

SOUTH WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Curriculum and Instruction

- ▶ SCIENCE..... 2
- ▶ LITERACY 3
- ▶ HEALTH/PHYSICAL EDUCATION..... 3
- ▶ CAREER/TECHNICAL EDUCATION . 4
- ▶ WORLD LANGUAGES/ ENGLISH LEARNERS 4
- ▶ MATHEMATICS..... 5
- ▶ MUSIC..... 5
- ▶ SOCIAL STUDIES 6
- ▶ 2017 DISTRICT ASSESSMENT CALENDAR 6
- ▶ RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS 7

A MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

This fall has highlighted many new changes in South Windsor. At the high school level, a new 8-period schedule was adopted, and Chromebooks were rolled out to all ninth and tenth grade students. One-to-one devices have changed what the learning environment looks like as students as are able to collaborate with their peers both at school and at home. Additionally, access to devices in the classroom allows for greater differentiation and individualized learning, and has cut down on the number of paper copies. Philip R. Smith is piloting an elementary STEM "Project Lead the Way" class for all K-5 students. The response from students, parents and teachers has been overwhelmingly positive regarding what the students are designing and learning in STEM class. Elementary schools just concluded the fall early release professional development series, which included for the first time an integrated curriculum committee with more than 60 teachers working together to integrate Language Arts, Social Studies and Science, facilitated by their curricular leaders.

While there were no changes to our teacher evaluation plan this year, the name of our online platform changed

from BloomBoard to EdReflect. The Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) will continue to review feedback from staff on both teacher evaluation and professional development in order to provide recommendations. Thank you to Robyn Ongley and Laurie Chestone for co-chairing this important committee.

This newsletter recognizes the semi-annual professional accomplishments of faculty and staff who shared their information with us. South Windsor is fortunate to have teachers who are true models of lifelong learning, as they attend workshops and bring back new instructional practices and ideas to share with their colleagues and use in classrooms. As you read through the newsletter, you will also see the many ways in which our staff involve students in real world learning experiences. I am always amazed by the variety of experiences offered to our students – and I thank you all for your continued hard work and dedication.



Sheryl L Mortensen
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Changes to the Curriculum and Instruction Leadership Team

For the 2016-2017 school year, we welcomed Candice Irwin as the new K-12 Literacy Curriculum Specialist, and Arnica Sullivan was named as the official K-12 Science Curriculum Specialist. Steven Albrecht also assumed new responsibilities as the curriculum specialist for Career and Technical Education (which encompasses Business Ed, Technology Ed, Family & Consumer Sciences and CWE).



SCIENCE

Arnica Sullivan, Curriculum Specialist

On Thursday, September 22, the SWHS UCONN Early College Experience (ECE) Marine Science classes traveled to UCONN Avery Point to participate in the 6th Annual Cardboard Boat Race. Team Bobcat finished 4th in the first and second heats. The 23 Bobcats and their chaperones also brought home the "School Spirit Award" for their matching neon "Bobfish" design t-shirts and enthusiastic cheering. Great teamwork from all our ECE Marine Science students!



On November 3, Deb Field's Zoology classes took a trip to Roger Williams Zoo in Providence where they spent the day studying the taxonomy, habitats, and conservation status of the zoo's animal exhibits. The snow leopards, red pandas, and giraffes seemed to be the most popular animals. Zoology students created an "Edible Arthropod Cookbook" just in time for Thanksgiving.

TEMS students in grades 6-8 participated in the first annual STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) Olympics. This activity was sponsored by the EXCEL program and made possible by a grant from the South Windsor Public Education Foundation (SWPEF). Throughout the morning, students competed in various short-term activities testing their abilities to be the "best"! Activities included bottle rocket construction (and launch), glider design, wire sculpture, tessellation design and an equation based scavenger hunt. Angela Cahill, a special guest facilitator, ran an architectural design activity. Taylor Gladding, another guest presenter from Gil-



bane Construction, led students in a tower building event. At the conclusion of the day, all participants returned to the TEMS cafeteria for lunch and an Awards Ceremony. Gold, Silver and Bronze medals were awarded in each category! ALL participants left with a STEAM Olympics t-shirt (designed by a seventh grader from TEMS) and a goodie bag donated by Drummey Rosane Anderson.

