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Unique Times



Inspire Unique Solutions

(Hula Hoops teach Kindergarteners Social Distancing)

**In order to prepare each child for what comes next,
we must align vision, expectation, and practice.**

Region 1 Board of Education

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

A TIME OF CREATIVITY, INNOVATION AND SHARING



The new year can bring time to reflect on the events of the previous year and opportunities to make plans for the year that has arrived. In thinking about 2020 and the start of 2021, we are understandably consumed with thoughts about the challenging impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Region 1 staff, students, and families. While our staff and students are bravely weathering the storm, ten months into the pandemic, we are periodically seeing fatigue, grief, anxiety, and depression emerging among members of our school community. The presence of an effective vaccine brings hope for a better tomorrow, but we know there is still a way to go before we return to a more normal daily routine. And yet, in the midst of considering the sobering circumstances created by the spread of SARS-CoV-2, we are struck by the robust and inspirational ideas and practices that have arisen in the educational community in Region 1. Our administrators, staff and students are digging deep and staying true to their commitment to work together as a community to have the most positive and successful school year possible under daunting circumstances. For this to happen takes courage, creativity, innovation, and a willingness to listen carefully and to share ideas and practices with one another to ensure that our staff and students are safe and engaged in their learning.

This issue of the Region 1 newsletter will give you a glimpse into the classrooms in all our schools. You will read about the unique and remarkable practices of administrators, teachers, and support staff as they work together to use new educational tools for learning, provide positive prompts for safety and hygiene as well as social and emotional well-being, and spruce up their classroom environments to reinforce a positive atmosphere. Jill Pace and Scott Fellows, our Assistant Superintendents, have shared information about the support that teachers provide for each other in a variety of roles that encourage the high energy levels needed to persevere as we make our way through the year. You will also find information about how we plant the seeds to ensure that our students develop the characteristics identified in the Region 1 Portrait of a Graduate. Finally, you will see images of how Region One staff support each other in fighting COVID fatigue.

As we continue our journey through this pandemic, it is important to be mindful of the toll that the event is taking on our lives. At the same time, it is essential that we concentrate equally on the characteristics that make us resilient in the face of adversity. By empowering our staff and our students to honor the less than positive aspects of the current situation as they experience them, and then to draw on the Habits of Mind or to “think outside of the box” with regard to how to manage those feelings, we harness the courage and the will to make a better tomorrow.

I hope that you see this inspirational and holistic view of our educational process as you read through this newsletter. Thank you for all that you do to support our schools and please continue to stay safe and healthy.

Lisa Carter, Superintendent Region 1 Schools

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS

In August and September, when we started looking at the school year, we saw it as a significant challenge that lay before us — a little like planning a trip to Mars. Some things we could imagine wanting or needing, but we could only begin to perceive how many more we would need until we needed them. We took stock of all the information we had, asked a lot of questions of both teachers and community members, and prepared ourselves as best we could for the unknown and launched into this extraordinary year.

At first, it was hard to imagine a day in this new world, much less a week or a month. We took things a day at a time — sometimes even a moment at a time — but we kept moving forward and built our own version of what our schools and classrooms could be during this time. As you read this newsletter, you will have the opportunity to see just a small part of the engaging and relevant learning experiences being created in classrooms and online each day. These innovations all stem from the creativity and resilience of our staff. This is work that every staff member in Region One has been committed to day in and day out, and we could not be prouder of their efforts.

We are especially indebted to those colleagues who have stepped in to support coworkers in need or agreed to serve as instructional coaches or mentors. Just as we recognize the power of relationships in supporting our students, we know that it is collegial relationships that strengthen us as educators and help us evolve over time.

Mentoring: Bringing new teachers into the profession with support and guidance is an honor that mentors take seriously. This year, more than twenty veteran teachers from across the region were asked to officially serve as mentors for our new faculty members. In an average year, mentoring meetings might include a blend of sharing one's own experience and supporting a mentee in developing their own teaching practice. This year, mentors and mentees are inventing new ways to work together from afar. Using technology, mentees can observe mentor teachers in action with students, and mentors can virtually sit in on lessons and provide feedback. In fact, this is one area in which virtual meetings can be more beneficial. Because some mentors are not in the same building as their mentees, the virtual observations can happen more often than in the past. Mentors are highlighting the good work happening across the district and helping mentees to make connections with other colleagues who can serve as resources both now and as they continue their careers in Region One.

