

Cabinet Report to Boards

May 2020

It has been a unique month to say the least. Our WCSU team continues to impress me as we are all working together to deliver remote learning, provide healthy and nourishing meals, support our students and staff's mental health, and plan for summer and fall re-entry.

The Secretary of Education will be providing guidance on end-of-year celebrations including Graduation on May 8th. Once that guidance has been shared, we will begin our planning and preparation for these important celebrations.

River Valleys has settled a multi-year contract, while Marlboro starts their first Collective Bargaining negotiations. WCSU and West River continue to negotiate with the Teacher's Association.

The legislature continues to discuss the challenges with the ed fund. Here is the latest from **April 29th**:

The House Ways and Means Committee discussed a [preliminary proposal](#) to finance education spending in FY 2021. The proposal put forward by Representative Ancel outlines a plan to set tax rates, in order to cover /already-known/ additional costs over the previous year, by applying a per parcel tax credit to taxpayers. The tax credit would be financed by Coronavirus Relief Fund money and would act as a workaround since CRF money may not be used for straight up revenue replacement as if it were directly deposited into the education fund.

Academic Proficiency

Director of Curriculum and Instruction

- The Academic Support Team (AST) continues to provide interventions lessons for students and families via distance learning (hands-on materials, virtual classrooms, YouTube videos, etc) in conjunction with classroom teachers. The collaboration between classroom teachers and AST varies depending on the needs and requests of each school. The AST has been working with classroom teachers to provide academic and instructional coaching.
- Families have begun to sign up for and receive the ["Beyond the Worksheet"](#) student activity packets. Beyond the Worksheet are materials and activities for students that are hands-on (games and activities) and can be used independently by families outside of the curriculum and lessons provided by classroom teachers. The first delivery of materials to homes was April 29.

AST teacher, Danielle Crabtree, has led this work with the help of other AST teachers and several paraeducators who have been working to prepare and deliver materials.

- The COVID 19 website is being updated almost daily with new materials and activities for parents. The site is linked to the WCSU homepage. The AST has been collecting and sharing lessons, activities, and resources for both teacher and family use.

Director of Special Education

- Collaboration with the Academic Support Team (AST) for the “Beyond the Worksheet” student activity packets. Our paraeducators are delivering these packets and are assisting with the creation.
- Facilitated special education meetings to promote equity of services and practices with the Wilson Reading Program in remote learning environments. Staff shared ideas and I orchestrated support for those in need. Assisted staff with coordinating sharing of materials and ordering when necessary.
- Executive Functioning Skills remain an area of importance for student learning. Several students were identified to be in need of increased support and instruction on skills such as developing a task list, deciding which assignment should be prioritized, chunking work to ensure pacing is manageable, materials management, online learning, and more in light of this remote learning environment. I continue to work with our elementary and middle-high school teams to develop systems that are responsive to student needs and continue to increase their level of independence with these important life skills.
- On-going meetings with other regional Directors of Special Education to promote equity and alignment of practices.

Personalized Learning

Director of Special Education

- Extended School Year eligibility determination and planning has begun. This year is particularly challenging due to COVID-19 and the inability to make predictions, thus multiple plans are being developed in response to student needs as well as possible mandates from the Governor.
- Continued work on developing Distance Learning Plans (DLPs) for all students in special education. These plans are in place during school dismissal/closure. Continuing to work on clarity with the Agency of Education and Medicaid to ensure continuity of billing Medicaid for some services. Included in this process is a significant amount of work with staff and parents/guardians to ensure clarity and understanding of the process.
- Attended several student team meetings based on annual IEP reviews, problem-solving around challenges students are having, and other meetings.

High Quality Staffing

Director of Curriculum and Instruction

- As part of a weekly professional development offering to WCSU educators, we have organized a Remote Learning PD calendar for whom all staff have access. The Remote Learning PD Calendar lists all available PD on Wednesday afternoons, including teacher led groups. Live online and recorded PD is also listed on the calendar, either on the live dates they are offered and/or on the Wednesday afternoon resource list. Feedback from the SU wide staff survey indicated that teachers are most interested in finding support for distance learning, student and family engagement, technology, and in providing social and emotional support to students and families.
- The Leadership Team (LT) received approval for the WCSU Continuity of Learning Plan that was submitted to the Agency of Education this month. The LT has continued its work as an

instructional team. The LT met virtually to continue its work for planning for next year's opening week and a new teacher induction program.

Director of Operations

- Our SU received a generous donation of cloth face masks that were donated by Susan Walker of Brattleboro. With the rapid depletion of supplies in light of the COVID-19 response, these masks arrived with great timing. They were distributed amongst the facilities and food service personnel who currently work in teams. Teamwork is a necessary part of our operations, although it does carry a higher risk. With the proper use of these cloth masks, we continue to strive to keep ourselves, our staff and our families safe.
- As part of the governor's decision to start opening businesses, the Vermont Department of Labor in coordination with VOSHA, created an online training, Protecting the Safety and Health of Workers. It is an easy to navigate guide with information pertaining to the virus and how to remain safe at the workplace. This training was distributed to our operations teams as a refresher to the handouts and guidelines we have been operating on.
- Overall, the operations teams have all been in great spirits during this unique time. As I travel between schools I see smiling faces and work being done to better our students and our facilities. Everyone is taking advantage of this time to make the best out of the situation and prepare for the return of our students.