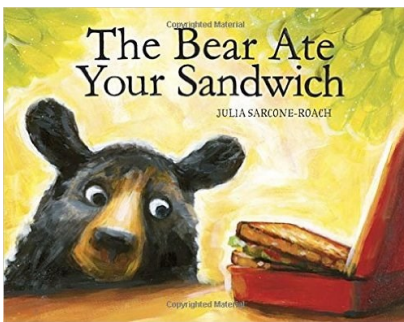
Sixth grade teachers Dianna Roy, Pete Lepak and Deb Bajorek worked collaboratively to bring something to their 6th grade science classes that is truly "out of this world." Dianna holds a lunar and meteorite certification from NASA which allows her to borrow lunar and meteorite disk samples from the government for a 2-week period. Students visited three stations over the course of two class periods. During the first class period, teachers engaged students in observation and questioning skills. Student questions allowed for further exploration and instruction as the team of teachers utilized methods of 3-D Learning to address the needs of NGSS. After a whole group discussion students visited a teacher-led station. Students were actively engaged and really enjoyed the activity.

On Thursday, November 17, Philip R. Smith held its first annual STEM Family Night. Over 200 people came out to enjoy an evening of science, technology, engineering, and math. Twelve different stations were set up around the gymnasium, offering a wide variety of hands-on activities. Students were challenged to propel different gliders the farthest distance, move blocks with a remote controlled robot and write code to make a cat move on an i-Pad. A popular table involved building a boat using a single square of foil, then seeing how many paperclips it could hold. Students were able to show their families what they were learning in STEM, as well as learn about other grade level projects. Everyone left with an engineering bag to bring STEM home with them. It was a fun and educational night for all!

LITERACY

Candice Irwin, Curriculum Specialist

We have certainly had a busy, and exciting, start to the 2016-2017 school year. On October 27, Jumpstart (a national early education organization) organized a campaign inviting elementary children across the U.S. to celebrate reading by exploring a shared text. This year we participated in Jumpstart and Read for the Record by welcoming guest readers in our kindergarten classrooms to read The Bear Ate Your Sandwich by Julia Sarccone-Roach. Orchard Hill's student council performed a Unity Day play based on the text Spookily the Square Pumpkin, and Eli Terry fifth grade students are working on arts integration by creating character playlists and connecting music to their reading.



The South Windsor High School Writing Center attended the 9th Annual Writing Center Conference for Secondary Schools at UConn. The students worked with other schools and the UConn Writing Center staff on becoming better tutors and growing the center itself. Three schools gave unique presentations on the "do's and dont's" of the tutoring process in order to inspire other writing centers. Sarah Guzinski, a SWHS senior who attended the conference, said it was "a good opportunity to collaborate with peers and discover other perspectives on what makes a good writing center."

This year teachers and families can look forward to many shared reading experiences. Teachers at Eli Terry completed their fall book club reading of Who's Doing the Work? How to Say Less so Readers Can Do More. Teachers have been

able to discuss new instructional strategies and apply them in their classroom. Pleasant Valley is providing families a chance to participate in their Read At Home Committee - families can look forward to monthly events for the whole school community. At Timothy Edwards Middle School, seventh grade students are also meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays during 'X' block throughout the first trimester. Over 25 students have signed up for book club and have selected the novels they are going to read. Eighth grade parents were also invited to participate in book conversations centered on William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night. Be on the lookout for many more opportunities for families to engage in literacy learning at each of our schools throughout the year!

HEALTH/PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Travis Edwards, Curriculum Coordinator

8th grade students at TEMS recently completed their training in the American Heart Association CPR/AED course. Health teachers received training this past year to align with the new standards created by the American Heart Association (AHA). While CPR (cardio pulmonary resuscitation) teaches skills that will help someone who is involved in an accident, has trouble breathing, or is suffering cardiac arrest, other procedures like how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) or how to do a Heimlich maneuver are also touched upon. Each student received their AHA certified card upon successful completion of their practicum and exam.