Instructional Coaching: A year this different can make even the most seasoned educator want some additional support. As you have probably seen in the media, many experienced teachers are describing their work this year as making them feel like first-year teachers. We are deeply fortunate to have a cadre of instructional coaches ready and available to all teachers seeking to reflect on their work, learn new strategies, or collaboratively troubleshoot concerns. The coaches in each building have developed interesting ways of supporting colleagues around their own teaching responsibilities, from before-school "Coaches' Corner" meetings to after-school sessions to virtual connections being made via email.

Kent Center School has adopted the use of "pineapple boards." Pineapples are a symbol of warmth, friendship, and hospitality, and pineapple boards in schools are posted near classrooms in which the teacher is inviting colleagues to observe and provide feedback on the lesson. Sometimes pineapple boards include specific instructional practices about which the teacher is asking for feedback. There is a surfeit of knowledge available within our buildings so that some of the best professional learning comes from colleagues, and this has been a great way to showcase that knowledge.

Our professional learning day on January 4 ensured that all teachers had the opportunity to work collaboratively with colleagues to reflect on the work of the year to date, look ahead to the rest of the year, and learn from one another. They are looking for interesting and unique ways to allow our students to demonstrate their mastery of priority standards and to couple those lesson ideas with social-emotional learning strategies (including Habits of Mind) that will encourage our students (at all grade levels) to become better learners. We look forward to having the opportunity to continue this collaborative effort in March. This year especially, we truly are all for one.

Scott Fellows, Ed.D. and Jill Pace, Interim Assistant Superintendents



Region One strives to nurture confident communicators who are globally and environmentally aware and able to problem-solve and self-advocate.

It is a K-12 Commitment.



DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION



Students at Cornwall Consolidated practice their communications skills by working in teams on some projects and presenting to their



GUIDING PROBLEM SOLVING

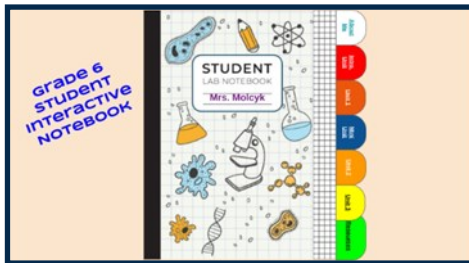


LEFT: “Where there is a will, there is a way,” as demonstrated by Kent’s virtual winter concert. (story on page 8)
RIGHT: HVRHS chemistry students work with individual kits funded by [21st Century Fund for HVRHS](#).

COVID-19 has given students and faculty numerous opportunities to hone their skills.

Kudos to their creativity, flexibility and willingness to think outside the box during these challenging times.

BUILDING GLOBAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS



Unit 1: Polar Bear Habitat



[Canaan Digital Notebooks.](#)

(story on page 12)

*https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1jCz5eqR5wF2csg1CltsKUGxHNM6R-lT_0O-lmpXw2y8/edit#slide=id.g9190e3c4f8_2_89

Students at Sharon Center build community awareness by collecting warm pajamas and cozy socks for families in need of a helping hand. Students and staff raised several hundred dollars by wearing pajamas to school, too.



ENCOURAGING SELF-ADVOCACY



Left: HVRHS students at peaceful protest

Right: Cornwall second graders share feelings during a morning meeting



Fostering Confidence



LEFT: Lee H. Kellogg students learn how to make large tasks doable by logging their progress in the *Walk Across America Challenge* one recess at a time. (story on page 11)

RIGHT: Kent students prepare for videoing their Winter Concert Boomwhacker performance. (story on page 8)

THE PATH OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

- Kathy West, Science Teacher

Middle school students in Cornwall have been busy figuring out the “how's and whys” of different phenomena. Students drive the learning through the questions they ask and post on boards.

