

# SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

350 Mountain Road, Suffield, Connecticut 06078  
860-668-3800

**Karen M. Berasi**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Brian Hendrickson**  
Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction

**Natalie Donais**  
Director of Special Services



To: Suffield Board of Education

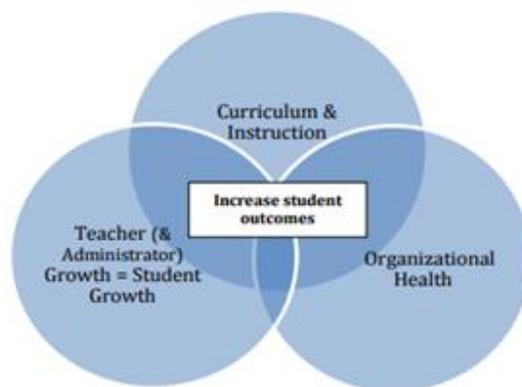
From: Brian Hendrickson

**RE: Fall Curriculum & Instruction Update**

Date: December 5, 2016

By taking a holistic approach to the three goal areas in our District Improvement Plan, we believe that we are improving student outcomes for all students within Suffield by investing heavily in our teachers with the resources and supports needed to *prepare all students for success in a rapidly changing world*.

The attached updates are provided to paint a holistic picture of the alignment of efforts across the district (with specific connections to our district improvement plan strategies) and include connections to our efforts from last year.



## **Attachments:**

- 1. Curriculum and Instruction updates by goal area**
- 2. Revised listing of curriculum revisions taking place during the 2016-2017 school year**
- 3. Curriculum Newsletters**

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## Attachment #1 BoE Fall Curriculum Update by Goal Area

### Curriculum & Instruction

- The summer curriculum writing went very well and we are reflecting on how to improve the process to ensure smoother implementation for all content areas and grade levels at the start of the school year. Curriculum Leaders will be collaborating with faculty on scheduling additional curriculum writing as well as support for the Atlas software throughout the year. Additionally, Curriculum Leaders are coordinating and publishing benchmark and curriculum based assessment calendars for each grade and content area. Finally, each month the school based administration, curriculum leaders/coaches, and myself review student work samples, aligned to curriculum revisions, in order to calibrate on academic expectations with specific attention to:
  - 1) Content based standards, and
  - 2) Differentiating peer based support and supervisory feedback.

*See Short-Term Strategies:*

  - #2 Provide resources and time to improve and write curriculum in all areas of study
  - #7 Continue to improve organizational health by clearly defining roles and expectations throughout the district, and
  - #9 Continue to establish benchmark data in all content areas
- This year we have implemented a district data team structure to look at intervention data across all schools with specific focus on our student intervention team meeting structure, progress monitoring resources, rounds of intervention, and parent/faculty communication. The assistant principals and I will be presenting an Intervention Report to the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee of the Board of Education.

*See Short-Term Strategy*

  - #4 Improve intervention procedures and practices
  - #5 Develop a comprehensive social emotional learning plan that creates conditions and systems to analyze, interpret, and leverage academic & social emotional student data Effectively
- Our district math consultant, Christine Moynihan, has visited and observed instruction and resources at all schools. She has been impressed with the professionalism and commitment to our students and is excited to support your efforts in making our math program as strong as possible. We will be focusing on how to support math teachers as they implement the core 8 math practices into their instruction. Below is a link to a Scholastic article that outlines and summarizes the core 8 math practices that will better prepare students for college and career readiness.

*See Short-Term Strategy*

#2 Provide resources and time to improve and write curriculum in all areas of study

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/top-teaching/2013/03/guide-8-mathematical-practice-standards>

- Our Curriculum Cabinet (consisting of administrators, BoE members, and faculty) will be focusing on grading practices throughout the district. We are looking into this area - in large part - based on the feedback from student focus groups that we met with last year as we discussed the vision of the Suffield graduate. At our first meeting this year we reviewed Board policies, student handbooks, and current report cards at each school. We will continue to explore the topic of grading (while making connections to our vision of the graduate) and will be focused on gaining a deep understanding of student, teacher, and parent perspectives on all things grading.  
*See Short Term Strategies*  
*#10 Revise grading practices and policies*  
*#14 Continue student focus groups to increase student voice in the learning process*
- Responsive Classroom – teachers from MIS and AWS received training from Responsive Classroom over the summer and have been hard at work implementing core elements of their training into their daily practice. Specifically, the dedicated time at the start of each day for *morning meeting* has been well received by students and teachers as a way to start the day with classroom community building through intentional reflection and student acknowledgement of expected behaviors.  
*See Short Term Strategy*  
*#3 Strengthen social-emotional wellness/character development programming.*