7th grade students recently began their AHA first aid training, which prepares

them to respond to situations that include bleeding, choking, broken bones, seizures and poisoning. Each student will have an opportunity to receive their certified first aid card upon completion of the course, passing the practicum and final exam.

Students at Orchard Hill and Wapping recently completed Bike Safety Week as part of the 4th grade PE curriculum. Students are all instructed in bike safety and riding technique. Additional skills include:

- How to adjust bicycle seats
- ABC Quick Check
- Hand brakes
- Sign meanings
- Scanning for traffic

- How and when to use gears
- How to fix a chain that has fallen off or a flat tire
- Hand signals

This program runs for three days at each elementary school and culminates with a ride through the surrounding neighborhood. The bike safety program is one of the reasons that South Windsor was awarded the Bronze designation for a bike friendly community in 2014.



CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Steven Albrecht, Curriculum Specialist

This school year marks the 100th anniversary of career and technical education (CTE) in our country. In 1917, the Smith-Hughes Act authorized federal funds for the establishment and support of secondary and postsecondary vocational training in agriculture, home economics, and trades, and industry. Our schools keep the Smith-Hughes Act alive in our Business Education Department, our Family and Consumer Science classes, our Technology Education courses, and our Cooperative Work Experience program.

Several of our CTE areas offer opportunities for students to earn dual credit with Manchester Community College. Classes designated as Career Pathways invite students to earn MCC credits on which they can build by pursuing certification or degree programs that prepare them for high-skill jobs. For example, SWHS students following the Journalism and Broadcasting Career Pathway enroll in Broadcast News, a course that offers many hands-on learning opportunities and career exploration.

In October, Mr. Rockey's Broadcast News students visited the WFSB and FOX61 news studios. They met with staff and reporters, saw how a newsroom is run, and observed the work that reporters and anchors do every day. Amanda Raus from FOX61 also visited SWHS and talked with students about her role as a reporter and an anchor and about the skills needed to work in the news industry. The visit was enlightening for students who are producing a daily television news show at the high school. Broadcast News students are also preparing to compete with other Connecticut schools in the FOX61 Student News Program. Each team must find a newsworthy topic and produce a final 60- to 90-second news package that makes use of interviews, cover shots, a reporter stand-up, and narration. Final projects will be submitted to the FOX61 news team for review and critique.

This fall, Video Communications students produced an impactful film short on the subject of suicide prevention. Students took this project from idea to comple-

tion by scripting, storyboarding, filming, and editing. The message conveyed is so impressive that the film short will be shown to English classes in early December, and classroom discussions will follow as a means of highlighting this important issue and helping students cope with the realities in the world around them.

The CTE Department also offers an Early Childhood Development and Services pathway, which students start by enrolling in Child Development. They continue their journey by completing Leadership in Childcare. Through these classes, students learn to apply theory in the operation of an in-house nursery school.

Looking to the future, our business teachers have been working to blaze a new career pathway in accounting by aligning our Introduction to Personal Finance course with a class at MCC. If approved, our students will not only have an additional opportunity to earn college credit while at SWHS, they will also begin to ready themselves for careers in the financial sector.

WORLD LANGUAGES AND ENGLISH LEARNERS

Karen Stoj, Curriculum Specialist

The World Language program is delving into the world of Integrated Performance Assessments (IPA). Several teachers from Timothy Edwards and South Windsor High School attended a workshop this past summer hosted by the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers. These assessments are proficiency based and highlight what a student is able to do with a language in lieu of conjugation drills or vocabulary translation. The Spanish 2 PLC at SWHS created their first IPA where students had to read several authentic trip reviews from Trip Advisor in Spanish and then have a spontaneous dialogue with the teacher where they were able to use their speaking skills and vocabulary from the unit. The department is eager to learn more about proficiency based assessments as it explores incorporating IPAs into various courses.