Some of the most engaging lessons are at the beginning of a unit, when students first notice things about a new phenomenon and wonder about aspects they do not know about yet. Recently some students started moon journals, looking at the moon’s phases every day. Their observations and questions drove later lessons about the difference between phases of the moon and lunar eclipses. Concurrently, they are looking at shooting stars, asking if they are really stars and what makes the “trail” of light we see “shoot” across the sky. While other students watched videos of the golden jellyfish in Palau (people can swim with these jellyfish!) and generated long lists of their observations and questions about the life cycle, feeding habits, and effects of climate change on the jellyfish.

Recently, 7th graders began looking at bath bombs, wondering where the bubbles came from, what they are made of, and do they make bubbles in liquids other than water, like milk, oil, orange juice, and apple cider. 8th graders listening to a music box recording learned how the sound was made and transmitted through the air, then how it was recorded and sent via the internet to other computers. This kicked off a unit on sound waves and how they are generated and travel; then how pitch and volume are related to the structure of those waves. Later the questions extended into light waves, ultraviolet, infrared, radio waves, X-rays and other parts of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Our focus is to make sense of the observations we make and the data we collect. When something does not make sense, students ask questions, and actively engage in deciding what kind of investigation we should conduct to get the information needed to understand the phenomenon. Students gain skills in scientific practices through seeking answers to questions they generated. Then they design other experiments, each with a single variable. For example, when the 7th graders wanted to know how bath bomb ingredients caused the bubbles to form, they tested each ingredient separately. They noticed that some ingredients floated, and some sank, so they asked questions about that, and learned about density. They also noticed that some ingredients dissolved more readily than others, so they learned about solubility. Then they started combining two different ingredients at a time, to see if a combination of ingredients effected how the bubbles form. Their next questions were about what kind of gas the bubbles are made of and so their questions take them to the next level of knowledge.



The scientific method also encourages collaborative skills, as students find it helpful to discuss their ideas with each other. Talking about ideas out loud, sharing models of their current thinking and listening to a broad array of ideas from classmates, helps them make sense of the phenomenon, but it also requires listening skills, clarity of communication, focus, and suspension of judgement. Students practice these important skills often, and it has been wonderful to see their confidence in putting their ideas out build, even when they are unsure whether their ideas are “right”.

Left: 7th Graders gathering material for bath bombs phenomenon

MORNING MEETINGS BUILD CONNECTIVITY

- Jane Hanley, Spanish Teacher

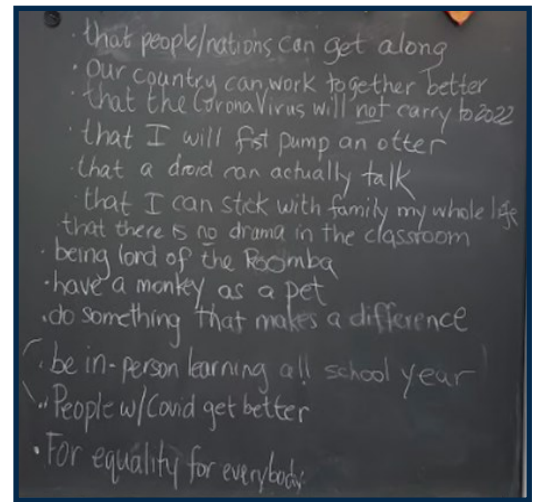
This year, all students and adults in Cornwall Consolidated participate in a morning meeting from 8:30-8:45. Like many others in the building, I enthusiastically embrace the chance to get to know students better. Our meetings include several components which give me the opportunity to assess where my students are emotionally and to build unity among them. Points of discussion include “Habits of Mind,” such as managing impulsivity or perseverance. We also discuss current events and how to deal with the impact they have on students.

In January, students listened to Martin Luther King, Jr’s “I Have a Dream” speech and were asked to share their dreams. Some responded lighthearted, fist-pump an otter, others were more profound, wanting to be more connected to family; to contribute meaningfully to their own life. We will work together to support each other’s pursuit of these dreams.

