

Assistant Superintendent Report
Region One Schools
January 2019

2018-2019 Budget

I have been working with Dr. Vogel, Sam Herrick, the Region One administration team and the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC), to organize the Curriculum and Professional Development budget for the next school year. The key components of the Region One Curriculum and Professional Development budget will not change this year and will include:

- Continued funding support for the services of Bena Kallick and Allison Zmuda in the area of personalized learning (costs shared between the Central Office and all Region One schools);
- Continued funding support for the services of Revision Learning to assist with consistent calibration of teacher evaluation (costs shared between the Central Office and all Region One schools);
- Continued funding for K-12 curriculum work (totally funded by the Central Office) to include:
 - The audit of English/Language Arts (ELA) and Math curriculum for grades Pre-K-3 and grades 9-12; and
 - Revisions to grades 4-8 ELA and Math curriculum (totally funded by the Central Office);
- Continued funding for the Rubicon Atlas and EduPlanet platforms (also completely funded by the Central Office);
- Funding for a continued introduction to Social-Emotional Intelligence to raise awareness of the importance of incorporating this practice in instruction. This effort will be funded by the Central Office and will be presented in workshops for teachers as well as in a Learning Path on EduPlanet. Teachers will be able to use this new learning when they are ready to do so; and
- Continued funding for my own professional development per past practice.

I will also coordinate the budgets for the next round of NGSS professional development as well as for several digital platforms that include: the benchmark screening and progress monitoring tool (currently STAR Renaissance), the Alpine program, and the SafeSchools program for State-mandated training. These expenses are borne exclusively by all Region One schools and are calculated based on the number of students or teachers who will be using these programs. There is a cost benefit to having these contracts negotiated on a Regional basis.

Assessment

Alpine - Progress continues with regard to the development of the Alpine database. Thus far, we have successfully uploaded STAR, SAT, PSAT and Smarter Balanced assessment data. We are on schedule to introduce the platform to some teachers in January (those “early adopters” who want to begin to use the reports as soon as possible). Mr. Strever, the HVRHS School Counselors, as well as the Department Chairs will use the available Alpine data to help with appropriate course placement for incoming freshmen.

High School Student Achievement Indicators - Based on the discussion at the last BOE meeting, I spoke to Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer from the State Department of Education about data that would be a reliable indicator of student achievement for High School students. He feedback is summarized as follows:

Classroom assessment data is the most reliable measure of student achievement as long as the assessments are rigorous and are well-aligned with the expectations of the CT Core Standards. The no-fail (or NYP) practice is a good one.

- PSAT data for grade 9 has limited use because students are taking different courses and some of those courses may not address content that is assessed on the PSAT (e.g. geometry). The focus in 9th grade should be to ensure that students successfully acclimate to high school and do not fail any of their courses.
- PSAT data is more useful in 10th grade because students have acquired more knowledge that is included on the assessment. Students should take this assessment in the spring and the data should be analyzed in conjunction with classroom assessment data to inform instruction for 11th grade.
- The same practice holds true for 11th grade as for 10th grade. He does not recommend that students take the PSAT/NMSQT unless it is for scholarship purposes.
- We should not assume that taking the PSAT in earlier grades ensures higher SAT scores. Student proficiency in thinking and problem-solving are the drivers of success on these assessments.
- NYP is a good practice as long as students are going back to revisit what they did not learn prior to the summative assessment.

I can answer questions about our conversation during the BOE meeting.

Professional Development (PD)

January 4 - Regional Professional Development - As noted in earlier reports, this day will be devoted to working on Region One curriculum as follows:

- Pre-K-Third Grade - Teachers will focus on completing English/Language Arts (ELA) units in Rubicon Atlas to be sure that they are prepared for the audit of their ELA and math curriculum that will take place during the summer of 2019. The math units for these grade levels are complete.
- Grades 4-8 - Teachers will work on identifying priority standards for ELA and Math based on feedback from the curriculum work.
- Grades 9-12 - Teachers will complete any outstanding units of study in each course/content area. Where content area curriculum maps are complete, teachers will review and revise assessments where necessary.
- Specials:
 - K-12 World Languages - Teachers will work on revisions to their curriculum with Jesse Gleason, Assistant Professor, Applied Linguistics & Spanish Coordinator, World Language Teacher Certification Program, Southern Connecticut State University. Her research is focused on curriculum and assessment for World Languages and she has done some consulting with other school districts in CT in this area.
 - K-12 PE and School Counseling - Teachers will work on developing a K-12 Health curriculum that addresses age-appropriate instruction regarding self-care and self-advocacy for all students.
 - K-12 Music and Art - Teachers will work on the completion of their curriculum maps.
- Pupil Services and Title I - Teachers will work on a variety of topics including:
 - A review of the effectiveness of the current benchmark screening and progress monitoring program (STAR Renaissance) compared to programs used by other schools, and

- Speech instruction and intervention

January 23 - This is an early release date for the K-8 schools. Per the agreement of the Region One Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC), this is a date when teacher groups from all of the Region One schools can come together and work on PD projects. The activities organized to date include a meeting of all of the middle school math teachers to work on assessment and a meeting of the Specials teachers to work on curriculum and instruction for their content areas.

