

November 2020

Cabinet Report to Boards

Our mission

*"Windham Central Supervisory Union provides leadership and resources
to ensure a strong educational system for all students."*

Core Values

Windham Central Supervisory Union will...

- *place students at the center of decision-making.*
- *build trust and respect by acting ethically, transparently, and with integrity.*
- *operate as a community of learners, committed to developing the skills and capabilities of all.*
- *collaborate, share and seek creative solutions.*

Connections to the WCSU Mission Statement Core Values

Students at the Center - The AST team is currently reviewing the available Fall benchmark screener and current diagnostic data for students to plan for in person and remote instruction.

Community of Learners - The Leadership Team (Principals and Cabinet) also spent their time this month beginning the process of collecting data and reviewing goals of the CIP. The WCSU is required to update and submit a new CIP this school year. As part of their regular practice to improve supervision and evaluation, the team reviewed a classroom observation, shared feedback, and calibrated their responses.

Collaborate and Share - Cross-training: With staff shortages and the need for additional cleaning support for reopening of schools, West River custodians have been stepping up to the plate to assist as needed. Custodians have been working in buildings other than originally assigned to get familiar with the layouts and responsibilities. This flexibility has created a contingency plan for us to fulfill gaps in scheduling. Another component that has made this transition smooth is the use of standardized cleaning chemicals across the schools.

Acting Ethically, Transparently, and with Integrity - Financial Efficiencies section (below) and FY 22 WCSU Budget development: The Superintendent's budget came in at an increase YOY of 1.21% for expenses, (below COLA). Most of the school district assessments, based on prek-6 ADM, saw a reduction with the exception of RVSD which has had a boom in students moving in. The Special Education expenses year over year saw a reduction.

Updates

All WCSU Districts have begun the challenging process of developing student-centered budgets that communities value. We have received quite a few grants (see Financial Efficiencies) and are concluding the detailed process to receive as much reimbursement possible from the Cares funding grants.

Academic Proficiency

Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Academic Support Team (AST): The AST continues to meet weekly or biweekly. The purpose of these meetings is for the team to share resources for in-person and remote learning and to organize their efforts to ensure support is provided for math and reading across the elementary schools. The team is currently reviewing the available Fall benchmark screener and current diagnostic data for students to plan for in person and remote instruction.

Director of Special Education

Great teamwork and collaboration has been done among our Special Education Department, Academic Support Team and general education staff to help students through these challenging times. Students are making progress on IEP goals and objectives despite the disruptions with learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It's amazing to see everyone truly working together to meet the instructional (and other) needs of students!

Personalized Learning

Director of Special Education

Our Special Education team is working hard to develop programs, services, and supports for students in special education that are tailored to their individual needs. We have had to be a bit more creative than usual because of changed opportunities / requirements due to the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e. not as many community-based activities, co-op opportunities, etc.). Bill Gallagher, Special Educator and Director of our HOME Program (Hands On Minds Engaged) at Leland & Gray ran a beautiful outdoor program this fall with our support staff for up to 10 students. This was in response to student instructional needs and alignment with core values of the program and a desire to work with students on practicing the skills necessary to appropriately access their education during remote learning periods. General education teachers either taught in person or remotely while students had Special Educator and Paraeducator support in person. The HOME Program is a 6th through 10th grade program that "is based on projects that incorporate an integrated academic program, service learning activities, and expedition planning and execution. Through these activities students further develop their social and workplace skills while setting their own personal development goals." (Bill Gallagher, Program Description). We also had some students receive in person instruction and support while their schools were remote for some periods of time to assist them with gaining the skills needed to access their remote instruction. Lots of creative thinking and collaboration to personalize learning for students and I feel fortunate to work with such a great team of educators, administrators, and mental health staff! Special thanks to all of you and our Boards for allowing these opportunities!

High Quality Staffing

Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Leadership Team: The LT continues to use its monthly meeting to share resources around providing a Safe and Healthy start to the year. The LT also spent their time this month beginning the process of collecting data and reviewing goals of the CIP. The WCSU is required to update and submit a new CIP this school year. As part of their regular practice to improve supervision and evaluation, the team reviewed a classroom observation, shared feedback, and calibrated their responses.

Mentoring Program: In addition to the regular meetings mentors have with proteges, the full group met together this month. The purpose of these whole group meetings is to provide professional learning to the

new teachers and to help them build connections with other teachers across the SU. This meeting provided our new teachers with a tutorial of the VT licensing program (ALIS), the Local Standards Board (LSB) requirements and walked them through the submission of a PL activity into the online system.

Director of Operations

Custodian Vacancy: One of our long term custodians in the West River district has decided to move on. He has done a great deal of work to single handedly keep his building performing well and we wish him all the best in his future endeavors! One of our L&G custodians has transitioned over to the elementary and we are working on filling one full time custodian gap at the MS/HS. Interviews are being conducted and we hope to fill the position by early December.

Cross-training: With staff shortages and the need for additional cleaning support for reopening of schools, West River custodians have been stepping up to the plate to assist as needed. Custodians have been working in buildings other than originally assigned to get familiar with the layouts and responsibilities. This flexibility has created a contingency plan for us to fulfill gaps in scheduling. Another component that has made this transition smooth is the use of standardized cleaning chemicals across the schools.

Director of Special Education

Several special education staff have continued with professional development opportunities this fall. We have also had great training and support for our paraeducators from our School Psychologist (Sarah Kiefer), Behavior Specialist (Beth Merrill), Special Educators, and Principals to assist with gaining skills and creating systems to support students remotely and in person. I am thankful for the excellent support and collaboration for staff to be responsive to student needs.