Director of Special Education

- Continued collaboration with the Agency of Education, State of Vermont, and our Human Resources Department regarding pay for hourly employees and timesheet / log requirements to document time.
- Continued work on research and collaboration around remote options for special education evaluations and other procedural compliance documents pertaining to special education.
- Developing clarity around Multi Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) in collaboration with our Director of Curriculum & Instruction
- Beginning stages of planning staffing assignments for the 2020-21 school year

Safe, Healthy Schools

Director of Curriculum and Instruction

- Our WCSU commitment to becoming a Trauma Informed School Community has been evidenced through the work of our Catalyst Group and Leadership Team, as well as the continuous efforts of our school staff to provide support to students while they are distance learning. The Catalyst group will continue to meet with Dave Melnick, albeit virtually, to work on our ways to provide support to our students, families, and teachers, all of whom are experiencing new and different types of stress. Members of the Catalyst group, teachers and administration have formed a work group to create a re-entry and continued plan to support students beginning in August 2020 when we return to our schools. This work will be vital for our school community as we transition back to a new school year.

Director of Operations

- Earlier in 2020, L&G engaged a civil engineering firm to perform a structural condition assessment of the current building. The firm performed a visual inspection and review of site plans. We received the initial report which concluded that based on the visual inspection the building is in overall fair condition, with areas of concern that will need repair in the near future. The next step is to perform additional testing which consists of load tests, crack monitoring and

other minor destructive testing to get an accurate idea of what is happening behind the surface. This additional testing will yield a better understanding of useful life projections and costs associated to make necessary repairs.

- Marlboro Elementary and Townshend Elementary have recently finalized their Act 66 repairs. L&G has started the process of replacing fixtures throughout the building. Post remediation testing is still on hold from the state. Once we get the go ahead, all schools that completed initial repairs will resume the process of flushing the new fixtures and completing the second round of testing.
- I am happy to report our food operations in all districts have been going very well! This has not been an easy task for any of the food service workers. Many others have also stepped up to assist the food teams in getting meals prepared and delivered to our students. This bit of “normalcy” of school meals goes a long way to keep families healthy during these unique times. Kudos to our Dover, Marlboro and West River food operations teams for all they do each day!!

Director of Special Education

- Collaborated with our McKinney Vento Coordinator regarding student needs during this time of school dismissal/closure.
- Working with our School Psychologist and Behavior Specialist for development of support for students on IEPs as they re-enter schools (when permitted).

Financial Efficiencies

Director of Curriculum & Instruction

- Work on the Consolidated Federal Program grants and Best/Act 230 grant has begun. This month I attended 9 remote learning presentations from the AOE on the new requirements of the CFP. As of today's date, the AOE has not yet opened the grants for districts to apply. The BEST / ACT 230 grants are open and the principals of PBIS schools and I have met to create the application for funds.

Director of Operations

- The new roof over the multipurpose room at NewBrook Elementary is now complete! We can say goodbye to leaks and enjoy many years of worry free operation. The new roof is a seamless match to the remainder of the building which was done years prior. While up on the roof, the company performing the installation noticed some wind damage to the ridge cap on the main building which they fixed under warranty.
- The new walk in cooler at Leland & Gray has been installed. This was a grant funded project that will greatly increase our food storage. Now, more than ever, this will prove to be a necessary upgrade with all the food preparation that is being done out of the L&G production kitchen. Another positive, is this will allow us to shuffle other refrigeration equipment between the district to benefit other school kitchens.
- As mentioned before, this school dismissal has presented an opportunity for our custodians to perform work, in house, that otherwise would be priority. Townshend Elementary is midway through a large scale painting project of the multipurpose room. From large crack repair, patching and a complete color change, this has been a large undertaking. Marlboro has been patching and painting in the outback. This along with the addition of installing LED retrofit bulbs has made the outback look like a new building! Dover has been hard at work painting in the interior of the school; it is amazing what a fresh coat of paint can do, it looks like a different

school when you enter the front door! This is just the tip of the iceberg of some of the amazing projects our custodians have been performing.

Director of Special Education

- Time study review and analysis continues. This is a review of a one-week period of time for special education staff to determine which grade ranges they spend their time instructing (Early Childhood Special Education, Primary, Secondary, or a combination thereof). This is one type of documentation the Agency of Education is considering for reimbursement of special education costs.
- On-going work with the Learning Collaborative and regional colleagues for regional collaboration for regional programming continuum.