



Windham Southwest Supervisory Union
Trailblazers in a Changing World

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
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Halifax

Readsboro

Searsburg

Stamford

Twin Valley Unified Union SD

Central Office Leadership Team Report

February 2023

Respectfully Submitted by:

- Barbara Anne Komons-Montroll, Superintendent
- Michael RobbGrieco, Director of Curriculum & Technology Integration
- Karen Atwood, Business Manager
- Troy McAllister, Director of Special Education

Kudos To

- Wendy, Betsy and Michelle for all their hard work and effort to make sure that payroll was accomplished in the absence of a payroll clerk. Thank you for ensuring that everyone got paid!
- Jillian Valerio for all of her assistance in supporting the business team with filing, data input and the annual reports while the team was short staffed. And also for coordinating the final printing of our strategic plan with the care befitting of the great work of so many stakeholders in our community.
- Shannon Fike for taking on the creative wellness and health encouragement role in the central office.

In the Know and Engaged (*professional meetings the Central Office Leadership Team attended*)

- Troy participated in interviews for Executive Director of Vermont Learning Collaborative as part of the board. The Board has hired the new director to start July 1. More information regarding the director will be forthcoming.
- Barbara Anne met with the teacher union leaders last week to discuss topics related to next year's calendar, as required by the union agreement.
- Barbara Anne is meeting this week with the para union leaders to listen to any concerns that they may have and try to resolve them.

- Barbara Anne conducted interviews with both Mike Eldred of the Deerfield Valley News and Chris Mays of the Brattleboro Reformer, to promote WSWSU and its new Strategic Plan.
- Mike and Adam Bisson attended an AoE/Cognia/Pearson all day training on 1/30 at Bellows Falls H.S. on the new state summative assessments, previewing how to set up school coordinator and test administrator accounts and how to roster students. (More below)

Professional Development Provided to Our Teachers & Staff

- Troy McAllister and Pam Bernardo have been providing an overview training of Multi-Tiered System of Supports/Educational Support Teams and Special Education to teachers at all schools (3 done as of writing)
- On 1/11 during Trailblazer Hour, PK-4 Literacy PLC (professional learning community) engaged in an online workshop with MTSS/EST Coordinator Pamela Bernardo to continue developing common local assessments for PK-4 Literacy Scope & Sequence.
- On 1/11 during Trailblazer Hour, the grades 6-12 Math PLC met with CORE Learning consultant Lisa Ramish (ESSER grant funded, coordinated by Mike), who is facilitating monthly meetings on effectively implementing the new Eureka Math² program.
- On 1/19 at the Mentor-Mentee monthly meeting with Mike and Marie Paige (TVES), mentees reviewed proficiency based assessment and grading guidelines and addressed technical questions about PowerTeacherPro gradebook and report cards.
- On 2/1, during Trailblazer Hour, teachers (other than K-8 Science teachers) had options a) to engage in an online learning module custom designed by author Renee Hobbs around fostering the Portrait competency of *Communication*, b) to meet with Focus PLC colleagues, or c) to spend time planning student supports ahead of school-based team meetings [PLCs include: PK-4 Literacy; K-5 Math specialists (TVES); 6-12 Math; 5-12 Humanities/Science; Unified Arts; and Counselors/Nurses].
- On 2/1, during Trailblazer Hour, K-8 Science teachers met online to reflect on their experience implementing common units with students from Discovery Science Techbook; input and data collected at the meeting will inform next steps in science curriculum development.

Innovation Update

- On 1/11 during Trailblazer Hour, the 5-12 Humanities/Science PLC and the Unified Arts PLC continued their work to identify ways to collaborate to develop student learning opportunities and events connected to Portrait competencies, including co-designing lessons/units, planning performances and field trips, and more.
- On 1/30, Mike RobbGrieco and Adam Bisson learned about the new state assessments at the AoE training in Bellows Falls, and set up a timeline for implementing account set up, rostering, and training rollout for school coordinators and test proctors in WSWSU. The administrative leadership team will review this plan for rollout at our next meeting on 2/9.
 - Last year's SBAC summative assessment results continue to be embargoed "as the agency still awaits finalized enrollment data from districts," though a [press release on 1/10 from the AoE](#) previewed "preliminary results" at the statewide level.

Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

- The first two meetings of the JEDI team have been held with great success. There are a total of 25 participants, 6 of which are students. The team thus far has spent time getting to know each other, identifying team norms, and clarifying our purpose. Participants are very excited to bring actionable recommendations forward to our SU.
- An Equity Professional Development with Equity Consultants for administrators took place on February 2, 2023 where administrators discussed ways to resolve problems of practice related to equity. This is our third out of six scheduled for the year.

Strategic Plan Update

- Hot off the press are the printed tabletop versions of our Strategic Plan. We are excited to be sharing these with internal and external stakeholders across our districts so that they know the direction our schools are headed.
- Barbara Anne was interviewed about our Strategic Plan by Chris Mays of the Brattleboro Reformer: [Windham Southwest finalizes five-year strategic plan](#)
- Our Community Engagement initiative is well underway with scheduled meetings between Barbara Anne and the below service groups. Please feel free to join these conversations about our shared vision for our districts and how these groups can support us in reaching our goals.
 - Wings - Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 5:30 pm on Google Meet
 - Halifax Community Club - February 13, 2023 at 6:30 pm on Zoom
 - Families First - February 14, 2023 at 11 am on Zoom
 - DVCP - March 20, 2023 at 5:30 pm in the conference room of the OSEC Building

Many more meetings are to be scheduled. If you are interested in participating, please reach out to Jillian at execassist@wswsu49.org

Supervision and Support Update

- Beyond her monthly round robin supervision meetings with each administrator, it is that time of the year when Barbara Anne conducts formal midyear progress on goals meetings with each principal and observations of those principals and administrators who are up for renewal of their contract.
- In order to help grow our instructional leadership skills while seeing teachers doing their craft Barbara Anne and the principals meet monthly at each school and do walk throughs of classrooms together using the Fundamental 5 model.

- Barbara Anne also visited all schools this month to connect with principals around burning issues and spend time observing and speaking with the teachers and students.
- Barbara Anne and Mike facilitate two Administrative Team Meetings each month to support our principals' leadership practices, gather input on decisions that impact them and collaborate around the implementation of our strategic plan.

Facilities

- Produced and submitted 2nd round grant application with the Vermont Department of Public Service for the Readsboro Central School HVAC controls project.
- Preparing for Facility Condition Assessment with Energy Audit conducted by the State of Vermont. This is for all schools in Vermont. The tentative date for our first inspection is March 22nd at Twin Valley Middle High School.

Safety Update

- Barbara Anne facilitated a training presented by Heather Lynn, Esq. on Hazing, Harassment and Bullying. The key takeaway for all staff is their requirement to report any misconduct to their principals.
- Sean will be taking the ALICE training so that he can be a trainer for our schools of this state supported choice of response method.
- Barbara Anne is facilitating our next Behavior Threat Assessment Team Meeting scheduled for February 14, 2023 at 3 pm. Our guest members include Chief Murano and the Wilmington Police Social Worker, Knowles Wentworth.

Technology Update

- iPad configuration and deployment continues for iPads funded through Emergency Connectivity funds (first replacing damaged and outdated devices).
- We are beginning work on our Spring AoE data submission, verifying and updating student and staff data.
- We are planning and preparing for our Student State Assessments with regards to firewall configuration, student devices and accommodations.
- Individual department content is being added to our new website.

Policy Update

There are a number of new required policies that you will be seeing coming in front of your district boards next month as your budget season comes to an end. Feel free to review these samples below.

- [Policy Tracker](#)

- [C2 Student Alcohol & Drugs](#)
- [C4 English Learners](#)
- [C15 Student Conduct & Discipline](#)
- [E1 Parent & Family Engagement](#)
- [Exit Interview Policies](#) (for those districts who have not approved of it yet)

Business Update

- Barbara Anne, Karen and Michelle are working together to streamline key aspects of the payroll system.
- All School District Budgets have been approved by School Boards.
- Reports have been created for each school for their Town Report or Annual Report.

