

## **HYDE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

To: Hyde Park School Board  
From: Shelley Mathias  
Subject: Principal's report  
Date: December 30, 2010

### **Culture at HPES**

We presented two concerts; the first for grades K-3, and the second for grades 4-6 and bands. They were both well received. Both concerts showcased each grade and full ensemble work. Mrs. Norland is to be commended for truly remarkable work with very large groups of children. Her effort to encourage interest in playing an instrument is seen with the fourth grade class which performed beautifully with recorders. Learning to play the recorders included learning to read music. We increased Mrs. Norland's time by 10% this year in order to provide time for lessons and sectionals (grouping instruments together by type – percussion/wind/brass). The difference was quite obvious as some fifth graders were able to play in the sixth grade band for some of the songs. The inclusion of a skilled percussionist during the 4-6 grade concert made for an especially exciting performance as students clearly enjoyed singing some ethnically diverse pieces. New for next time- the ukuleles have arrived!

### **Community Service**

One aspect of education at HPES includes service to others. Mittens, hats and scarves that were made by our students during the summer program directed by Jean Pratt were delivered to the WCAX mitten tree. During the month of December, students in each classroom participate in a food drive. This year, the students and families of HPES donated several car loads of food to the Lamoille Community Food Shelf. Representatives from the food shelf were delighted by the amount of food donated. Students take great pride in efforts such as these.

### **Sports for Life**

We will be starting Sports for Life on January 6 with very active participation. Approximately 11% of the students are not participating. We have 68 students going to ski or snowboard, 60 students skating, roughly 40 bowling, and the balance are cross country skiing or playing tennis. The program is excellent for cultivating a life-long healthy activity for our students. Our faculty will be participating with the students one afternoon out of the six.

During the SFL afternoons, the faculty and I will be focusing on Committee work, collaboration with grade level peers and Smart Board training.

## **Field Trips**

During the month of December, our Pre-School students and parents enjoy a trip to a Christmas tree farm. The most exciting part of the trip for a lot of the students is actually riding the bus! (Funny but true). The children and their families were able to enjoy the tree farm and hot chocolate. This event combines both sessions and is the one field trip for pre-school. The kindergarten students attended the Helen Day Art Center and had a great day there.

The fourth grade has traditionally gone to the Billings Farm as part of their Social Studies curriculum. This is the first time we will not be able to send both classes in one field trip because the group is too large to be accommodated (we have 40 4<sup>th</sup> graders). While fundraising was conducted by the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, it was short of the target. The teachers have asked for donations from families as possible. There is no expectation that every family participate in making a donation.

## **Committee work**

All HPES faculty are involved in committee work. Committee assignments at HPES are based in five core areas: Curriculum, Climate, Systems, Culture and External. Each committee is serving as an “umbrella” for several foci relevant to that committee. For example, Climate includes PBiS, Crisis, and Health. Systems include the schedule, technology, and report cards. The External includes that work that requires out of district involvement such as the Curriculum Council, the LNSU Math or Science Committees, as well as regional work in EEE, etc. The focus for the various committees has been identified by the action plan (some areas need inclusion in the action plan – Health being one).

I have asked each committee to have a chair, and an agenda for each meeting and meeting minutes are to be submitted to me. The full staff meeting on the first of the month will include time for each committee to report out. Committees may request more time during the full staff meeting for issues that they feel are ready for full staff input. My goal is to cultivate a mindset among the faculty that includes trusting colleagues to do the work of honing information down to a level that can be efficiently addressed by the whole.

## **Math Coach**

Kalee’s comment regarding the funds that the state received to study assessments at the last Board meeting provided us with an avenue to request help from the state. Kalee pointed out that the state had \$33 million from the federal government to study assessments. RTI is a process that

involves assessment and intervention. When discussing the ViiM model with the state last summer, I was firm in our commitment to provide equal focus on RTI Math despite the state's focus on literacy. Karen Edwards had suggested this summer that HPES could be a pilot school and possibly get some support in that role. Dr. Taylor, David White and I will be meeting with Karen Edwards from the DoE to discuss how the state might assist us by funding the Math Coach position, possibly through some of the Assessment grant. I've estimated a cost of \$120,000 to cover the next two years. It should be noted that my decision to have equal focus is rooted in the results of my research that indicates a startling increase in the achievement gap in math scores among FRL eligible students (26 points in 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 82 points by 8<sup>th</sup> grade) that far exceeded the decrease in the literacy achievement gap (25 points in 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 10 points by 8<sup>th</sup> grade), pointing to an emphasis on literacy to the degree that math achievement was seriously impacted.

### **Professional Development**

Special Education faculty participated in two days of professional development focusing on Math Diagnostics with Mahesh Sharma. The effort was a collaborative program between Orleans South Supervisory Union and LNSU. Four members of the faculty and staff also participated in training to gain more strategies for working with students with particularly challenging behaviors.

### **Facilities**

The boiler in the 1898 section of the building shut down over the weekend of the 19<sup>th</sup> resulting in classrooms being too cold to use for the majority of the day. Six classes needed to be relocated (including art and music). We were able to successfully do this thanks to the flexibility of the faculty (and the fact that the issue occurred on a Monday when there were no Library classes). We are looking into putting an alarm on the boiler so that it will call me or Marty should this happen again. In the interim, I've instructed the faculty that we do not turn the heat down below 60 degrees on the weekend so if the temperature is more than 5 degrees below that in their area, to please notify me immediately.

The floor in the gym has gotten worse and several parents have expressed concern. I have encouraged them to attend the visioning session on the 10<sup>th</sup> and to express their concern at Town Meeting.

We have a workman's comp claim resulting from a fall on the ice in the playground. An employee broke her arm. The playground can get icy and it is a constantly changing condition.

### **Technology**

We have successfully migrated all computers from the Novelle Server to the Windows server thanks to the work of John Coppens, Yvonne Jones and several students from GMTCC. This was done as efficiently as possible. It was interesting to see the level of change from my arrival two and a half years ago when the faculty use of computers was negligible, to last week. Despite the warning that the laptops were going to be unavailable for the day, the obvious concern about getting computers back as soon as possible was evident. It was plain to see that the transformation to a computer literate (and dependent) faculty has been accomplished!

### **Professional**

I presented my research at the VT School Boards Association December Executive Committee meeting. I also worked with Win Goodrich in creating a video tape for the VSBA discussing reframing the debate regarding school finance (which I believe was forwarded to all of you).