## **Teacher Growth & Admin Growth = Student Growth**

- Building on the work of PDEC last year, at the start of the school year each school PDEC team rolled-out the TalentEd platform as well as a consistent message for goal setting meetings. This year's PDEC goal will be articulating a professional development plan for the district (consistent with our district, school, and teacher goals) that supports and encourages teacher ownership of their respective PD. Additionally, PDEC has helped articulate technology concerns of teachers and has been collaborating with IT on a trouble-shooting protocols for student Chromebooks. And as a result of this collaboration, Richard Lane (our district-wide instructional technology integrationist) will be working on instructional technology PD options across all schools.  
*See Short Term Strategy*  
*#12 Continue to reflect and evaluate effectiveness of teacher growth & evaluation plan at the Professional Development & Evaluation Committee (PDEC) and strengthen the voice of PDEC*
- PLC Update – Over the summer curriculum leaders and school administration worked with our consultants to discuss the purpose and goals of PLCs in Suffield. Each school developed a roll-out that was facilitated by school leadership teams, coaches at the K-5 level, the PLC consultant, curriculum leaders, and administration. The purpose of the PLC is to provide an intentional and dedicated time for teachers to engage in teacher led discussions about student work. Our PLC consultant will be attending an upcoming PDEC meeting to share-out progress to date and listen to feedback from teachers on the effectiveness of the model.  
*See Short Term Strategy*  
*#6 Provide teachers with opportunities for professional development in student centered learning, PLC, K-12 core text math, differentiated and specialized instruction*
- Early Release Day Study Group - This fall representatives from each school have been studying the viability of a weekly early release day for the 2017-2018 school year. Several feedback vehicles are being used to capture stakeholder voice including an online forum and in person focus groups. Additionally, the team (which includes a parent representative) will be visiting other districts and making a report for the Board and Superintendent by mid-winter. This report will also be shared out at each school.  
*See Short Term Strategy*  
*#1 Increase collaboration time for all teacher groups and teacher led learning*

- Through collaboration with the District Management Council, we are working with all schools to create building based budgeting to support teacher growth and student outcomes. Principals will be working with their school based teams to allocate resources in an intentional and measurable way that is aligned with their respective School Improvement Plans.

*See Short Term Strategy*

*#8 Strategically budget to support teacher growth and student outcomes*

## **Organizational Health**

- Each school improvement plan includes a goal in the area of organizational health. The research in the area of organizational development clearly indicates that high performing organizations have highly functional teams that operate with clearly defined goals, roles, and processes. Over the summer our administrative team and curriculum leaders engaged in team building exercises and activities aimed at understanding the various elements of conflict and the importance of clearly defined and communicated goals, roles, and processes. We are excited to continue on the path of organizational health throughout the district.

*See Short Term Strategy*

*#7 Continue to improve organizational health by clearly defining roles and expectations throughout the district*

- This year we are streamlining and aligning our new teacher orientation and induction process, in addition to supporting our new teachers as they complete the State Certification requirements of TEAM. Highlights from the summer and start of the school year include a bus tour of Suffield facilitated by our HR specialist, Kathy Carney, which highlighted many of the cultural and economic assets of Suffield. That was then followed by a TEAM orientation with mentors and mentees with a broad discussion on the expectations and responsibilities of being a teacher in Suffield.

*See Short Term Strategy*

*#7 Continue to improve organizational health by clearly defining roles and expectations throughout the district*

- Our school based administrator teams are collaborating with a district consultant in the area of teacher and administrator feedback. There will be clear protocols shared at each school. To be clear, the consultant is in the district to work with administrators only and not teachers. Additionally, the Superintendent and I will be sitting in on a teacher evaluation cycle at each school for feedback on the effectiveness and value of the process

*See Short Term Strategy*

*#7 Continue to improve organizational health by clearly defining roles and expectations throughout the district*

## Suffield Public Schools

Suffield recognizes that curriculum development is a complex and dynamic process in which review is an essential component. The following schedule is intended to capture a big-picture view of our long-term plans.

Fall Update Draft (changes from June draft are in **BOLD RED**)