Safe, Healthy Schools

Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Trauma Transformed Schools: The Trauma Catalyst group met with Dave Melnick again this month. Members of the Catalyst group continue to meet regularly with building administrators and to bring their guidance to staff through faculty meetings and committee work.

Director of Operations

Enhanced IAQ Testing: In light of recent events around the state and the concern of PCB's present in older Vermont school buildings, we enlisted the help of Vermont Air Testing. In early November, VT Air Testing performed a full indoor air quality assessment at each building. This testing consisted of CO, CO₂, VOC, mold spores, air particulates, radon and PCB. We anticipate full reports with the results to be made available by the end of December.

IAQ Pilot Program: Dover school was selected by Efficiency Vermont to partake in an extended pilot program regarding IAQ monitoring and the extent to which the addition of a controls system impacts air quality. Engineers from EVT installed additional IAQ monitoring at the school to measure the pre-controls air readings as a base line. Once the controls upgrade is complete, they will continue to monitor for changes and increases in efficiency. We are all very excited to continue these partnerships with the folks at Efficiency Vermont!

Director of Special Education

Our Behavior Specialist and several social-emotional/ behavior support paraeducators have proactively provided instruction to classrooms around social emotional and behavioral expectations during the

COVID-19 pandemic. They have worked to help explain rules and safety requirements to ensure understanding of the reason for changes and have provided instructional opportunities to practice these skills. It has been wonderful seeing everyone team together to meet student needs.

Financial Efficiencies

Director of Operations

HVAC Grant Program: HVAC work is continuing. The facilities are all in various stages of the repairs and upgrade process. We are continuing to work closely with Efficiency Vermont and Alliance Mechanical to get as much work done by 12/30 to be grant funded. Overall, the projects have been going smooth and Alliance has been an excellent partner to the schools.

VSBIT Pilot Program: In another strategic partnership, I was able to work with our insurance provider, VSBIT, on a remote monitoring sensor pilot program. VSBIT was able to provide Monnit remote monitoring equipment to Leland & Gray and Newbrook Elementary. These sensors are able to provide temperature and water leak detection alerts. This will enable select custodians to get notified after hours if we have issues with the facilities in an effort to avoid costly loss due to burst pipes and failed heating systems. Through the pilot program, each school received 4 sensors and a wireless gateway.

VSBIT Safety Grant: We engaged VSBIT to perform a safety audit inspection of Dover school to access the full safety grant funds from VSBIT. We received the report and overall the inspection went very well. The primary focus of this funding will allow us to replace the deteriorating handicap ramp and also allow us remedy a few small items that came up in the report.

CRF and Food Grants: We have been working hard with the business office to identify areas of opportunity for the CRF grants and food grants. This is truly a team effort from concept to procurement of these funds and supplies/equipment that have been identified.

Director of Special Education

We continue working on blending support structures between the Academic Support and Special Education teams to improve intervention while increasing efficiencies across our rural supervisory union. This is further work we have engaged in for preparation of Act 173 funding changes that is scheduled to begin on 7/1/22.

I have also continued work regionally on collaborative programming, especially with the recently announced closing of The BRIDGES Program at the Brattleboro Retreat. Our regional group has engaged with the Learning Collaborative in Brattleboro who has hired a consultant to assist with collection of information on needs as a result of this closing. We will use this information to determine what is needed, by when. At this time, the data indicates that Directors of Special Education have developed other possibilities for students but are working toward building a regional program offering for possible opening in Fall 2021 should the analysis still demonstrate that as an overall need. We are working with Kindle Farm, Health Care & Rehabilitation Services (HCRS), and other agencies to brainstorm possibilities.

Director of Finance

FY 22 Budgets

Reminder and [LINK TO THE SU BUDGET:](#)

The WCSU board at Wednesday's (10/28) meeting reviewed the proposed Superintendent's budget and the Special Education budget ECSE-Age 22 and the board approved both. The

Superintendent's budget came in at an increase YOY of 1.21% for expenses, (below COLA). Most of the school district assessments, based on prek-6 ADM, saw a reduction with the exception of RVSD which has had a boom in students moving in. The Special Education expenses year over year saw a reduction. First time in a long time that has happened. The work that you read about from Jen and Stephanie has played a huge part in that reduction. For Reference you can find those budgets here:

[WCSU 10/28 Board Docs Including Budget Information](#)

The Fee for Service (FFS), formally known as the Agency Fund, will see some major changes this year. With school districts becoming larger entities, we will start to move staff into the individual district's budget, where they serve the most time. **It is important to note that technology in the SU continues to be a challenge, especially in this unprecedented time.** There have been investments made in both hardware and software that will continue to provide increased resources for staff and students.

Commissioner's letter to come - 12/1 This will provide the boards with some of the necessary information concerning the tax rate.

Upcoming budgets:

Windham's second draft budget-12/7

RVSD 1st draft budget-12/7

Marlboro's second draft budget- 12/10

WRED budget committee meeting-12/14

Stratton's 1st draft budget-12/15

Covid Related Expense and Funding Sources

December 30th will mark the end of the Cares Act funding. **We will be working diligently to pay for all the COVID related expenses by that date in order to reap as many federal dollars as possible.** The back up required to receive reimbursement is intense and we have already begun to pull all of it together. Last week I picked up the RVSD food program vehicle from Saint J's Subaru. It was used today for the first time to deliver food to Wardsboro School. We will begin to plan for the ESSER funds as soon as we start getting reimbursements from the CRF funds.

Audits

The audit process has been slowed down due to COVID and auditors needing information scanned. We also will need to resend trial balances to the auditors due the recent guidance from the AOE on CRF funding. We are fortunate that the FY 20 audit is not complete. There are many SU/SD's that will have to go back and reopen their audit in order to receive reimbursement for COVID expenses that occurred in FY 20.