



Sheepscot Valley RSU 12
September 2019
Superintendent's Report
Information, Recognitions, and Celebrations

From the Superintendent

By Howard Tuttle

RSU 12 had a successful and exciting opening of school. The theme of the staff opening day was helping our students and staff to lead a healthy lifestyle and take care of their “six cylinder engine.” There was a special emphasis on the importance of a whole foods, plant-based diet. What we eat is the primary cause of Heart Disease, Cancer, Stroke, and Diabetes. Anthony Anderson, Health Coach from Bath Iron Works, presented to staff about how it is important that as educators we model a healthy lifestyle for our students. The six cylinders that folks should take care of are:

1. **Nutrition** - Recommendation: A whole foods, plant-based diet. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains improves longevity, prevents and reverses many chronic diseases, helps you reach/maintain a healthy weight, allows you to sleep better and many, many other benefits.
2. **Physical Activity** - Recommendation: 30-60 minutes a day
3. **Tobacco** - Recommendation: Zero Tobacco
4. **Sleep** - Recommendation: 7-8 hours a day
5. **Stress and Resiliency** - Recommendation: Identify and manage sources of stress over which you have control.
6. **Relationships** - Recommendation: Cultivate healthy relationships and other social connections with family and friends.

Your 6-Cylinder Engine



See full presentation here, [Take Care of Your Six Cylinder Engine](#)

Curriculum and Technology Report

We are off to a busy and exciting new school year that began with a New Staff Orientation on August 22, during which the Superintendent reviewed the district’s mission and vision for learning. Later that day, new teachers gathered for a more in-depth look at our beliefs about learning - that students learn in different ways and in different time frames; that success breeds success and influences esteem, attitudes, and motivation; and that mistakes are inherent in learning. We explored ways of designing learning experiences that honor these beliefs and that integrate Habits of Mind and complex reasoning. We will continue to support our new teachers through ongoing meetings of the 2019 new teacher cohort at which additional training will be provided.

We are examining resources and strategies to improve our support of students and their learning in the area of Math. This includes continuing the Math professional development begun by the Superintendent during the previous school year. It also includes some professional development to support examination of a highly reviewed open source Math curriculum resource for middle grades from Open Up Resources. More

information about this program can be found at <https://openupresources.org/math-curriculum/6-8-math/>. Middle level Math teachers will spend this school year exploring these resources in detail, which will inform district-wide conversations about our K-8 Math resources and instructional approach.

We also received additional training in Education Modified, a digital resource within our reporting system (Jumprope) that support personalization and intervention. The tool allows us to share information about student learning needs and strengths, accommodations, and relevant plans (i.e. 504, Response to Intervention, behavior, and/or IEPs). It also provides access to a curated list of research-based strategies and interventions from which teachers can bookmark relevant strategies for individual students. Lastly, it provides a platform for capturing Response to Intervention (RTI) goals and monitoring progress. Staff will use this tool to manage RTI processes.

Chelsea Elementary School Report

It has been a fantastic opening at Chelsea Elementary School. Our custodians have the building shining as you will see when you walk in. They definitely go above and beyond when it comes to their care of our building. Thanks go out to Rick, Tim, Jim and Brian and of course our helper who came over from Windsor the last couple of weeks to help us finish up.

Opening teacher workshops focused on the district vision and complex reasoning skills. Additionally, Chelsea worked with George Connant, a facilitator for schools interested in Restorative Practices. George worked with Chelsea once last year as well. This year Chelsea and Palermo reviewed the reasons for Restorative Practices and the benefits of circles. Staff participated in learning circles so that they would be able to go back to their classrooms and have circles. Checking in this week, we found most classrooms having their circles first thing in the morning and loving it. Right after breakfast, students and staff circle up and just share some of themselves before the start of the day. It is amazing to see the community that has been formed in some of the classrooms already. Some classrooms are doing 2-3 circles a day, because they work so well in building community and accountability.

In the 3-5 wing the school year has been off to a great start. The students are smiling and excited to come to school. Many of them are enjoying a free breakfast everyday in their classrooms. The 3-5 wing students have been learning and reviewing the procedures for all the common areas such as hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria and playground. The third graders have also been learning how to open their lockers with a lock combination. The 5th graders were great role models and helped them learn how to do it. One super exciting event was watching monarch chrysalis hatch into butterflies this past week in Mrs. Delgallo's class. They did say goodbye and let them fly away. It was wonderful to see so many parents at Open House this past week.

Students in grades pre k-5 will be participating in Mindfulness activities this coming week. Windsor and Chelsea are part of a grant that is looking at the differences that knowing mindfulness strategies might make in the behaviors and worries of our younger students. Mindfulness strategies help students calm their bodies and minds when they are upset and frustrated. Students who can effectively use these strategies seem to be better able to regain focus and calm their bodies and minds. I am anxious to learn some of those stress relieving strategies myself.

