy/ Shane Oakes
- Co-Curricular Director: Heidi Wright
- Pre-K: Hannah Thody
- Kindergarten: Joslyn Banning, Erin Dyroff
- Grades 4-5 BES Campus: Kathy Fechter
- Interventionist: Kathryn Shearer
- Outdoor educator: Bonna Wieler
- Tech Support Specialist (based in South Roy.): Ed Nichols
- Office Assistant: Kate George