YEAR	<b>PHASE 1- PLAN AND OUTLINE CURRICULUM</b> <b>AT THE END OF THIS PHASE, THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WILL BE MET:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Team developed</li> <li>● Outline of units throughout the year.</li> <li>● Determine scope and sequence, standards alignment, essential questions, etc.</li> <li>● Type these into Atlas.</li> </ul>	<b>PHASE 2- WRITE CURRICULUM AND BEGIN IMPLEMENTATION</b> <b>AT THE END OF THIS PHASE, THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WILL BE MET:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Curriculum is developed and written in Atlas.</li> <li>● Units completed.</li> <li>● Design &amp; blueprints of common assessments &amp; corresponding rubrics developed.</li> <li>● Initial curriculum and assessments implemented.</li> <li>● Calibration of assessments to establish common expectations. Begin to create/collect anchor sets.</li> </ul>	<b>PHASE 3- REVISION OF CURRICULUM AND IMPLEMENTATION</b> <b>AT THE END OF THIS PHASE, THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WILL BE MET:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All teachers are expected to use the new curriculum in Atlas.</li> <li>● Teachers administer common assessments.</li> <li>● Implementation monitored by Curriculum Leaders and Administrators.</li> <li>● Feedback is collected.</li> <li>● Curriculum and assessment are revised as necessary.</li> <li>● Calibration of assessments and collect anchor sets.</li> </ul>	<b>PHASE 4- FULL CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION*</b> <b>AT THE END OF THIS PHASE, THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WILL BE MET:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All teachers are expected to use the new curriculum in Atlas.</li> <li>● Feedback is continuously collected &amp; curriculum is revised as necessary from collaboration (inter-visitation, learning walks, PLCs, etc.)</li> <li>● Teachers continue to administer the common assessments. Continuous feedback is gathered for necessary revisions and differentiation.</li> <li>● Implementation is monitored by curriculum leaders and administration</li> </ul> <p><small>*Curriculum will be continuously refined in this phase</small></p>
<b>Summer 2016</b>	K-5 Math K-3 Word Study 6 Social Studies 6 Math 7 Math 8 Math 8 English Language Arts 10 English Language Arts 11 English Language Arts UCONN ECE Algebra 1 9 Integrated Science	K-5 Reading 5 Social Studies 9 Integrated Science Algebra 6 English Language Arts 7 English Language Arts 9 English Language Arts		

## Suffield Public Schools

*Suffield recognizes that curriculum development is a complex and dynamic process in which review is an essential component. The following schedule is intended to capture a big-picture view of our long-term plans.*

<b>School Year 2016-2017</b>	<p>4 Social Studies  <u><b>K-5 Math (assessments 2, 5)</b></u>  <u><b>K-3 Science (Consortium)</b></u>  <b>6 Social Studies</b>  <b>7 Social Studies</b>  <b>9 Social Studies</b>  <u><b>10 Social Studies</b></u>  <u><b>11 Chemistry</b></u></p>	<p>K-5 Math  K-3 Word Study  6 Science  9 Integrated Science  Algebra  8 English Language Arts  10 English Language Arts  11 English Language Arts  UCONN ECE  <b>8 Social Studies</b>  <u><b>11 Social Studies</b></u></p>	<p>K-5 Reading  5 Social Studies</p>	
<b>Summer 2017</b>	<p><u><b>K-3 Science</b></u>  K-5 Writing  4-5 Word Study  7 Science  10 Science  Algebra 2  Geometry    <u><b>11 Chemistry</b></u></p>	<p>K-5 Math  7 Science  10 Science  Algebra 1 &amp; 2  <b>6 Social Studies</b>  <b>7 Social Studies</b>  <b>9 Social Studies</b>  <u><b>10 Social Studies</b></u></p>	<p>6 English Language Arts  7 English Language Arts  9 English Language Arts  <b>8 Social Studies</b>  <u><b>11 Social Studies</b></u></p>	
<b>School Year 2017-2018</b>	<p><u><b>K-4 Science</b></u>  8, 9 &amp; 11 Social Studies  12 English Language Arts  10 Science</p>	<p>K-5 Writing  K-5 Math  4 social studies  4-5 Word Study  Algebra 2  Geometry  <u><b>11 Chemistry</b></u></p>	<p>6 Science  9 Integrated Science  Algebra  7 Science  10 Science  Algebra 2  8 English Language Arts  10 English Language Arts  11 English Language Arts  UCONN ECE  <b>6 Social Studies</b>  <b>7 Social Studies</b>  <b>8 Social Studies</b>  <b>9 Social Studies</b>  <b>10 Social Studies</b>  <b>11 Social Studies</b></p>	<p>K-5 Reading  5 Social Studies  6 English Language Arts  7 English Language Arts  9 English Language Arts</p>

<b>Summer 2018</b>	K-4 Social Studies <u>4 Science</u> Geometry 8 Science <u>11 Science</u>	K-3 Science Geometry	K-5 Math <u>6 Social Studies</u> <u>7 Social Studies</u> <u>8 Social Studies</u> <u>9 Social Studies</u> <u>10 Social Studies</u> <u>11 Social Studies</u> <u>11 Chemistry</u>	
<b>2018-2019</b>	4-5 Science AP Stats AP Calculus	K-4 Social Studies K-3 Science Geometry 8 Science <u>11 Science</u>	K-5 Writing K-5 Math Algebra 2 Geometry	6 Science 9 Integrated Science Algebra 7 Science 10 Science Algebra 2 8 English Language Arts 10 English Language Arts 11 English Language Arts UConn ECE <u>6 Social Studies</u> <u>7 Social Studies</u> <u>8 Social Studies</u> <u>9 Social Studies</u> <u>10 Social Studies</u> <u>11 Social Studies</u> <u>11 Chemistry</u>
<b>2019-2020</b>	<u>5 science</u>	<u>4 Science</u>	K-3 Science	K-5 Math Algebra 2 Geometry
<b>2020-2021</b>	Pre-Calculus Stats	<u>4-5 Science</u> Pre-Calculus Stats		K-3 Science
<b>2021-2022</b>			<u>4-5 Science</u> Pre-Calculus Stats	Pre-Calculus Stats