Sixth grade students wanted to connect with other members of the larger Cornwall community. While many of us see others outside of our homes, not everyone has that opportunity, particularly older members of our town. With the assistance of Cornwall Park and Rec’s director, Jen Markow, and the skilled artistic talent of our classroom paraprofessional, Tricia Collins, sixth graders are participating in local outreach projects. Beautiful turkey bookmarks at Thanksgiving and homemade greeting cards for the holidays were created during morning meetings, too. Our next step is to establish “penpal” connections between students and local seniors.



There never seems to be enough time to accomplish what we would like to. Yet, having the opportunity to share our feelings, and to reach out and connect with others, especially during the time of COVID-19, is vital. My dream is that, in the future, we will find more opportunities to create and sustain these much-needed connections.



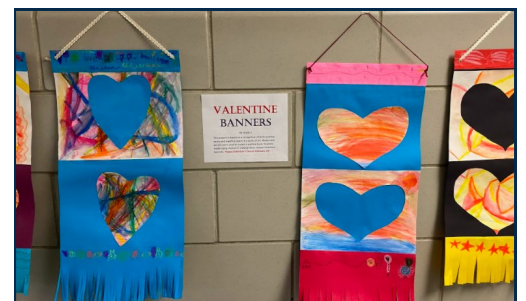
ART IS ALIVE & WELL AT CCS!

- Mary Kay Ravanola, Principal



There are so many amazing, creative art projects occurring at CCS under the careful planning of our art teacher, Christine Hanley. This past semester middle school students chose a superhero image and used a grid to enlarge the image segment by segment. This fundamental art skill is useful in many ways. Murals are often designed this way. The finished products were stunning!

Grade 2 students created Valentine Banners that focused on recognizing both positive and negative space in a work of art. Watercolor pencils were used to create a washed look. Students made many choices in making these unique Valentine banners.



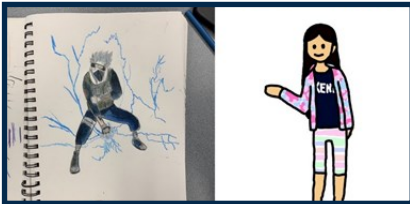
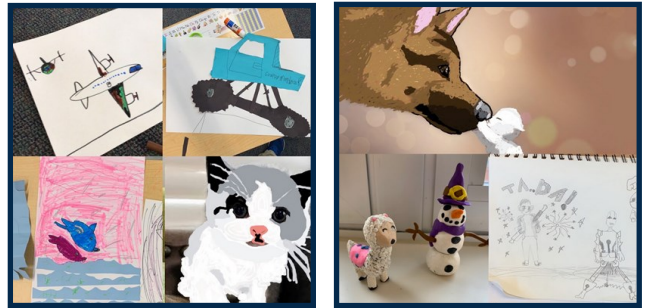
CREATING CHOICE FROM OUR ART-ON-A-CART!

- Ellen Tarabara



This is our fourth year using the Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB) philosophy, which is a choice-based art education approach. Whether students are at home or in the classroom, we continue to think, work, and act like artists by using the behaviors required for each phase of the artmaking process – starting with the most challenging step of generating an idea. In a TAB program, the child is the artist, the classroom is their studio, and the artwork is a result of their choices. Our goal is to continue making choice artwork, be it from a class taught from a cart or while at home.

Our Art-on-a-Cart setup promotes student choice. 2nd through 8th Graders receive a sketchbook, while students in K through 1 request what size paper they want from the art cart. Since we are not sharing supplies, students have three options for how they create their choice artwork: use the art supplies they already have at their desks; bring supplies from home or borrow supplies from our Art Cart. Grades K - 3 can borrow supplies for one class and 4 - 8 keep supplies for multiple classes.



We are doing what professional artists do – setting up a mini art studio wherever we are! Students learn to create artwork within limitations such as: time, space, and/or materials. The emphasis is on process rather than product. The life lesson is that during times of uncertainty artists make art to relax their mind, express their feelings, and have fun!

KCS VIRTUAL PERFORMANCES

- David Poirier

KCS students have taken their performances online this year. With live performances being prohibited due to COVID, KCS music teachers created video editions of the annual fall musical for the third and fourth graders, as well as the Winter Concert.