Special Education and Student Support Update

- Staffing continues to be a dilemma
 - We have hired a physical Therapy Assistant to provide needed services for students throughout WSWSU
 - We have open paraeducator positions at all levels
 - Staffing shortages are increasing budget as we have had to get creative with bringing in some retired teachers, working with staffing agencies and we will need to provide additional services to address the areas that we have lacked
- AOE Monitoring continues
 - We are going into Targeted monitoring for another year regarding special education evaluation timelines and post-secondary transition planning
 - We have already implemented changes to address the concerns
 - Developed clear process for who is involved and in charge of various aspects of the process
 - Meeting as a special education team monthly to review processes and data to see what issues we are having

Central Office Update

- Betsy Moseley our Accounts Payable Specialist has graciously extended her retirement date to April so that she can help support the Central Office through our Human Resources and Accounts Payable position transitions.
- Central Office has a new Payroll Clerk, Melanie Dow. She started on February 6, 2023 and is in training under the Business Office Team.
 - Melanie previously worked at Brattleboro Subaru as a Digital Marketing Manager, doing website maintenance, community involvement events and more. She considers math one of her great strengths, along with strong organizational skills and a focused attention to detail. In her spare time she enjoys crafting, thrifting, and journaling in the cold winter months; and spending time outside in the warmer months.
- We are actively engaged in the interview process for a Human Resource Specialist as Wendy Musiak is transitioning to the Accounts Payable Specialist

this month. Barbara Anne is heading up this interview and hiring process with the help of the business team.

- Barbara Anne and Jillian organized an appreciation luncheon for all central office staff on January 20th.
- Barbara Anne is facilitating our quarterly full central office staff meeting scheduled for Thursday the 9th of February where we all connect to brainstorm ideas for system and climate improvements.
- The Business Manager hiring Committee is open to all administrators and board members. While multiple advertising avenues have already been pursued, the pool remains shallow. The first committee meeting will be scheduled shortly after the Feb. break in hopes that there will be more applicants by then. The following people expressed interest and are on the committee.
 - Cindy Florence
 - Homer Sumner
 - Paul Blais
 - Janna Ewart
 - Kelly Holland
 - Troy McAllister
 - Robyn Oyer
 - Kristy Corey
 - Michelle O'Neill
- In order to ensure a smooth transition of the Business Manager, Barbara Anne is having weekly information, update and transition meetings with Karen and also with the business team staff.

Board Negotiations Committee Update

- The Board Negotiations Committee is wrapping up their work with the teachers union. They are pleased with the level of good faith negotiating that occurred.
- Next on the docket will be negotiations with the Staff Union which includes our paraeducators. Dates are being scheduled for meetings to begin in March.

Legislative Update

- The VSA has released a [bulletin](#) concerning recent legislative activity to address the Carson V Mankin US Supreme Court decision and its implications for the education system in VT.

Vermont School Boards Association Resources

Act 1: Temporary Measures Related to Annual Meeting and Open Meeting Law Are in Effect Until July 1, 2024

[Act 1 of 2023](#) took effect last week. Act 1 provides temporary authority until July 1, 2024 that: (1) permits school boards to move the date of the annual

meeting, apply the Australian ballot system to annual and special meetings, and hold electronic informational meetings in the days preceding the annual meeting; and (2) permits public bodies to hold electronic meetings without designating a physical location and without requiring staff to be physically present at that location. Act 1 also suspends the mandatory, specified school district budget ballot language in 16 VSA Section 563(11)(D). Please direct questions on how to manage the wording of budget ballot language to your respective school district legal counsel.

VSBA Current Webinars:

How School Boards Can Support Student Achievement and Close Gaps

How does your board...

- Ensure the district is accountable for the well-being and success of all students?
- Assure high expectations for student learning?
- Demonstrate responsible and inclusive governance?
- Engage and involve your local community?
- Create conditions for the success of all students and staffs?

In case you missed this great training here is the recording:

[Recording](#)
[Powerpoint](#)

The New 2023 School Board: Onboarding New Board Members and Reorganizing the Board

3/2/23 Noon - 1:00pm

Town Meeting Day is coming quickly. You will walk away from this webinar with knowledge and materials to ensure your district has the best practices for onboarding and working well with new members and reorganizing your new board.

This webinar is open to all central office staff as well as school board members.

[REGISTER HERE](#) FREE WEBINAR

Dates to Note

- Eboard Meeting, Wednesday, February 22, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.
- Superboard Meeting, March 8, 2023, at 6 p.m.
- Eboard Meeting, Wednesday, March 22, 2023, at 6 p.m.