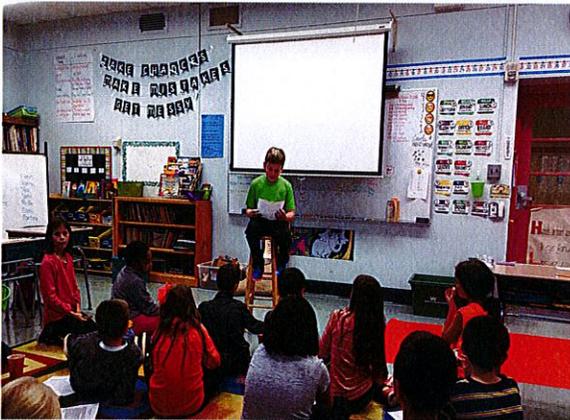
# SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**KRIS PRYCE**  
K-5 ELA and Social Studies Curriculum Leader

*November 18, 2016*

## English Language Arts

Work continues on the implementation of the Reading Curriculum. This summer, representatives from each grade level continued to revise Reading Units of Study. These units, implemented during Reader's Workshop, teach reading strategies, build comprehension, and explore a variety of genres and literary elements to meet the needs of every reader. Most grade levels began the year with units designed to launch the workshop model. The beginning of a new school year involves discussions and/or modeling of procedures, behaviors and classroom expectations. The art of building a "reading community", in which students are independent, needs to be purposeful and meaningful to allow students to truly grow as readers. Each grade level has units throughout the year designed for the study of literature and nonfiction.



*Fourth Grade Author's Celebration in Miss Stearns class.*



*A. Ward Spaulding School Veterans Day Assembly*

## Social Studies

This past summer fifth grade social studies teachers revised the American Studies curriculum to align to a three year scope and sequence with eighth and eleventh grade. The teachers have been working with this newly revised curriculum. Fifth grade now focuses their instruction from the Pre-Columbian Indigenous Era to the Revolutionary War. Work continues on the development of the curriculum and plans are under way for a Revolutionary War Day scheduled for June 1, 2017.

As part of our elementary curriculum all students participate in activities to gain an understanding of our National Holidays. All students in grades Pre-K through fifth grade participated in various lessons and activities to honor Veterans. Spaulding students read the text, *Veteran Heroes in Our Neighborhood*, constructed a large American Flag with Veterans names, wrote letters to Veterans as part of the Operation Gratitude Campaign, and capped the week off with their annual Veterans Day Assembly. McAlister students invited local Veterans into their classrooms and had the opportunity to learn about life in the Armed Services. Veterans shared experiences relative to their time in the service and life since. McAlister concluded the day with their Annual Veterans Day Assembly.



# SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**SARA BARANAUSKAS**  
K-5 Math & Science Curriculum Leader

*November 18, 2016*

Since school started, all students K-5 have been learning from the same mathematics resource, *Investigations 3*©. Our new program is rich in conceptual understanding of mathematics so that our students can truly become mathematical thinkers. In order to make the transition to the new resource smooth, teachers have begun their year long study of the Numbers and Operations units with Christine Moynihan, our K-12 math consultant. This professional learning has enabled them to understand more about their own mathematical thinking as well as facilitate student learning within the Numbers and Operations concepts.

These two pieces of feedback sum up how the teachers have felt about professional development so far:

- "I've learned more in the past three hours about teaching math than I have learned my whole career. This is the best professional development I have ever gotten!"
- I thought the day was amazing, and I didn't want it to end. She (Chris) was so motivating and believes in us. . . but also knows the reality of the juggling act of teaching. She was so down to earth and really gets it! I want her to live in my classroom!

Christine will be back several times throughout the rest of the year to continually work on developing teacher understanding of the new resource, as well as deepen their understanding about mathematics instruction.



*Mrs. Motter, Mrs. Breen and Mrs Marzi work through representing a multiplication equation using Base Ten Blocks. This hands-on experience help them deepen student understanding.*



*Chris Moynihan models how a 100 chart can be an effective tool to develop student understanding of place value with Mrs. Goldstein and Mrs. Wosko.*

Representatives from K-2 (and grade 3 in the spring) have begun collaborating with other grade level teachers from across the state in a Next Generation Science Standard (NGSS) Consortium. Within this consortium, Suffield's K-3 representatives will share in the development of a NGSS aligned curricula that is anchored in phenomena. Anchoring science in phenomena will allow students to question scientific occurrences and circumstances through inquiry. The development of NGSS aligned curriculum within a consortium will allow K-3 teachers to tap into the knowledge of other teachers within their grade levels as well as guide the district towards a revised science curriculum.

The 6-12 Science Curriculum Leader is working vertically to begin examining the major inquiry skills that all Suffield students should possess. We will be working with teachers over the course of the school year to begin developing some of the NGSS instructional practices and shifts within teaching. Grade 5 science teachers will be learning more about designing science inquiry for students through an instructional method called claims, evidence, and reasoning (CER).