From November 18—November 20, several World Language teachers had the opportunity to attend the annual con-

vention of the American Council of Teachers for Foreign Languages in Boston. The convention brought together more than 8,500 language teachers from around the United States. Many of the sessions focused on transitioning traditional language programs into K-12 proficiency based programs where students are able to complete course sequences with an intermediate proficiency level. This was an invaluable opportunity for the South Windsor teachers who were able to attend. Teachers will present their learning to colleagues during the winter months at building department meetings and PLCs. Karen Stoj, Curriculum Specialist for World Language and English Learners, presented a workshop entitled, "Ten Ways to Use a Tweet; Social Media as Authentic Content in the World Language Classroom." World Language teachers use various text sources such as online newspapers, blogs, infographics, videos, and tweets to engage students in literacy activities

at various proficiency levels.

During the November professional development day, the South Windsor High School faculty participated in a workshop focusing on second language acquisition and cultural perspectives. The workshop, facilitated by Karen Stoj and Nicole Papa, led the teachers through activities that modeled BEST teaching strategies for our English Learner population. Teachers learned about the stages of second language acquisition as well as the important role of academic English in the classroom. Teachers also participated in an activity where they had to match modified assessments to English proficiency levels. Our English Learner population is continuing to grow. So far this year we have welcomed students who speak more than 30 different languages into our program. Our Top 6 most spoken languages are Hindi, Arabic, Spanish, Urdu, Chinese and Vietnamese.

MATHEMATICS

Sharon Keegan, Curriculum Specialist

On November 10th, Eli Terry held a math night organized by Math Interventionist/Coach Nancy Bassilakis. Over 100 families attended and everyone had a great time. They especially loved playing the math games! Special thanks to those who dedicated their night to assisting Mrs. Bassilakis: Mike Festi, Suzanne Robinson, Joelle Margnelli, Erin Boberek, Pam Desmarais, Rick Czapla, Amy Graney, Allison Beaulieu, and Jennifer Rewinski.

At Philip R. Smith, Math Interventionist/Coach Julie Ratajczak is holding Math Mornings. This is a time to have informal discussions with parents to share and teach fact fluency and math strategies as well as tips on how they can help at home.

MathCounts, the math club at TEMS, is in full swing. Sponsored by the CT Society of Professional Engineers, Math Counts is open to all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. The school is very fortunate to have 3M (Meriden facility) support them locally.

The 75+ student participants will receive a very stylish MathCounts t-shirt thanks to 3M. MathCounts is supported by the entire math staff at TEMS with advisors Bill Denker and Beth Goldman. The club meets on Friday mornings, November through March. The in-school MathCounts competition will be held on Friday, January 13. The top eight scorers will be invited to represent TEMS at the Hartford regional MathCounts competition on February 4 at the University of Hartford. MathCounts will also participate in the New England Math League competition at the end of February.

South Windsor High School has 28 students on this year's Math Team, coached by SWHS math teacher Andrew Brindisi. They are competing in the Euler Division with the top schools in the Capitol Area Math League. The team is hoping to build on their success from the last two years, and make it back to the State and New England Championships.

In October, five TEMS and SWHS teachers and Sharon Keegan attended "Making Best Use of Free Google Tools, Apps & Extensions to Strengthen Math Instruction." Excellent ideas were brought back to be shared with the math departments to capitalize on improved instruction with the use of 1x1 devices.

In November, Matt Eppler, Larry Bojarski and Jay Grosso attended a CollegeBoard workshop on the AP Computer Science Principles course to gather information and prepare for the first version AP test for this course.

Nancy Bassilakis, Julie Ratajczak, Jenn Hill, Dawn Campbell and Karriann Noble, our district elementary math interventionist/coaches as well as Sharon Keegan presented numerous K-5 PD sessions for grade level collaboration, kindergarten "make it, take it" workshops, and math teaching strategies for special education teachers during the early release Wednesdays.

