

Superintendent's Report

December 2020



Connecticut River Valley Planning Committee

The next meeting will be held on December 21st at 6:00 pm. A survey will soon be sent out to gather ideas for the name of the new regional school district. Meeting information may be found on the committee website www.connecticutrivercollaborative.org.

Curriculum Instruction and Assessment

The Curriculum Committee was initiated and held their first meeting on November 16 and will meet at least monthly. Here are highlights of this month's work:

The "Why" behind this work

A system built on competencies or proficiencies allows students to work master content at their own pace. Proficiency Based Learning (VT) and Competency Based Education (NH) have been required curriculum delivery systems for some time. Both of these systems are synonymous with each other.

Our Joint Objective

Our collaborative Vt and NH committee is working together to facilitate this system and disseminate information to teachers to help them work together to implement personalized learning, using integrated technology tools and a competency-based learning approach.

What has taken place

Our first meeting was 11/16/20. The purpose of this meeting was to understand the process, system, and timeline. We will be working with consultant, Brian Stack, from Sanborn High School.

Anticipated Timeline

Superintendents Debra Taylor and Karen Conroy have developed the following timeline for our work. This PD lineup is subject to change as we learn and move forward.

Work will occur on the following dates, times, and locations:

- December 9, 2020 - Early Release (Remote)
- February 3, 2021 - Early Release (Remote)
- March 18, 2021 - Early Release (Remote)
- March 19, 2021 - Full Day Professional Development (Remote)
- June 17, 2021 - Early Release (Remote)
- June 28-July 2 - 2021 - Teacher Professional Development Design Institute. (Both on site and remote options will be available to meet the needs of all staff and the challenges of the pandemic.)

Communication and Transparency

After each meeting, teachers will receive updates on what took place to ensure everyone is receiving the same information around this work.

Resource

For more information, please reference this [Competency Based Learning Handbook](#).

Remote Learning

Our staff, families and students have been significantly impacted by the rise in COVID 19 cases in our region. We are also experiencing staffing challenges due to substitute teachers shortages and strict travel guidance requiring quarantining after non-essential travel. Consequently, we had no choice but to continue remote learning through December.

We continue to hone our skills with remote learning as instructors. Professional development concerning remote learning tools and strategies has been an ongoing part of our focus beginning this summer and into the fall. We received 125 chromebooks and distributed them to families of our elementary students this fall. Our teachers are carrying out regular daily instruction and families are providing us with good feedback. We chose to use Zoom as the teacher's virtual meeting tool. This has enabled us more flexibility in instruction and programming. Repurposing physical classroom methodologies for virtual classes is critical to our success. We have reached out to families who do not have internet access and have ordered hot spots and investigated connections from local internet service providers as well.

We are also reaching out to our teachers to document successful remote learning strategies and celebrate student achievements during these challenging times. One thing that is for certain is that the pandemic has caused us to rethink education and will lead to a more flexible, personalized approach to teaching and learning in the coming months and years.

As we continue to face the challenges of the pandemic, we are continuously monitoring guidance from the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services as well as COVID 19 transmission rates in our communities. Thank you for your support of our students and community health and wellness.

School Board Appreciation

We very much appreciate the Board's support of our recommendation to implement more stringent health and safety practices. We hope that our collective efforts and promotion of these health and safety practices throughout our communities will slow the spread and enable us to return to in person instruction once again.

Communication

Our efforts to communicate with students, families and staff are ongoing. Our new websites are a great vehicle. We post updates on Facebook and Twitter as well. SAU office and leadership team meetings continue. We maintain daily communication among our school and central office teams.

The fourth Parent Forum on COVID-19 will be held on Monday, November 30 at 5:30 pm. This virtual meeting is open to parents and community members and will continue to be co-led by the Superintendent and School Health Coordinator and Colebrook Nurse Devon Phillips.

Looking Ahead to 2021

2020 has certainly presented challenges to all of us. However, out of challenge comes opportunity! We have learned new skills and advanced our integration of technology. We have found ways to connect and communicate with students, staff and families that are convenient and informative. We have learned that flexibility is primary and that personalization is possible and necessary in a post pandemic era.

On July 1, 2020, I made a commitment to develop a comprehensive picture of SAU 7 and our member districts, including students, staff, families and community stakeholders. My entry work included interviews, document reviews, school visitations, participation in school staff meetings, community forums, and support of the regional Connecticut River Collaborative Planning Committee. In addition, the pandemic response has been an ongoing focus this year. This included understanding the history and context, norms for operation, and identification of goals and tasks to be prioritized.

At our recent SAU 7 School Board meeting, I presented draft goals for Board consideration. The Board asked that each member district board review and provide feedback concerning these goals in advance of the upcoming December SAU7 Board meeting. Here are the goals stemming from my initial transition to the school system. I look forward to your feedback.

- Provide Leadership During Pandemic in 5 Key Areas:
 - Health and Safety;
 - Finance, Policy and Communication;
 - Logistics;
 - Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment;
 - Social Emotional Learning and Supports

- Support Advancement of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
 - Implement strategies aimed at improving student achievement within the context of personalized, competency-based education with a futuristic focus
- Ensure High Quality Professional Development Activities
 - Plan and implement relevant and research-based activities with and for leaders, teachers and support staff
- Support the Work of the Connecticut River Collaborative Planning Committee As Needed
 - Gather information, facilitate meetings, prepare reports and inform school staff and citizens concerning the work underway and timelines.