Suffield's K-5 NGSS adoption and curriculum revision plan begins this year by developing a NGSS aligned K-3 curriculum, followed by grades 4 and 5, respectively, over the course of school years 2018 and 2019.



# SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**JEANINE ROSE**  
6-12 ELA Curriculum Leader

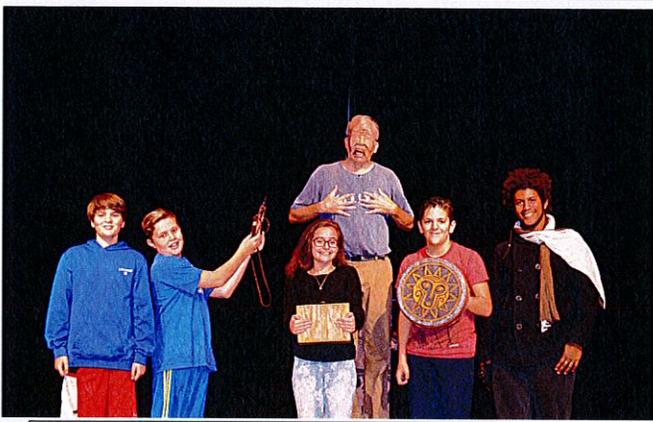
*November 18, 2016*

## Suffield Middle School

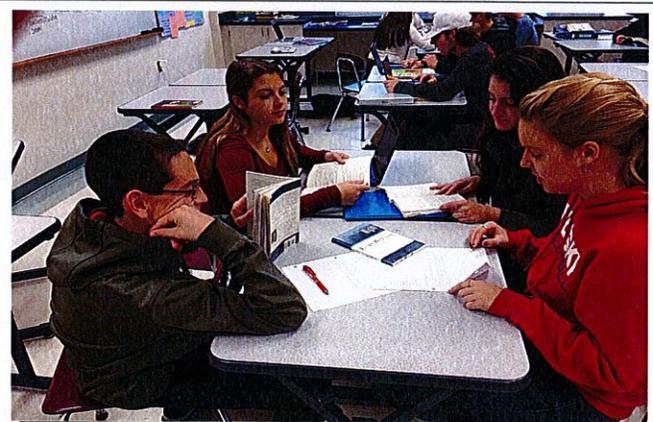
**6<sup>th</sup> Grade:** The sixth grade began the year learning the *Notice and Note* signposts to identify significant moments in a story that help readers to understand the theme, conflict, and other important literary elements. Students are revising narrative stories and developing their conferencing skills. Soon they will begin the process of researching a historical figure for the *Courageous Characters* unit. Watch for the showcase in January!

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade:** *Students bring history to life* by researching a historical event, developed a narrative, identifying a conflict and practicing characterization through dialogue and character traits. With lots of conferencing and feedback from their teacher and their peers, students create a finished historical fiction story. Students are now engaged in group literature circle readings and collaborative discussions. Seventh-grade classes are also building grammar skills with strong verb selection.

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Powerful Zeus, Jealous Hera, Beautiful Aphrodite, Wise Athena, and Warlike Ares! Having a good foundation in Greek and Roman mythology is proven to support a strong vocabulary. Eighth graders immerse themselves in these ageless stories that reveal so much about human nature. The "Chariot of the Sun" assembly helps to bring these stories to life for the students. The unit culminates with an essay looking at the nature of heroism and what it means in society today.



*The Cyclops Lives! 8<sup>th</sup>-grade "Chariot of the Sun" Assembly*



*10<sup>th</sup>-grade students in Ms Monahan's Literature Circles*

## Suffield High School

All students 9-12 are engaged in building reading, writing, analysis, and grammar skills that will help to support performance in the PSAT and SAT.

**9<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Students began the year in English 101, studying literary elements and the short story. Classes now continue 101, engaging in an introduction to research skills. They have chosen a topic and are honing their skills in assessing the credibility and validity of a source and its author. After reading the articles, they identify what distinguishes each argument so that they can figure out how they can add to the conversation.

**10<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Students are reading novels, memoirs, biographies and short stories in literature circles discussion groups to examine how individuals are impacted by oppression and persecution in society.

**11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Eleventh grade classes have finished reading *The Great Gatsby* and are now revising non-fiction analysis essays by looking at how an author builds an argument using rhetorical techniques.



# SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Esther Dattey  
6-12 Math Curriculum Leader

November 18, 2016

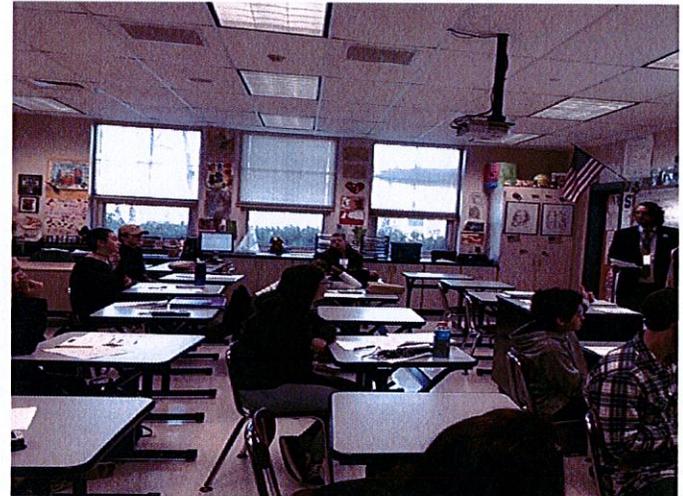
Christine Moynihan, our K-12 Math Consultant, spent a day at the middle school and a day at the high school on September 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 2016. Her visit was well received and provided us with valuable feedback.

Her day at the middle school commenced with participating in the Professional Learning Community (PLC) time with each grade level. During this session she was briefed on what the teachers will be teaching when she visits the classes. After her class visits, the day concluded with a conference with teachers where she shared her feedback.

From her visit and feedback middle school teachers have decided to delve deeper into the Mathematical Practice Standards with the support of the curriculum leader.



*Chris Cosma's Programming Class*



*Mark Janick's Student showing SAT practice work*

## **Highlights from Suffield High School Math Classes**

Teachers have incorporated preparing for the new SAT into their SHS math classes, where students tackle SAT like questions. Teachers either do a monthly SAT review or engage in a daily SAT practice question that is linked to the current curriculum. Mr. Janick and Mr. Lowman's Algebra II classes have just completed the unit on solving and graphing systems of equations. The unit culminated in an activity that applied student's knowledge. They ended the unit with SAT prep as the students were given time to work on the problems and then share their solutions and work with the rest of the class on the SMARTBoard. This gives them practice in explaining the rationale behind their answers.

Students in Mr. Cosma's Introduction to Computer Science class just learned how to program a computer to generate random numbers. The students were working on designing a guessing game where a user can try to guess the random number that the computer picked. This will help lay the foundation to discuss topics relating to objects oriented programming as well as discussions relating to game designs.



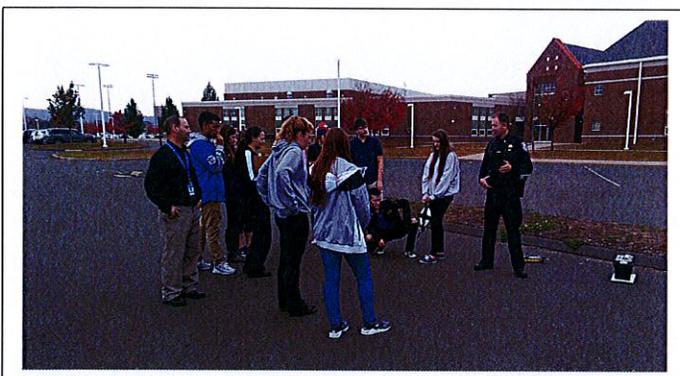
# SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Steven M. Autieri  
6-12 Science Curriculum Leader

November 18, 2016

## What's Happening at Suffield Middle School?

This fall, Dr. Jaime Rechenberg of the Capital Region Education Council (CREC) provided an intensive professional development opportunity acquainting our teachers with the three-dimensional framework of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Our teachers have been working to integrate many of the new science and engineering practices and crosscutting concepts into their instruction. **Grade 6** students recently completed the atmosphere unit by constructing interactive digital models of the atmosphere layers. Our **grade 7** teachers utilized the principle of phenomena-based events to provide a context for student learning during our human body unit while studying bones. Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Plourde provided our **grade 8** students with the ability to use models to construct explanations during a unit on the solar system and seasons.



Mr. Courchesne's Forensic Science class and Lt. Ryan Burell of SPD conducting a vehicle accident investigation.



Mrs. Killam utilizing the Plickers Interactive Questioning tool with her students during a unit on the atmosphere.

## What's Happening at Suffield High School?

As part of a unit on energy, students in the **grade 9** Integrated Science course participated in a STEM engineering design challenge to construct Solar Cookers in teams. Students were able to use solar energy to heat water and understand the design factors that influence the effectiveness of capturing solar energy in this context.

Our **grade 10** Biology teachers have been working to increase the student-centered opportunities for exploration in both academic and honors biology. In our unit on genetics and heredity, students were able to construct genetic family portraits, model the relationship between meiosis and genetics by constructing "Reebops", and in the coming days be applying these concepts to the topic of protein synthesis in a Design-O-Saur challenge.

Mrs. Volpintesta and Mr. Courchesne combined several of their **grade 11** Chemistry course sections to provide students the opportunity for meaningful discourse as they constructed models of the periodic table trends. Students taught their trend to the class utilizing an array of strategies.