Pre k to grade 8 have worked hard learning the PBIS expectations for the common areas of the school. Teachers are also developing standard operating procedures for the classroom where the students help develop the expectations. Ask your children about how they developed their classroom expectations. Pre K has had a busy start to their school year and they already know expectations. They even did a fire drill the other day that was perfect. Feel free to browse their family news at this link.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Erm5ds3bmisUuZnz-8SVG3le3Bh30_Ewz9hiMYIeoE8/edit?ts=5d724b19

We are loving our many new staff and looking forward to a great year.

Whitefield Elementary School Report

Building updates, new staff and a revised daily schedule are all highlights of the great summer we experienced and the tremendous beginning of the 2019-2020 school year we've just passed through. Our custodial staff did an amazing job over the summer not only with their standard rejuvenation and cleaning of the building but with two in-house upgrades. The staff helped to create a very usable space for our new WHES Learning Commons by opening up a wall, installing a new door and adding other components to an old back room. Students have been enjoying that space already as our new program launches. Also, through the creativity and skill of our Head Custodian Louis Shorey, the middle school girls bathroom received a thorough renovation over the summer. This addressed a need that had been present for several years. Because of the summer custodial staff's efforts, our students returned to a bright and positive space for the 2019-2020 school year.

Joining the WHES teaching staff this year are Molly Brewer in grade 5, Crystal Crowell who will be teaching grade 6 math, social studies and ELA and grades 7 & 8 math, and Kelley Capen who'll join our middle school staff teaching grades 6, 7 & 8 Reading and grades 7 & 8 ELA. These are all experienced educators who come to us with sparkling recommendations from their previous schools. Joining our School Nutrition Staff this year are Vicki Dill who will serve as our new Kitchen Manager and Janelle Jennings who will be Vicki's assistant. These new staff members have already demonstrated their value to the WHES program and environment.

Our new daily schedule was created last spring to open up space in the day for systematically doing extensive Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI seeks to identify students who have academic deficiencies that, through intensive, focused work, gain proficiency in the problematic content areas. At WHES we have three RTI Teams (K-2, 3-5 & 6-8) who identify needy students and plan interventions. Our new schedule offers four RTI periods (80 minutes/week) for conducting these interventions with our identified students. We only have so many minutes in each school day and the goal of any schedule is to facilitate students' growth as much as possible. While we are in the early stages of this model of intervention, we are optimistic that we can devise plans to positively impact struggling students, using the newly arranged time available. Educators can typically be described as "eternal optimists" as we believe that the next plan or the next strategy will be the one that spurs on the growth in students that we seek. A schedule is just a mechanism to, hopefully, allow this process to play out.

Palermo Consolidated School Report

We have had an amazing start to the school year! Our staff attended restorative justice training in Chelsea on Tuesday of last week and every teacher started the year with "circles" to build a strong community environment. Circles help provide an environment where everyone has a voice and students are learning to listen and have compassion for each other. These circles will allow for further work in handling conflict and addressing challenging issues.

As a team, our teachers worked together and identified goals to work towards that address our data reports given to us by Howie. We recognized that Math is an area to focus our efforts and teachers came up with some creative ideas, such as math buddies, building math foundational skills, and celebrations to promote math in a positive way. Other goals include: including student leadership opportunities, addressing absenteeism, and building interventions in RTI (response to intervention).



Here at Palermo, we have discussing recess and how middle school kids are using this time. With the help of some ideas, students are engaged and having fun. This picture only shows a few of the middle school kids out playing soccer together. They are learning and refining social skills while getting some exercise and having fun. Working together is the key!

We have added three new teachers to our school. We are pleased to welcome Jared Grenier for PE, Kelly Halkyard for special ed, and Megan Wedge for 7th and 8th grade ELA.

Windsor Elementary School Report



Happy September! If you're like me, you're greeting September with bittersweet feelings; we're sad to let summer go but excited about the new school year. This year Windsor Elementary School has the theme, "Growing Stronger Together," which came from the idea that our school community is indeed growing (we are now over 350 strong!) but also that we have a commitment to help our students become strong learners and citizens. With the addition of FoodCorps, a mindfulness curriculum, a middle school intervention/enrichment block, and lots of



changes in our cafeteria, we are embracing change and how small steps can lead to big rewards.

Open House and the first day of school found us welcoming many more students than we had anticipated. Ten students registered during the first week, bringing us to 350 students. Each and every new student was greeted with warmth and enthusiasm, showing what a wonderful community our school is.

The first week was a good time to establish and practice classroom routines. All staff continue practicing these for as long as necessary for students to be successful. We know that it will pay dividends as the year progresses.

Speaking of routines, Becky Wilson has been working hard to assess the needs in the cafeteria, and we can already see a calmer, more inviting space for students to eat. Our custodial staff painted the cafeteria walls a soothing shade of blue, and installed acoustic tiles. Additionally, we moved to four lunch blocks to accommodate for our large numbers.



Maggie Blumenthal, our FoodCorps service member, has been busy establishing new relationships in the building. She is currently working with kindergarten, third grade, fifth grade, and the middle school. We feel so lucky to have Maggie in our building.

The Windsor middle school staff has been flexible and positive about our new intervention period. As with anything new, there have been bugs to work out, but this staff always pulls together to make it work for kids.

