

# February 2021

## 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

**Collaborate, share and seek creative solutions-***Very exciting* news for future financial efficiencies! Several Superintendents and Directors of Special Education have been working collaboratively to discover ways in which we can [expand regional offerings](#) for students as well as [increase financial efficiencies](#). Stephanie is 1 of 5 people on a Regional Collaboration Task Force who will be meeting in March to determine our next steps. Our goal is to be able to have programs up and running for the 2022-23 school year (just in time for Act 173). Stay tuned for more exciting news!

**Operate as a Community of Learners** - Elementary level Special Educators will be joining the AST (Academic Support Teachers) for 8 half day Literacy trainings. AST and special education is working together to ensure professionals continue to receive high quality training and is sharing resources, materials, and time. These efforts will maximize student learning and intervention as well as efficiencies (financial and time)

**Place students at the center** - **UPDATE:** Child Nutrition has requested the SU to collect information on Free and Reduced lunch applicants so that the state can issue P-EBT cards to those families that qualify. This work continues and we recently found out that all WRED families will receive P-EBT cards due to the WRED Boards commitment to provision II where all students eat for free!

### Updates

#### [School Employees will be in the next round of vaccinations!](#)

The messaging from the AOE has been pretty clear. **The AOE would like all students in schools for in-person instruction for 5 days a week.** I will work with Board Chairs to get this item on upcoming agendas. It will be important to plan for this possible transition and communicate with families. It appears the ideal time to transition would be Monday April 26th.

#### [Education Legislative Update](#)

#### [Sec French Op-ED - Getting students back in-person](#)

## **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, K -8. AST members have been assisting classroom teachers with benchmark assessments and conducting tier two diagnostic assessments for those students who are not meeting the winter benchmark. AST is also working together to review new curriculum and resources for literacy instruction.

C&I Office: We are working on documentation for the AOE on our Continuous Improvement Planning and in preparation for the CFP. We are also busy processing REAP and ESSER grants for schools.

Winter Benchmark Data: Data Meetings are underway at each school. The Data Meetings are part of the LCAS procedure and help principals work with teachers to create intervention groups and provide support for instruction in Literacy and Math. We are seeing some unprecedented skill gaps in some of our classrooms, which we attribute to the last unusual year of instruction. Students who are working remotely have not necessarily completed the winter screener assessments. District wide data is collected in the Data Collection Tool (DCT) which has proved to be very helpful in reviewing student data and trends.

### *Director of Special Education*

Special education continues to work on identifying needs of students on IEPs in light of changed or missed instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Agency of Education is beginning to share information on processes, ideas, and other ways to work toward closing the achievement gaps for students. I am seeking further guidance on how to answer certain eligibility questions with regard to the special education evaluation process. For example, if a team feels a student may have a Specific Learning Disability (SLD), does that disability exist due to changed or missed core instruction or does the student have a genuine learning disability? Are they in need of special education instruction or Tier 2 intervention? These are some of the challenges we will be working on in order to ensure we are meeting student needs but not over-identifying students due to the pandemic.

## **Personalized Learning**

### *Director of Curriculum & Instruction*

Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS): The Data Meetings have been an excellent jumping off point for us to begin implementing a tiered support system in our schools. The AST and Special Education teachers are working to blend services with the classroom teachers to provide a “all hands on deck” approach to instruction.

### *Director of Special Education*

I have had the pleasure of attending data meetings for NewBrook, Townshend Elementary, and Jamaica Village School so far. Extensive collaboration is occurring as we respond to and plan around the student benchmark data. We have been able to take beginning steps toward blending of Academic Support Team (AST) and Special Education staff. For example, if a Special Educator is providing special education instruction for a small group of students on IEPs, it has become possible for struggling students in need of intervention to fold into some of the special education instruction without needing to be on an IEP OR a student on an IEP who needs some fluency work could potentially join an intervention group with the Academic Support Team and peers. These types of collaboration and creativity are the aim of Act 173 which is the Act that will begin 7/1/22 that will shift how special education is funded. The goal is for schools to have a structured Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS) that is responsive to student needs quickly based on data and needs analysis without a student having to fail or reach an intensive level of

need. I'm looking forward to our continued work together with general education teachers and other staff, Principals, AST, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, and special education.

## **High Quality Staffing**

### *Director of Curriculum & Instruction*

Leadership Team: The LT continues to use its monthly meeting to share resources and knowledge for working during the pandemic, be it in-person, hybrid, or remote learning. This month the LT finalized its revisions to the WCSU Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) and determined action steps for the next two years. The LT also finalized procedures for ensuring Student Data Privacy in the WCSU. The team has begun planning for professional development for the 2021-2022 school year.

### *Director of Special Education*

Elementary level Special Educators will be joining the AST (Academic Support Teachers) for 8 half day Literacy trainings. AST and special education is working together to ensure professionals continue to receive high quality training and is sharing resources, materials, and time. These efforts will maximize student learning and intervention as well as efficiencies (financial and time).

### *Director of Operations*

Custodian Vacancy: Recently filled a part time vacancy at Newbrook with Mastaler cleaning providing a staff member.

Custodial training: The first Weiss Bros. webinar is planned for Wednesday Mar. 3. We will be focusing on effective disinfection. How to clean versus disinfect. Given the pandemic, this seemed like the most logical first step in this training series. This program consists of online training that can be taken as time allows. We also have three "live" webinars, where their ISSA certified trainer will discuss topics of our choosing and tailor training to our specific cleaning chemicals and tools. These webinars will be spaced across the year and will cover our most relevant items with input from our custodial team.