MUSIC

Jo-Ann Thomas, Curriculum Program Coordinator

The use of technology and other technical devices has touched every level of music instruction in South Windsor. With the use of technology, we now have the capability for individualized instruction. Visiting a Timothy Edwards vocal music class under Linda Gasta, you may see some students working on chrome books learning their music while other students are at the piano learning to play and read music. While this is going on, there are students receiving one to one instruction from Mrs. Gasta. The new music teacher has to replan and frontload many of these activities that are needed well in advance. All music teachers have spent a great deal of personal and collaborative time learning how technology can greatly improve the delivery, feedback and assessment of the music curriculum.

Jeremiah Crowley is another example of how a teacher has changed his approach to music instruction. Mr. Crowley has personally developed a complete modified flipped classroom where each student starts on an individualized learning map that moves them through a complete program. Mr. Crowley acts as mentor and collaborator with the student to create an environment where all students can succeed through this partnership. In music theory and music history at the high school the curriculum now embraces both teacher instruction and online

courses that are programed specifically to meet each student's personal needs.

The use of Smart Music in our grade 4-12 performing groups has finally enabled students to develop consistent home practice habits which is the main component that all performers must embrace to reach musical independence. It is exciting to see this new role of a music teacher and what is needed in music education at this time. Technology has freed our teachers to create an environment where all students set personal goals and feel valued at their skill level. The results are that students are reaching fluency faster and are not afraid to express their need to grow. The interpersonal relationship between teacher and student is even stronger because students recognize that the teacher has a more vested interest in them personally through this individualized approach. It is truly an exciting time for music instruction in South Windsor.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Gregory Frank, Curriculum Specialist

Inquiry-based standards and instruction continues to shape Social Studies at all levels. In October, South Windsor teachers from elementary, middle, and high school levels attended the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies' fall seminar entitled "Action, Taking Charge of Change." TEMS 8th grade teachers Rob Murphy and Chad Lowd presented the workshop "Inquiry in the Middle School Classroom: Civil War Causation" to teachers and administrators from throughout the state. All South Windsor teachers who attended the conference brought back valuable skills and knowledge to help implement the new State of Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks which were approved last year.

The new framework implementation has led to curricular changes at every level. At the elementary level, teachers from the Elementary Social Studies Committee met with ELA Committee members looking toward unit integration. A district-wide meeting utilizing Wednesday PD time allowed Social Studies, ELA, and Science to re-examine existing units and to strategize over a unit-by-unit ap-

proach at each grade level to embrace an inquiry model. While this work will be ongoing over the next few years, the groundwork was laid for an exciting transition. Framework implementation has led to new units in the middle school and high school curriculums with planning and writing ongoing.

October and November were eventful as students at TEMS and SWHS engaged in the 2016 Mock Election. Working with the South Windsor Registrars of Voters, students used ballots and cast votes in the exact manner as all registered voters in town. The Connecticut State Department of Education and the Office of the Secretary of State launched a new partnership called "Red, White, and Blue Schools" which will offer a yearly theme to promote civic education. This year's theme is teaching the 2016 election. The TEMS Media Center was used for a statewide press release when the program was announced in May (see picture above). Students at all levels followed the 2016 presidential election and studied candidates, issues, and the Electoral College.



L-R: TEMS Principal Nancy Larson, K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Specialist Gregory Frank, Connecticut Commissioner of Education Diana Wentzell, TEMS U.S. History teacher Robert Murphy, and Connecticut Secretary of State Denise Merrill

At South Windsor High School, 39 seniors were inducted into Rho Kappa, the National Social Studies Honor Society, on November 30th. Students admitted to this prestigious national organization fulfilled requirements in scholarship, leadership, and service. The keynote speaker for this event was Ms. Megan Torrey, Executive Director of the World Affairs Council of Connecticut, whose mission is to further global awareness and engagement in the state.

