

Cabinet Report to Boards

March 2020

Reminder

The Senate Committee on Education will hold a public hearing on the Study of Pupil Weights in Vermont's Education Funding Formula. The hearing will be held on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in Room 11 of the State House in Montpelier.

Seating is limited. Witnesses may begin signing up to speak at 3:30 p.m., just prior to the hearing. Witness testimony is limited to two minutes per person. The committee will also accept written testimony at testimony@leg.state.vt.us. Please indicate Pupil Weighting Study in the subject line.

Current Bill in Senate

Hello March and hopefully soon, Hello Spring weather. It has been another busy month in the WCSU. The Weighting Study, School Budgets, and Student Progress have been top of mind for all of our schools and school boards.

Here is a link the Education Legislative Report #3:

[https://mailchi.mp/03fa48a71377/2017-education-legislative-update-715158?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/03fa48a71377/2017-education-legislative-update-715158?e=[UNIQID])

Academic Proficiency

Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Academic Support Team: The AST met this month to support the planning for the Keys to Literacy PD day and to go through the Rewards literacy intervention program that we are piloting this year. The group shared instructional practices and reviewed progress monitoring procedures and data. The team uses this time as instructional rounds to ask one another questions, reflect on their practice, and learn from one another. The AST also received training from Brian Buettner on Story Marker Grammar to bring back for universal instruction. This professional learning will be used to support classroom teachers in understanding their classroom data. The AST met for a second afternoon to learn about Math Menu and plan for the grade level meetings in March.

Personalized Learning

Director of Special Education

The Leland & Gray Special Education team and I are consistently working with outside agencies to ensure successful post-secondary transition plans for students. It feels students have many choices for their futures and it is a wonderful feeling to be able to help them launch into their future paths! Though we are

a rural area, we do seem to have a lot of unique opportunities for students. We are extremely thankful to local businesses and communities for expanding vocational and volunteer opportunities for students! As they say, “it takes a village!”

High Quality Staffing

Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Leadership Team: The LT continued their initial planning for professional learning (PL) for FY21. The WCSU is planning to offer two Teacher-Led Conference days next year and information went out to teachers this month. The LT also continues its work on the implementation of change ideas and strategies for accomplishing the goals set out in the WCSU Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP). The leaders implemented a PDSA cycle for the change ideas they were implementing at their schools. Separately from the large group meeting, Instructional Leaders are working with the Director to complete the necessary requirements of school CIPS for submission to the AOE.

Director of Operations

L&G Facilities Department: We have been working through some staffing obstacles at Leland & Gray during the month of February. I am excited to announce, Chris Hughs has rejoined the team and is making a smooth transition back into his former role as daytime custodian. Regardless of the fluctuating size of the department, the rest of the L&G facilities team has the same square footage to clean and they have been working tirelessly over the past couple weeks to keep the building in the best condition possible for our students. I would like to give a kudos to not only them, but the custodians from all our schools for all the hardwork and dedication they put into their respective buildings day in and day out!

Director of Special Education

Continued work in collaboration with EST (Educational Support Team), 504 Teams and AST (Academic Support Team) to refine processes and ensure collaboration to maximize instruction for students identified as “struggling.” It is an extremely exciting time to be in education as we continually analyze and review progress, student success, and collaborate.

I have begun preparation for training opportunities for special education staff for next year in collaboration with other Directors of Special Education. Some exciting training opportunities are on the horizon!

I have also been working on further planning for the 2020-21 school year. This includes consideration of transition and other needs of students, staff expertise, and of course, budgets!

Safe, Healthy Schools

Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Trauma Transformed Schools: This month Dave Melnick, NFI, met with both the Leadership Team and the Catalyst group to continue our work on becoming Trauma Transformed communities. Members of the Catalyst group continue to use the strategies they work on as a group and bring those methods back to the schools they represent.

Director of Operations

Act 66 Lead Testing Update: As of early February, lab results from all schools have been received. Windham Elementary School remained in compliance throughout the testing. Dover Elementary and NewBrook Elementary have both completed the remediation actions and are preparing to re-sample. The remaining 5 schools are all in various stages of the remediation phase. The state did not put any time limit on the remediation as long as those taps identified were immediately removed from service for consumption. We have been working closely with the state on options and progress reporting.

Tier II Reporting: I was able to go around to the facilities and gather an inventory of items to determine what was necessary to submit for our Tier II reporting. The most common hazardous materials included but not limited to: no. 2 heating oil, lead/acid batteries, floor stripper, floor wax, and paint. This process also started the creation of safety data sheet (SDS) binders. I have been working with the facilities staff to compile lists of chemicals to create the binders for each school.

Director of Special Education

Continued work with Beth Merrill, our Behavior Specialist for Elementary, to expand our offering of social emotional and behavioral support of students. We have just begun working on more structured development of supports at Jamaica Village School. Development of these supports includes training, data collection and analysis, and collaboration with existing supports and teams.

Financial Efficiencies

Director of Operations

L&G Biomass Boiler: Messersmith Manufacturing has delivered and is in the process of installing the new components of the wood chip boiler. Electricians are expected to be site the week of 3/2 to install the new controls. We are hopeful by mid-March to start up and commission the system.

Director of Special Education

After seeking clarification from the Agency of Education, it has been verified that Special Educators may be directed by the LEA (Local Education Agency), in other words, me, to use up to 20% of their time supporting struggling students whom are not on IEPs but are on 504 or EST plans. While there are some restrictions around group size, etc. we are working to maximize these services and resources. Specific time studies are done for 2 weeks of the year (mid fall and late winter) for all special education staff. Time studies track every minute of the day which is then analyzed by Alison Hescoock and I to ensure we are in compliance with Federal and State regulations as it pertains to use of special education funds. As students' needs are met quicker through the AST (Academic Support Teachers) and LCAS (Local Comprehensive Assessment System), I have seen a trend in reduction of the number of students identified as having Specific Learning Disability (SLD) since they are receiving intervention quicker. As this occurs, it allows Special Educators more time to work with students with much less requirement for paperwork and procedural compliance tasks.

I have attended another Board meeting with the Learning Collaborative. In the next few weeks, we will be meeting with other Directors of Special Education to identify programs or supports we can collaborate on in order to improve financial efficiencies. Very exciting work!

Director of Finance

Budget Information

The preliminary budgets were submitted to the AOE. From Brad James, AOE Finance Manager: *“with 90 districts submitting preliminary budget data (~78%), ed spending is up 4.39%. Ways & Means is happier than they were about a month ago.”* This will most likely mean that the yield will not change.

Marlboro, Stratton and Windham’s budgets will be decided on March 3rd. River Valleys Budget was successfully passed and West River’s budget vote is March 25th.

Audits

Fiscal Year 2019 draft audits were issued at the end of last week. I am in the process of reviewing them this week before they are finalized. Once they are finalized I will send them out to the boards and have them uploaded to the appropriate websites. Along those same lines the auditors are working on consolidating the two systems and entities. We worked with them mid Feb. We hope to have all the financial consolidation work done by the end of March. This is not an additional cost to the districts as we used the transition money to procure this work.

Human Resources

We have sent out all of the ACA required reporting to staff members and the federal government. The deadline for this was March 3rd.

Preparation for professional and support staff contracts or letters of intent are being made in order to meet the April 15th deadline.

eFP Implementation

We are scheduled for the first major eFP update on March 27th. There are some enhancements that will now be available after that date. All users will need to be out of the system in order to upgrade.