Director of Operations Vacancy: I took over for Chris Medina on February 8. The transition has been about as smooth as one could have hoped. Chris was such a great support during the transition. I have been blessed by Chris's attention to detail and his willingness to share with me all he had created during his time here.

## **Safe, Healthy Schools**

### *Director of Special Education*

Some of the staff at HCRS (Health Care & Rehabilitation Services) recently toured our Thinking Feeling Room and MTSS model at NewBrook Elementary. This was a tour I asked them to do so they could see the implementation of our vision designed by our very own Behavior Specialist. My goal is to work with HCRS to see how their services and supports may streamline within our systems and vision. Sarah Kiefer, School Psychologist, will also be scheduling a meeting for Principals, Nurses, and Counselors to learn more about services and supports HCRS may be able to offer as we organize our recovery efforts for students.

### *Director of Operations*

Enhanced IAQ Testing: We have received all the necessary airflow testing results, with ongoing improvements being made. Great strides have been made at Leland and Gray, with us being able to open up the gym, and a few additional rooms on A and B level. There have also been additional repairs in Windham, Dover, Jamaica, and Wardsboro.

Act 66 Water Testing: Jamaica and Leland & Gray finalized some outstanding upgrades and fixture replacements. These systems will be resampled in the upcoming month and new results analyzed by the State. We are awaiting the sample bottles to come in from the state.

## **Financial Efficiencies**

### *Director of Special Education*

**Very exciting** news for future financial efficiencies! Several Superintendents and Directors of Special Education have been working collaboratively to discover ways in which we can expand regional offerings for students as well as increase financial efficiencies. I am 1 of 5 people on a Regional Collaboration Task Force who will be meeting in March to determine our next steps. Our goal is to be able to have programs up and running for the 2022-23 school year (just in time for Act 173). Stay tuned for more exciting news!

### *Director of Finance*

#### **FY 22 Budgets and Tax Rate Implications**

The following school boards have approved the FY 22 expense budgets:

- Windham Central [WCSU 10/28 Board Docs Including Budget Information](#)
- Marlboro
- Stratton
- Windham
- West River Modified Union Ed

**Update:** Based on AOE preliminary budget data with 86 districts out of 109 reporting. The education spending is coming in at .68%. This is good news and will most likely result in the yield staying where it is.

#### **Human Resource/Payroll**

Upcoming we are getting ready to issue letters of intent or contracts depending on negotiations. We will be learning how to create contracts through the new eFP system. We continue to watch federal legislation on extending and expanding The Families First Coronavirus Act in the next stimulus package coming out of Washington.

#### **Covid Related Expense and Grant Funding Sources**

- **UPDATE-** We have submitted for COVID reimbursements on behalf of all the school districts in the amount of 575K. This does not include HVAC reimbursements. To date the districts have received and will use 1.4 million dollars of federal dollars.
- **UPDATE:** 15m CRF-LEA money; The bill was passed recently that the remaining 15m of CRF-LEA money left will be designated to additional air quality projects. We expect

more communication from Efficiency VT in the next coming weeks. I will be working alongside Greg Frost to secure funding for the rest of the work that needs to be done.

- **UPDATE:** Administrators have been submitting proposals for the ESSER I Grant and this will be applied for by March 20th. The critical needs being addressed with ESSER I funds range from additional custodial staff, summer recovery, remote academy, sensory materials/furniture for in-person learning, additional technology support, and other response tactics.
- ESSER II money, from the new stimulus (CRRSA act) will be available for use out to Sept 2023
  - The state received 126m of money, after admin expenses are removed will flow to the SU/SD's based on TI allocations
  - The money will primarily be used for school COVID recovery plans
- Child Nutrition Program will have some additional funds from the new stimulus package CRRSA act.
- **UPDATE:** Child Nutrition has requested the SU to collect information on Free and Reduced lunch applicants so that the state can issue P-EBT cards to those families that qualify. This work continues and we recently found out that all WRED families will receive P-EBT cards due to the WRED Boards commitment to provision II where all students eat for free!

### Audits

FY 20 draft audits are being delivered. We still need to go through them before they will be finalized.

**H.35 :** H.35 is a bill that proposes to exempt from the excess spending calculation, "eligible school capital construction project costs pursuant to the State Board of Education's Rule 6134." Last week this bill was headed into House Ways and Means. I was asked by the AOE to provide the answer to this question for each of the districts: *Are any of your districts bumping up against or exceeding the excess spending threshold due to capital costs included in education spending that are not eligible for exemptions?*

This bill is being put forward because at least one district has been unable to pass a renovation and construction bond several times. The district board subsequently put roughly 1,000,000 in the budget the last several years to start addressing the critical needs of the building. This has pushed the district up against the excess spending threshold and in order to stay below the threshold, the board has had to make other cuts, since these capital costs are not eligible exemptions.

### *Director of Operations*

**HVAC Grant Program:** After facing some setbacks directly related to the pandemic, we applied for and received a grant extension from Efficiency Vermont for some outstanding projects on our original scope or work. Alliance had some manpower shortages through the month of December and our new timeline projects the completion of the HVAC improvements by January 30.

L&G Challenge Course: We have finalized a deal with High 5 to install the Challenge course this summer.

Grant Procurement: We received an extension from Efficiency Vermont on the first round of funding. I am actively planning our next potential round of upgrades. I have a meeting scheduled with Alliance to do another walkthrough of every school in the district to assess additional HVAC services to be completed.