Spring 2017 District Assessment Calendar

The following are the confirmed spring 2017 testing administration dates for South Windsor Public Schools:

SOUTH WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS – 2017 TESTING WINDOW/DATES

Grade(s)	ELA	Math	Science	CT SAT
	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced	CMT/CAPT	
Grade 3	April 19- May 10	April 19 - May 10		
Grade 4	April 19- May 10	April 19 - May 10		
Grade 5	April 19 - May 10	April 19 - May 10	Tuesday, April 4	
Grade 6	May 1 – May 26	May 1 – May 26		
Grade 7	May 1 – May 26	May 1 – May 26		
Grade 8	May 1 – May 26	May 1 – May 26	April 19 and April 20	
Grade 10			April 4 and April 6	
Grade 11				April 5

Details regarding assessments, including make-up days and schedules for CT Alternate Assessments and Skills Checklist, will be provided to staff by building principals.

RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

South Windsor Public Schools is pleased to recognize the accomplishments of its faculty and staff in the field of education, lifelong learning and the commitment to children. Twice each school year, we will highlight these professional accomplishments in the Office of Curriculum and Instruction's "Curriculum Update" newsletter. Categories include the following:

- National or State Recognition
- Professional Articles Selected for Publication
- Outstanding Community Involvement with Youth
- Presentation at a National Conference

All staff are invited to share information regarding professional accomplishments by emailing Sara Chamberlain. The next publication is expected in May 2017.



National or State Recognition

Member of NGSS "Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products" (EQIP) Peer Review Panel

- Dianna Roy..... TEMS

CAS Recognition of Excellence in Education (November 2016)

The CAS Recognition of Excellence in Education Celebration spotlights exemplary programs and/or extraordinary staff members who have contributed to significant school improvement, promoted school success, or have had a positive impact on a member school. This year CAS recognized four SWHS teachers for their programs and contributions.

- Anne Charter and Amanda Howard, "It Takes One" SWHS
- Lisa Rosano and Elizabeth Ruiz, "International Experiences" SWHS

Presentation at a National Conference

"Diversity and Inclusion for the Adult Senior" - United States Tennis Association (September 2016)

- Allen Dunbar SWHS

"10 Ways to Use a Tweet: Social Media as Authentic

Content in the Classroom" - American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language, Boston, MA (November 2016)

- Karen Stoj..... District

SOUTH WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOARD OF EDUCATION

David S. Joy, Chair
Beth Esstman, Vice Chair
Craig Zimmerman, Secretary
Joseph Durette
Jamie Gamble
Michael Gonzalez
Mary Justine Hockenberry
Phil Koboski
Richard Stahr

CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Kate Carter, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Sheryl L. Mortensen
Assistant Superintendent
Curriculum & Instruction
Colin J. McNamara
Assistant Superintendent
Personnel & Administration
Chris M. Chemerka
Director of Finance & Operations

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

South Windsor High School
Daniel P. Sullivan III, Principal
Tera Harlow, Associate Principal
Robyn Ongley, Associate Principal
Frank Rizzuto, Associate Principal

Timothy Edwards Middle School
Nancy Larson, Principal
Jarrid Clifton, Associate Principal
Dave St. Jean, Associate Principal

Eli Terry Elementary School
Vincent Federici, Principal

Orchard Hill Elementary School
Michael Tortora, Principal

Philip R. Smith Elementary School
Michelle Dixon, Principal

Pleasant Valley Elementary School
Tiffany Caouette, Principal

Wapping Elementary School
Laura Hickson, Principal

CURRICULUM LEADERS

Steven Albrecht, Career & Technical Education
Nicholas Canova, Visual Arts
Travis Edwards, K-8 Physical Education/Health
Gregory Frank, Social Studies
Candice Irwin, Literacy
Sharon Keegan, Mathematics
Karen Stoj, World Languages/EL
Arnica Sullivan, Science
Dave Sytulek, 9-12 Physical Education/Health
Jo-Ann Thomas, Music

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Denise Epps, Director
Special Services
Jessica Kuckel, Supervisor
PK-5 Special Education
Maureen Pearson, Supervisor
6-12 Special Education