Math Assessment Workshop - I attended this workshop, hosted by the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), with Scott Fellows and Rosanne Costa from the High School, and Laura Badolato and Raydin Neary from Salisbury Central School. The day consisted of a panel discussion led by Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer from the State Department of Education, Susan Austin, Assistant Superintendent, Groton School District and Paul Rasmusson, Program Director, Secondary Mathematics and Student Achievement for the Fairfield School district. The panel answered a series of pre-submitted questions. A summary of their comments is as follows:

- Coverage of material vs. mastery of material - it is far more important for students to make sense of math concepts based on application in an authentic context. Mastery means that we have to continue to ask students to revisit concepts.
- The use of SBAC scores be used to inform instruction - Smarter Balanced tests represent a sampling of an entire year of learning for a group of students. The results are not going to provide a great deal of information about individual students; however they will indicate overall strengths and challenges as well as indicate who is growing and who is not growing. The SBAC results should be used as the starting point for inquiry about curriculum, instruction and the growth (or lack thereof) on the part of individual students.
- Approach to mathematical problem solving based on CT Core Standards - Math Problems should consist of more open-ended tasks that require students to discuss, argue, and defend their solutions. Teachers need time to plan these tasks and discuss student outcomes.
- Use of Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs)- These assessments are formative exercises that have been developed by the CT Department of Education are aligned with the Smarter Balanced Assessment. They have been designed to inform instruction and are useful sources of student feedback. There are a variety of uses for these assessments depending on teacher determination of student needs.
- Communication of Math progress to parents - It is important to provide families with classroom updates, but also to involve parents in the work. Schools can think about sending home math games, making a Math Promise (promise to discuss a use of mathematics in everyday life each day) or other ways to make math real for students. Student-led conferences were also mentioned as an effective means for students to explain their learning to parents.
- Improvement of SAT scores - It is important to teach students to think. They must be able to determine the nature of the problem and then identify the strategy to use to determine the solution. Teachers should have access to the details of SAT results and align instruction accordingly.
- Plans to make changes to State assessment in the future - There are none. Smarter Balanced, SAT School Day and the Next Generation Science Assessment will be used as the State Accountability assessments for the foreseeable future.

After the panel discussion, we spent the afternoon attending two focus groups of our choice. Topics included mastery-based learning, formative assessment, Scientific Research-Based Intervention (SRBI), CT data and its use, retakes, and home-grown assessment practices. Based on the discussion in the focus groups that we all attended, it is clear that all of the schools are implementing some type of mastery-based learning and are working to determine the best strategies for assessment (formative and summative) and reporting. Very few schools have moved to complete standards-based grading, but are on a journey similar to that of Region One; that is to accurately align instruction and assessment to the CT Core standards, so that one day in the future, reporting of student achievement can be a meaningful description of what students know and can do relative to the standards.

Career/Work Experience Program

Dr. O'Neill has once again provided a detailed report regarding the many activities that she is pursuing to provide students with an understanding of some of the career opportunities that can be available to them after high school or college. The Master Classes continue to be successful and engaging as do many of her other activities. The one challenge that Dr. O'Neill faces is the lack of participation in internships on the part of HVRHS students. Internships can be an important experience for students for several reasons. They offer authentic work experience as well as the opportunity to become part of an adult community and thus offer a chance to develop a network of contacts beyond the walls of HVRHS. Participating in an internship in high school may make it easier to be chosen for an internship opportunity in college as experience tends to beget experience. Dr. O'Neill, Mr. Strever, Ms. McLeod and I will be meeting to discuss how to ignite more student interest in this part of Dr. O'Neill's program.

Please click on the link below to read about all of Dr. O'Neill's great work:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dxjpcKJ7VA9MoJusRw8hhL8OjOxXar2XoeyC9nn_XyA/edit

English Learner Program Coordination

In December, Mrs. Huber spent part of the month preparing for the administration of the State-mandated LAS Links assessment. Her activities included attending the LAS Links Assessment training to learn about the updates for this year's state language assessment as well as a LAS Links IT webinar. The IT webinar allows her to coordinate with the all of the K-12 IT departments to ensure that the testing networks are set up in a timely manner this year.

Mrs. Huber has also continued her research for a translation service and found a computer-based program that can work for our Region. She has submitted some forms and will now check with some of the World Language teachers to make sure the translation is accurate. If this program works, it will be a cost effective way for our schools to send notices home to our EL families translated into other languages.

Mrs. Huber attended CAPELL in Hamden on December 7th to ensure that she remains current with all State mandates with respect to the education of EL students.

Finally, on December 20, Mrs. Huber gave a presentation to all of the Region One Principals and Administrators regarding EL Modification Plans, TELL progress monitoring, EL grading practices, International Family Night, EL Professional Development opportunities, and the EL Teacher Survey.