AP Physics is experiencing great success in its first year at Suffield High. Mr. Szabla has recently completed the first instructional unit on kinematics utilizing an inquiry-based approach.



# SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Timothy Kinel**  
**6-12 Social Studies Curriculum Leader**

*November 18, 2016*

**Middle School:** Throughout the course of the first quarter of the 2016-17 academic year, the members of the Suffield Middle School Social Studies Department have been hard at work adjusting their existing curriculum to better meet the needs of all students. To this end, the sixth grade has been hard at work teaching their students about basic Geographical terminology and concepts such as the Five Themes, Map Skills, and the Basics of Government. To emphasize the importance that local government has on their everyday lives, the sixth graders welcomed Suffield's First Selectwoman Melissa Mack on October 24<sup>th</sup>, to discuss the many duties and responsibilities that local government fulfills. The seventh grade has taken steps to address academic skill development for their students through the lens of the global geography course in the areas of source analysis, argumentation, and student-led discussions. Teachers are looking to strengthen the development of student academic skills throughout the grade levels at Suffield Middle School. In the eighth grade, teachers have been undergoing a curriculum redesign that addresses the Foundations of American History from the Colonial American Period through the end of the American Civil War. Students have been engaging with foundational documents and examining the election process as stated in the US Constitution.



*Grade six students engaging in a conversation with First Selectwoman, Melissa Mack, on the role of local government.*



*Suffield High School students participating in a Mock Election; the Suffield Registrar of Voters brought ballots, privacy booths, and the vote scanner.*

**High School:** During the early portion of the 2016-17 academic year, the Social Studies teachers at the High School have been examining ways to provide students with a historical lens through which to observe the modern world. To meet this goal, students have been examining historical events and discussing their modern effects in the International Studies, Civics, and American Studies courses. By offering students the ability to view history and develop new understandings, they engage with the contemporary state of our nation and world. In addition to this shift in approach to content, students will also be the beneficiaries of a focus on academic skill development in the areas of argumentation, primary and secondary source analysis, presentation and discussion skills, and research. By honing our student expectations in these areas, we will offer the students of Suffield more thorough preparation for the challenges that they will face in college and career in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



# SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Richard Lane**  
K-12 Technology Integrationist

*November 18, 2016*

A little over two months into the school year, students at A. Ward Spaulding and McAlister Intermediate School are engaging with technology to practice skills, research information, and create products that effectively represent their learning. Kindergarten and First Grade students are using Android tablets for learning in station rotations in class and whole-group skill practice. The Library Media Specialist is leading lessons in all grade levels at Spaulding with different tablets and Chromebooks. These lessons provide students with choices in the use of mobile applications and include specialized projects connecting to concepts being studied in class.

McAlister students are diving into research and writing with their Chromebooks in hand. From developing database-searching skills to writing audience-specific letters, they are actively developing their digital literacy skills while being mindful of their digital environments. Additionally, non-digital technologies are being used in the up-and-coming Makerspace in the Library Media Center. Students are creating physical representations of their thinking and understanding with materials in this space, and providing oral and written explanations of that process. It will be exciting to see how students leverage the Makerspace as the year progresses.



*Sixth grade students building digital models of atmospheric layers*



*Kindergarteners building Math and ELA skills through mobile applications*

At the Middle School, students are modeling their thinking in digital formats with Google Apps for Education. From scientific models of lesson concepts to original creations depicting the perspectives of literary characters, the students are building their capacity to think critically and present that process in meaningful ways. The Library Media Center is also a hub of activity for this type of work, as students are expanding their learning horizons through innovative work in 3D modeling and digital collaboration.

The High School is providing opportunities for students to hone their research skills in preparation for critical argument, analytical thinking, and coherent and cohesive presentation. Google Apps for Education, research databases, and tools for digital feedback are being looked at and used for helping students productively engage in the research process and grow based on timely, focused, and constructive feedback from teachers and peers.

Students and teachers at the High School will also be participating in an "Hour of Code" event during the week of December 5 - 11. As part of a global initiative, this event provides students the opportunity to develop their computational thinking skills and solve problems using either a syntax-based or visual programming language. Proposed to the leadership team at the High School by a student, this event will provide students a modern-day, real-world method for engaging in a process that is prevalent in many sectors of today's society.



# SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

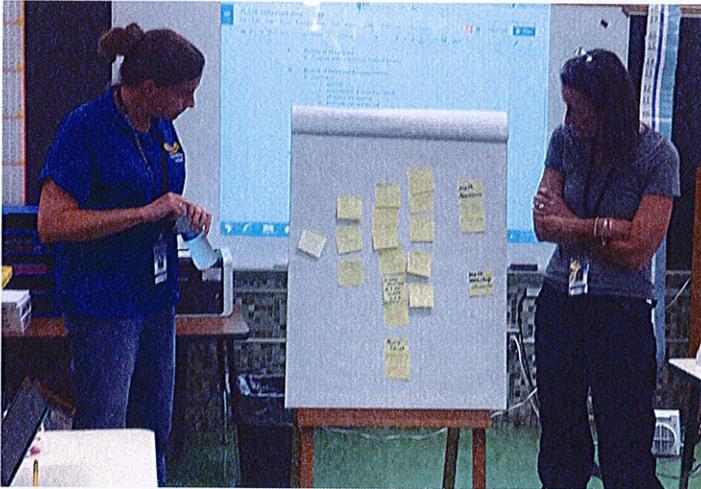
Erin Grasso  
K-5 Instructional Coach English Language Arts

