

June 4, 2019

Report to the Sharon Board of Education

By: Bob Whelan – Region One Board of Education representative from Sharon, Connecticut

At the June 2019 Board Meeting, these initiatives and presentations were the key focus:

- Advanced Placement test signup changes
- Preschool Program Coordination between the Mountaineer Academy and Kent Center School
- A new approach to marketing the “Why” for HVRHS
- Consideration of the CrisisGo software opportunity
- Summer School 2019
- Celebrating Karen Davenport and Mark Burdick
- Personalized Professional Learning and Goals for Teachers
- Formal approval of an extended contract for Lisa Carter

Ian Strever did a presentation on a major change in the Advanced Placement course testing process. Piloted last year by the College Board, test takers will now sign up for the tests in the fall, prior to the actual tests the following spring. The reasoning was brilliant. In the pilot, more test takers signed up, followed through on taking the test(s), felt more prepared, and performed better than those who signed up in the spring just prior to taking the test(s). Since the cost of the tests is no longer an impediment, combined with the number of institutions that now accept the 3 or better score as successful completion, the Board hopes to see that many more students rising to these academic challenges. HVRHS currently has 6 A/P courses, according to Mr. Strever.

The Board enjoyed a presentation by Amy Bennett of the HVRHS Mountaineer Academy and Karen Iannucci from Kent Center School on a joint project that involves Mountaineer Academy students working with preschoolers. The Mountaineers read to the kids, participate in at projects, and even take lunch and recess with them! It has been a terrific experience for both the Mountaineers and the preschoolers, with both the Mountaineers and the youngsters developing improved social interaction skills, and even new friendships! The program operates today in Falls Village at their preschool, as well as in Kent, but Amy would love to expand to other districts as resources allow.

About 10 years ago, a young couple decided to move to Cornwall from New York City with a goal of providing the best possible education for their twins. Janet Carlson (CEO) and John Sanders (COO) of the One Eleven Group have since diversified their marketing firm to include Cornwall Consolidated School as a client, and have successfully increased enrollment at the school by helping CCS discover the “WHY” in their value proposition. HVRHS / Region 1 has explored enlisting professional aid in this area in the past, but without ever finding the right chemistry. After a great presentation at the Board meeting and an extensive discussion, it was decided to go ahead with a 1 year commitment for services that will be monitored by the Communications Subcommittee. We’re all quite excited about the ways One Eleven Group can help to ‘raise the profile’ of HVRHS and all the wonderful programs that are available.

The world today unfortunately demands a high level of vigilance and response to threats for our schools. The Region 1 BOE approved the use of CrisisGo as an integrative platform for communications and security, particularly recognizing that Pupil Services personnel move around the entire region and may not be in immediate contact. A sign of our times. All of our districts in the Region should make this a common platform.

As was done in 2018, The Board approved a summer school program for those students who have for whatever reason not completed the coursework during the regular school year. This is a laudable effort, as it insures that students are more fully prepared to take on the next level of any course of study, such as math, science or English arts, and most importantly, be prepared for “what comes next”.

At 3:00 pm on July 14<sup>th</sup>, Laurelbrook Farm (the Jacquier’s) in North Canaan will host a community recognition of Karen Davenport and Mark Burdick. The public is invited to come together to thank these folks for their unstinting service and major contribution to the success of one of the finest Vo-Ag programs in the country. Local agriculture is so important in this local eco-system, and is a springboard for so many other opportunities for students to consider the goals and paths available in their lives. A nice way to celebrate some of Region 1’s greatest assets.

Mr. Strever spoke of the positive response of the Professional Development Subcommittee of the Leadership team regarding the creation of individualized goals for each teacher, and self-direction for goal determination. Ian presented an interesting graphic which showed individual priorities. The clear communication of expectations, as well as the constant review of instructional strategies predominated as priorities for the teachers. There will be a common core of values, though, insuring that all professional development will be useful, purposeful, meaningful, motivational, appropriate, engaging and relevant.

After receiving a recommendation from the ABC Committee, and an Region 1 Executive Review session, The Region 1 Board presented to Lisa Carter a new 3 year contract, which will commence July 1, 2019 and run through June 30, 2022. The Board was unanimous of its regard for Ms. Carter’s work and dedication to constantly improving Region 1’s curricula, communications and cohesiveness. We’re all grateful to have such a professional in this role.

Please feel free to email or call with any questions or comments.

Best regards,



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