

# Superintendent Report – December 2019

**Dr. Pam Vogel**

## **CABE/CAPSS Conference**

The annual conference was held in Mystic on November 15 and 16. The theme was “Every Student, Every Story”. Attending were Ms. Lisa Carter and Board Members Debbie Rathbun (Sharon Center) and Stacie Weiner (Region One representing Salisbury Central). We have good involvement from our staff and students, as well. Two members of the HVRHS Robotics team and coach Mike Ellington demonstrated elements of robotics in the display areas outside of the main convention hall. Students in Mr. Paul Padua’s Woods Class created an Adirondack chair that was donated as a door prize, and students in Mr. Warren Prindle’s and Mrs. Janet Johnson’s classes displayed some of the HVRHS artwork for conference attendees to enjoy. We want to thank these students and teachers for making the extra effort to share their programs.

The Keynote address on Friday was Dr. Derrick Gay, who spoke on the topic of exploring diversity, equity and inclusion with the goal of deepening cultural competency, cultivating common frameworks, vision, and language. He made everyone think differently about this topic and it’s an important one, with the focus on minority inclusion in Connecticut educational programs. Saturday’s speaker was George Couros who was a former educator and spoke on the topic of innovative student learning and engagement and the development of leadership. These sessions were very well received.

Breakout sessions that I attended were:

### ***“Leveraging the Portrait of the Graduate for District Improvement”***

We heard several different ways that schools were implementing the program, so that it is integrated and not an “add-on”.

### ***“Emerging Issues in Classroom and Teacher Safety and Collective Bargaining Implications”***

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwLZJwfJdVt1WTNxbS1NWWwyTzlWckppRUIfWmJDNWU4U0Y0/view?usp=sharing> This area has arisen in some Connecticut teacher negotiation sessions, so a robust discussion followed.

Stacie and I attended the session on ***“Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members and Superintendents”*** presented by the Farmington superintendent; Fran Rabinowitz, former superintendent and current Executive Director of CAPSS; the outgoing President of CABE; and Bob Rader, Executive Director of CABE.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SAC\\_kibQecXowHD9kdx2OXITXESMjm75/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SAC_kibQecXowHD9kdx2OXITXESMjm75/view?usp=sharing)

## **MS Regional Sports and Activities**

This has been discussed and voted on by all of the boards and most recently by the ABC Committee. Ideas for ways that transportation times could be reduced, drop offs moved to the schools, as well as more incorporation of other activities have been included in the plan to begin in the fall of 2020. We will likely have more discussion at the Region One Board meeting.

## **Grade Level Meetings (PK-8) and Department Meetings (9-12)**

All teachers and administrators are engaged in these on a regular schedule. The purpose of these meetings is to look at student data for that particular grade level, discuss groupings of students, needed curriculum and strategies for teaching for the next two weeks, and sharing of professional learning. This is fairly new for

most schools and principals have reported that this is going well and is helping to ensure that students' needs are addressed in a timely manner, rather than waiting for benchmark assessment reports that occur only three times a year.

### **CrisisGo Alert Program and School Entrance Safety**

The five schools adopting the safety program (North Canaan and Salisbury have adopted) are in the process of learning how to use the program through the use of webinars. A couple of the principals have stated that their school is lacking access to the Internet when outside of the school. I requested that Mike Ellington speak about this at our administrators meeting and Mike shared the ways that schools could address this by adding access points to areas in order to ensure security.

Additionally, administrators have been discussing ways to be certain that those who enter our schools are devoid of criminal activity. There are a number of systems that are reasonably priced and, by through the scanning of a driver's license, can immediately provide this information. Those schools that do not yet have a system of this nature have been asked to explore purchase and implementation.

### **Good Friday/Expected Absences**

The ABC Committee was alerted that overall, as a region, we had a number of requests for staff asking to take Good Friday as a religious holiday. To date, we have had over 50 requests and would not be able to fill the absences. It was decided by ABC that Good Friday would be a half-day of school, with a dismissal at noon. This should allow staff to celebrate the religious holiday and for the schools to have a regular morning for students.

### **China Trip/ Staff Meetings**

I have requested that I be given time to share information from the trip to China at each school's staff meeting in December, if possible. We have already had interest from several teachers in going to China for a Teacher Exchange. It is exciting to see the interest.

### **Orientation for New Board Members**

We will have an orientation for new board members, with the help of CABE. We will try to find a date that works for everyone. Understanding that December is a busy month with activities, I anticipate that this date will be in January.

### **Special Olympics**

Letters are going out to all students ages 8 and above who have an Individual Education Plan. Michelle Decker is the new Local Coordinator and is working to enlist more students into the program. Special Education teachers will be sending the letters home with students in the next week.

### **Policies**

There are several policies that all schools are being asked to present to their board for adoption. These are the Minority Recruitment Plan and Volunteer Policies and Practices.

Connecticut has a renewed emphasis on helping ensure that minorities are represented in educator roles. Each school is to have a Minority Recruitment Plan in place, so more information will be forthcoming on this topic.

In our schools we want to be certain that we have the same safety measure in place for volunteers. The administration team has been discussing our current practices for volunteer background checks and

fingerprinting. We have been comparing various policies and have agreed on ones that we are requesting boards to adopt.

### **Fall Student Conferences**

Principals shared the experiences of fall student/parent/teacher conferences and these were very well attended, with most schools having at least 90% parent attendance. Most grade levels, grades 2 and above, are having student led or student involved conferences in the fall. In the spring, these will all be student led. The goal is to move to all student led for both fall and the spring (grades 2-12), so that students are sharing their personal goals with parents (fall), as well as progress they are making (spring). We still expect that schools will have “open” times with teachers to meet with parents who want an additional time to speak together.

### **Legislation- General Assembly Preview**

Each year, new ideas are generated from legislators. The handout explains the session—dates and timelines. These topics are taking top priority for education:

- Special Education Funding
- School Start Times
- Religious Exemption for Immunizations
- Regionalization
- Minority Recruitment

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