November 18, 2016

## Instructional Coaching

The Roles and Responsibilities of the Instructional Coaches were introduced to all K-5 teachers at the start of the 2016-17 school-year. Instructional Coaching correlates directly to the District Improvement Plan as we are helping to provide resources and time to improve curriculum implementation, increasing teacher led learning, providing teachers with opportunities for professional development, and maintaining a focus on growth mindset through reflection and dialogue. Collectively, we are all teachers, and we are all here to grow and learn together.

During the months of September and October, a variety of ELA topics have been explored through coaching cycles. Topics have included: Analyzing Benchmark Assessments, Goal Setting for Reading Conferences, Managing Literacy Stations, Planning Effective Guided Reading lessons, and Classroom Environment.



*Kindergarten Teachers facilitating a PLC Meeting at Spaulding School.*



*A Kindergarten student practices reading pictures and hunting for words he knows during Reading Workshop.*

## K-5 Professional Learning Communities

Over the past four weeks, K-5 teachers have started delving into a teacher-based practice that aims to influence teacher growth and student learning. During weekly PLC meetings, teachers work together to closely examine lessons, projects, assessments, scores and instructional practices with the intent of improving what we do and how we do it. Through the PLC process (study-select-plan-implement-analyze-adjust), teachers and instructional coaches engage in honest and open dialogue regarding the areas that we need to improve on in order to best serve our student populations. Grade level teams have worked through the following steps:

1. Brainstorming Problems of Practice
2. Examining and discussing the learning expectations from the selected Problem of Practice
3. Determining how the Problem of Practice fits within the Scope and Sequence of District Curriculum
4. Discussing the learning expectations within the Problem of Practice

In the coming weeks, teachers will begin collaboratively researching and selecting instructional strategies and resources for enhancing learning as outlined in their chosen Problem of Practice.



# SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

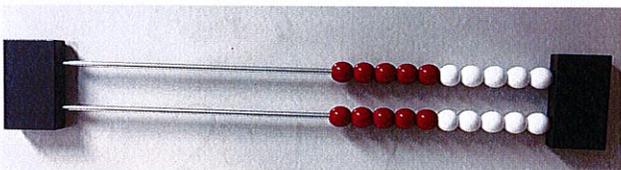
**JESSICA MARZI**  
K-5 Mathematics Coach

*November 18, 2016*

## Moments in Math Coaching

*"Number sense cannot be taught, it has to be caught"* - Christina Tondevold

On November 1st Kindergarten and 2nd grade teachers participated in Professional Development centered around Early Numeracy. This was our first session of four that will be held throughout the school year. Our focus on our time together was based on Cognitively Guided Instruction research from Thomas Carpenter and Student Centered Mathematics by John Van De Walle. Discussion surrounded four early numeracy concepts: subitizing, verbal counting, object counting and cardinality; with an emphasis on subitizing. Teachers left with the idea that students need many and varied experiences with subitizing and use of a variety of tools such as dot cards, ten frames and math racks. Subitizing is the "missing wheel" to help children move forward from using counting as their only strategy for solving problems.

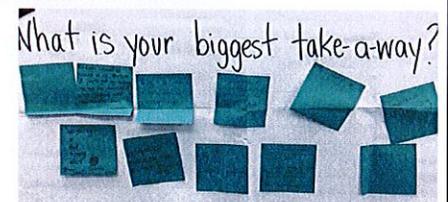


Above:  
Math Rack or Rekenrek



Left:  
Savvy Subitizing

*Tools for subitizing are more than just dot patterns!  
Variety of tools is key.*



*Teachers in grades K and 2 exit slips for subitizing  
PD on November 1, 2016.*

## New Teacher PLC

The instructional coaches, Erin Grasso and myself, facilitated the first New Teacher PLC on 10/13. During our first meeting, we reflected on the Domain 1 of the CCT Rubric. New Teachers brainstormed topics for future meetings.

Topics of Interest Included:

- Reviewing grade-level report card expectations
- Preparing for successful parent-teacher conferences
- Using the workshop model to differentiate instruction for small groups in ELA and Math
- Additional support with SLO development

A second meeting was held on 10/27. Focus of the discussion was on the text *Yardsticks* by Chip Wood and how this text supports teachers understanding children's developmental stages and how this is critical to effective teaching and classroom planning

The new teachers also engaged in A review of the K-5 Best Practices Document: Reading, Writing, and Math Workshop Environment expectations.

New teacher PLC will continue throughout the school year.