

Superintendent Report – September 2017

Opening the New School Year:

Our first day with teachers was a good one! We served a light continental breakfast outside of the auditorium. We set out several tables of professional books that we had been collecting in Central Office over the years. With piano music from one of our students, Trevor Hampson, playing as people were being seated, we welcomed everyone to the new year and introduced our Central Office Staff and all administrators. Lisa Carter introduced our 15 new teachers and gave a short speech explaining that which has been accomplished this summer and what is being planned for this year. I addressed the group about the extreme discourse that has been taking place in our country, particularly in light of the events in Charlottesville. My message was that it is our role as educators to change the narrative and to reinforce a continuous message to students that we must practice tolerance, a deeper understanding of cultural differences, and kindness instead of bigotry and hatred. To conclude our day, Alexa Curtis, the first recipient of the Derwin Scholarship, spoke about her experiences prior to graduation at HVRHS. We asked that she speak about what Region One did that prepared her well and if there were areas that we could have improved upon. Alexa gave a moving speech that was much appreciated by the audience. The Opening Day session is on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/ExAB0hef0X8> and will be placed on our Region One website.

I like to dedicate time at the beginning of the school year to welcome all of our support staff, as well. I scheduled a meeting with all secretaries and then spoke with the bus drivers when their company met. Because we do not have kitchen staff and paraprofessionals in the schools until the day students arrive, I will need to find another time to meet with these two groups, as well as the custodians. Our custodians were on contract, but frankly were too busy at the start of the year to make time for a meeting, so we will give this a few weeks and then schedule a time for donuts and coffee.

Communication to the Public: We are increasing communication to the public over the next year. Much of this will be through social media, parent/community meetings and the *Lakeville Journal*. The newspaper has agreed to print an article I will write every 4-5 weeks. Each article will also be posted on the Region One website a week or so after it is published in the newspaper and these will be archived. We want to also send minutes of our Region One monthly administrator meetings to the boards, for those agenda items that are relevant to your work. In addition, our Communications Committee has been meeting to discuss ways for us to have effective communication to our stakeholders.

Our Continuing Programs:

All of our schools are continuing to do the work outlined in their Strategic Plans. Most of these programs were started in the last year or two. These include the incorporation of Student Led Conferences, scheduling for student success, personalizing learning, mapping curriculum, and changing grading practices. Teachers and administrators are refining their practices in these areas and, with increased time to work together, will continually make these programs the best they can be.

New Programs:

At the High School, we have now begun instituting these new programs:

- The Career Experience Program
- The Bridges Program (for Alternative Education)
- Personalized Learning Courses

The Career Experience Program and the Bridges Program are off to a good start and those staff members who are overseeing these programs meet regularly with Mrs. Carter and with Dr. Martinez and Mr. Strever to discuss their progress. More communication will be occurring with the Personalized Learning Courses being offered (these replace Independent Studies) and we expect to see more students signing up for these programs over the next few weeks.

We make a serious effort to ensure that the staff involved in these programs have the support and resources they need for the programs and students to be successful. All three of our administrators will report in more detail at each meeting as to the progress being made.

We are excited about these opportunities, combined with the different schedule we are currently using, that will help students by giving them new and different learning experiences.

Lastly, I have been asked to be a part of a Panel Discussion on September 12 sponsored by the Connecticut Department of Education for the 2017 Performance Matters Forum. The description of the session is the following:

“The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) recognizes all of your hard work and dedication in serving Connecticut's students, specifically your districts' work regarding the Next Generation Accountability System (NGAS). The NGAS moves beyond test scores and graduation rates, and instead, provides a more holistic, multifaceted perspective of district performance and student growth over time. With that said, the CSDE would be honored if you would share your expertise and vision on a panel discussion at the *Performance Matters Forum* on **September 12, 2017 from 8:30 am to 10:00 am**. The goal of the workshop is to ascertain each district's broad scale implementation of Connecticut's NGAS. Districts will have an opportunity to share their story of how the 12 indicators help prepare students for success in college, careers and life.

I will provide a brief report on the conference, which Lisa Carter will also be attending, at the October Board meeting.

Teachers new to the High School and Region 1 and some information about them:

Jonathan Bruno received a B.A. in History at UMASS/Boston, a Masters in Special Education from Northeastern University. He is a few months away from earning his Doctorate in Education from Northeastern University. Jonathan is currently writing his doctoral dissertation focused on teacher education and development with regard to special education students. Jonathan has taught in K-12 schools in Boston for 14 years and holds certifications in History, Special Education, and English as a Second Language. Jonathan has lived in Western Massachusetts, Ohio, Nantucket and Boston. He has recently relocated to the Berkshires with his wife and three young children. He worked in the bike industry and his enthusiasm for this sport drove him to organize an after

school cycling program for Boston students. Along with cycling he loves to spend time in the great outdoors exploring, hiking, nordic skiing, and playing with his children.

Dr. Mary O'Neill is the new Career Experience Coordinator and will be working with high school students and staff. Mary earned a Bachelors Degree in Accounting and Philosophy at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania and her Masters and PhD in philosophy at DePaul University in Chicago. Her interests are reading, being outdoors, vegetable gardening, and watching Masterpiece Mystery. She is married to Jeff May and they have three children and live in Lakeville.

We are very happy to have Lori Bucco back as a member of our High School staff. Lori is an English teacher and will be co-teaching the freshman Humanities course. She received her Bachelors Degree and Masters Degree in English from Virginia Tech. She retired from teaching in the Fairfax County school district in Virginia and also taught at the University of Richmond for 19 summers. She has moved to Norfolk where she and her husband are renovating a 200-year-old home, which she calls a life-long project.

Francisco Charles is our new HS Spanish teacher. He attended the Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey, Framingham State University, and Sacred Heart University. He has lived in the United States for 20 years. His hobby is wood-carving. This past spring, his son and oldest daughter graduated from UConn. Francisco's youngest daughter is a senior in high school.

Christiane Morel Olson is our new High School French teacher. She attended the University of Colorado and received her Bachelors Degree in French and Theater, the University of Kentucky, where she received her Masters in French Literature, and Michigan State University where she received an MFA in Acting. Christiane's interests include French, theater, singing, travel- especially to visit family in France and Colorado. She is also interested in environmental and conservation issues. Her husband teaches drama at Hotchkiss and they have two children who both attend Salisbury Central School.

DavidJohn Douglas is the new teacher in the HS science department and completed the majority of his undergraduate studies at Central Connecticut State University. He then went on to complete his graduate work there and is now a member of the current 092 cohort at Central. His hobbies and personal interests include backpacking, woodworking, gardening, and doing arbor work for his wife, so they are able to travel. DavidJohn and his wife have two children and they have two dogs, a cat, a fish, and two dozen chickens. Their family hobbies include lots of traveling, camping and visiting wineries and breweries. He looks forward to working with Region One for many reasons, but particularly because he spent his childhood in West Cornwall.

Celina Huber is the EL Coordinator for Region One. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Services from the University of Bridgeport. She then went on to earn a Masters Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Bridgeport and a Masters Degree in Curriculum and Instruction in ESOL from Concordia University of Portland. After teaching for 14 years in the Bridgeport Public School District, Celina and her husband, Kevin, moved to Salisbury with their two children. She enjoys traveling, scrapbooking, gymnastics and spending time with her family.