

Superintendent Report – October 2017

Connecticut State Department of Education Performance Matters Forum:

The goal of the state sponsored workshop, held on September 12 in Cromwell, was to ascertain each district's broad scale implementation of Connecticut's *Next Generation Accountability System*. This is the "report card" that every school receives each year in the late winter regarding its performance with that of other schools in the state. (ELA, math, science, graduation rates, physical fitness, etc.) You may recall that we shared this information with the Region One Board and many members who attended as audience in March of 2017. We discussed our data compared with that of the state and considered areas for our school's improvement.

At the Forum, I and two other superintendents spoke on the panel to discuss how our schools used the *Next Generation Accountability* report. I shared the story of our high school's journey for continuous improvement, how we looked at data for the past several years and compared our classroom data (percentages and letter grades and the trends) with the state data. I discussed some of the changes that were being implemented to ensure that we were reaching all students and challenging students at high levels, which included the master schedule, Flex time, curriculum mapping and work on assessments. The session was well attended; I believe we had about 100 in our session. Lisa Carter also attended the session and the conference.

The day, overall, proved to be very helpful to our region's understanding of how we can use the *Next Generation Accountability System*, as we could better understand the state's calculations and comparisons.

Legislative Committee for CAPSS

I am a member of the CAPSS Legislative Committee that met on Monday, Sept. 18 in West Hartford. Our twenty some members had a lengthy discussion about the budget that was proposed in mid-September. Of particular concern to educators is the fact that schools will be relying upon the municipalities to approve expenditures that are to be "cost-saving" measures. This could include purchases such as software programs, technology, and other contracted services. It was made clear that not only does it "make locally elected Boards of Education subservient to municipal officials", it violates the statutory authority that give school boards the ability to make decisions that are in the best interest of students.

Our schools are already working together to create efficiencies and looking for ways to be more effective in our delivery of programs. EdAdvance, the RESC for Region One, has been meeting with schools in their area to discuss how they can help work with schools in this endeavor.

We recognize that school leaders and boards of education need to be constantly in discussion about why we do what we do. In schools, we find that often we must make a decision about a purchase within a short timeframe. If the current budget (as of September 21) would be approved, then schools would need to rely on town officials to meet and approve a number of requests from each of our districts. This would clearly require a much longer time period that could have negative impact for each school. In addition, then municipalities could deny a request that the board of education believes is essential.

On September 21, I sent an email to Brian Ohler requesting a time to talk, either by phone or in person. I will provide an update to the Board at the meeting.

Certified Contract Negotiations

Sam and I are currently involved in negotiations for four of our K-8 schools and are beginning HVRHS negotiations the first part of October. Another K-8 school also begins in October.

Administrative Meetings

Lisa and I are holding these meetings. Some of these meetings are intended to be separate for the High School and for the K-8 schools, so that we can have focus on topics specific for each of these levels. Some meetings will be conducted together for a portion of the day, in order for all of the administrators to begin a book study/discussion on "*School Leadership that Works*" and to learn about the specific responsibilities outlined for principals and school leaders. We will be involved in the book study and this new learning for the next several meetings. My hope is that this professional development, specifically designed for school leaders, will be a springboard for each principal to understand specific areas where each administrators is strong and other areas where, according to the needs in their specific school districts, can be strengthened in order to develop a collaborative partnership with teachers that builds momentum for change and continuous improvement.

Stakeholder Communications

These are the areas that we are currently addressing:

Parent/Community Advisory Groups

HVRHS is in the process of enlisting and inviting parents and community members to be members of the Parent/Community Advisory Committee. A late fall meeting is being planned. Teachers and administrators will share elements of the Strategic Plan that are being addressed in the high school. This forum is to be presentation, small group table discussions with staff, then questions to the large group, with 4-5 topics of focus. A spring meeting will follow and more topics will be highlighted.

Newspaper

The *Lakeville Journal* has agreed to print "Notes from the Superintendent" every 4-5 weeks. We want to thank them for helping us with this communication to the public.

Website/Facebook

The Region One website is undergoing changes. Tina and our Central Office support staff have been very instrumental in seeing that the new website is attractive and is easy for visitors to navigate. I plan to have administrative rights to the site, so that, with the help of our central office staff, we can keep the site current with news and photos.

Some of the same current information that will be placed on the website will be placed on the Region One Facebook page, which we hope will encourage people to go to either place to look for information, to stay up to date.

Newsletters:

Administrators have been asked to find staff members who will contribute to one of four regional newsletters each year. Each teacher can write a short article and/or contribute photos. Each school will have two pages in the regional newsletter which will be formatted by Nancy Hegy Martin and then sent through Facebook, School Messenger, and the website, to any individual who wishes to read the newsletter in a digital format. We will print some hard copies to distribute to reception areas in banks, medical offices, town halls, etc.

We anticipate that the first edition will be produced in late October.