



Regional School Unit #34

Alton, Bradley, and Old Town

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January 16th, 2019 – Report to the Board

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Highlights

- “Testing Season” kicked off January 7th with the state/federal **WIDA/ACCESS** assessment for English Language Learners. I appreciate the hard work of our ELL teacher, Amanda Saban, and of our IT department to make this work! (At most grades the WIDA/ACCESS is given via a computer-based platform).
Later in January, we’ll begin administration of the **CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test)** with 3rd graders. The CogAT is very different than most assessments given in schools; it is an ability assessment rather than an achievement assessment. The CogAT includes a verbal, quantitative, and figurative section. We use the CogAT results to identify places where students’ achievement seems out of sync with their ability, and as a screening device for Chapter 104 (Gifted & Talented) Services. Info letters are going home to 3rd grade parents this week. Much thanks to our Chapter 104 Resource Teachers, the 3rd grade team, and Brenda Dahlbergh for their hard work on this one!
Every year **the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress)** is given to a representative sample of students in each state. For this assessment guests visit the school to administer the NAEP. This year the OTES 4th grade and LMS 8th grade were the lucky winners! The 8th graders get to celebrate Valentine’s Day with the NAEP this year. Shortly thereafter, we begin preparation in earnest for the annual state testing in ELA, Mathematics, and Science. Our IT department plays an important early role in preparing devices in grades 3-8 with the year’s **eMPowerME** testing app released by the state, verifying network components through the state’s testing portal, and whitelisting servers that are important for the test administration. Our teachers also play important roles. We keep the focus on planning and delivering great units of instruction, but as the state assessments near teachers do extra work with their students to make sure the language and format of the assessments are familiar, to dig into released items from previous tests to address any appropriate gaps, and to convey and reinforce expectations for an environment in which students can show their best work. Behind the scenes, our administrators, office staff, Special Ed staff, and Brenda Dahlbergh do a lot of logistical work to prepare what’s needed for the assessments. This includes adding accommodations to the state portal to

Every student deserves to make continuous progress in school.

meet students' IEP or 504 plans, assessing certain students with the **MSAA (Maine State Alternative Assessment)**, training new staff and doing refreshers for other staff, building schedules for test administration and make-up, color-coded posters with session access codes (we'll use 56 unique access codes this year if everything goes well), tracking down students who are served at other institutions for testing (it is our responsibility that they take the assessment), and the logistics of managing 2100 sets of login credentials (each of our 700 students in grades 3-8 has a unique set of login credentials for the reading, math, and essay sections of the test). The eMPowerME results are typically available to us in early November.

The **MEA Science** at grades 5, 8, and 11 is a simpler affair; that remains a paper/pencil assessment. Much thanks to the teachers at those grade levels and the building admins for their hard work to administer that!

At the high school level, the **school-day SAT** in April is the ELA/mathematics assessment. Most students take this in a single day; some students have accommodations which span into a second day. With makeup testing, four days of instruction are impacted. OTHS does a great "team lift" to make the school-day SAT a success; Amy Ketch and Sue St. Louis do a great deal of preparatory work to ease the way. After the SAT they catch their breath for 2 minutes before students begin taking the **AP (Advanced Placement)** tests.

Chapter 104 Program Highlights

- Our Chapter 104 (Gifted & Talented) Advisory Committee met recently; minutes are here: <https://goo.gl/c7mboM> It was nice to celebrate that our two student reps in attendance that evening had both recently received acceptance letters to their dream schools. They had a lot of great input about things that we've done over the years that served them well, and great suggestions for our continued growth.

OTHS STEM Leaders Program and Honors Diploma Program Highlights

- Brenda Gardner has been hoppin' this year – we have a LOT of students seeking our diplomas of extra distinction! This is a great problem to have. Mrs. Gardner has been especially busy guiding our 9th graders in how to write truly reflective papers, and (with Mrs. Stone) in guiding our seniors in their research and writing for the Senior Exhibition Project. This year's Senior Exhibition will be Thursday 5/23 in the evening – save the date!

Title IA, IIA, IVA (ESEA/ESSA) Programs

- The budgets for our ESEA/ESSA programs will be developed over the next several months in parallel with our local budget. Members of the public can contact me to be involved in that process or to give input.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jon Doty