Last spring during the initial quarantine, BBB Press in New York introduced some musicals specifically designed to be rehearsed and “performed” in a distance-learning format. KCS selected their show, “Super Happy Awesome News!” as it showed children during quarantine putting a positive spin on the situation until they realized that sharing their honest feelings about their struggles was just as valuable. The student performers had to make videos of themselves singing their solos and speaking their monologues. Once complete, the teacher had to edit the videos and put them in order to create a coherent program. Although it lacked the nervous energy of a live performance, the results were astounding - bringing both laughter and tears to all who watched.

Our new music colleague, Jennifer Moros, and I collaborated to put together our Winter Concert. Like the musical, the students recorded their individual vocal or instrumental parts and the teachers synchronized and assembled them into ensembles. This style of performance made it necessary for the students to be truly independent. Students and parents alike enjoyed the show, but all are looking forward to a return to the traditional live performance.



The Kids Heart Challenge is usually a full day event where students in grades 2-6 participate in a variety of station activities run by parent volunteers. Since we were unable to do that this year, students participated during their regular physical education classes. Activities for students in grades 2-4 included regular jump roping, long rope, hula hoops, climb the mountain, twirl n' jump, agility ladder, and jump the snake and ocean waves. Grades 5-8 created their own personalized projects. They choreographed dance and jump rope routines; developed basketball trick shots and honed soccer, Chinese jump rope, and "tinikling" skills. Our distance learning students interacted and participated virtually with their classmates. During each PE class, videos were created, which were then edited to make a composite video that was shared with their families.

Through this event students learned the importance of physical activity and keeping their hearts healthy. The Kids Heart Challenge is also a fundraiser for the American Heart Association. At the end of January, we had raised close to \$400, with donations still coming in. Thank you to all the students who opened their minds to new ideas and possibilities and thus kept the Kids Heart Challenge tradition strong during these unique times.

SPECIAL THIRD GRADE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

- Adrienne McBrien & Brittany Barrett



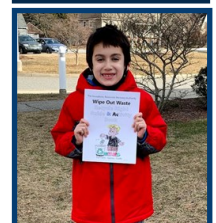
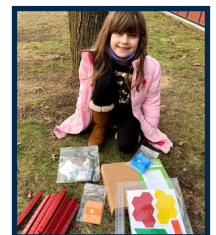
Third graders at KCS participate in many special programs and this year has been no exception. Every year, The Taghannuck Grange #100 from Sharon, CT, kindly provides each child with a dictionary with the goal of assisting students become stronger writers, readers, and thinkers. We appreciate the generosity of The Grange!



Our annual scarecrow project began with read "alouds," which guided students to use their imaginations. Then they used craft supplies to create their own scarecrows (absolutely adorable!). Next, students brainstormed their ideas using a graphic organizer and wrote a rough draft using Google Docs. They worked with teachers, in-person or remotely, to edit and revise their writing. The children shared their work with classmates and their families.

During math time, children explore concepts using the Bridges in Mathematics program that involves hands-on learning. They received their own kit of materials that included number and fraction cards, base ten pieces, dice, game markers, pattern blocks, and more. The children work with classmates from a distance while using their own math manipulatives!

Jennifer Baum from Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority provided a virtual presentation on recycling that connected to a poster contest. The students were surprised to learn how much trash individuals create in just one year! They discovered "recycle right" minimizes trash significantly and helps take care of the environment. Students then created posters for the Annual Billboard Contest. The HRRRA gave each child recycled gifts of informational coloring booklets, bookmarks, and pencils. We are thankful for such a wonderful community resource!



KEEPING IT ALL TOGETHER!

- Eileen Gargan

Some of us are born with incredible executive functioning skills. Others have to work at it. Third and fourth graders are becoming more and more aware of how improving their organizational skills and time management can lead to feeling more confident, being more productive and enjoying more free time. Our future is in good hands!

Below, students share their strategies for feeling successful and having time to do whatever they love to do.

- *I have routines so I am ready for school. I read from 6:00-6:30 in the morning, and then I have breakfast. Next, I get dressed and then make my bed and do my curtains. Then, last, I do the dishes with my brother and brush my teeth. This helps us learn how to do things and to be prepared.*
- *I organize my home calendar into categories. This helps me because if I forget my plans, I look at the categories and remember. I also organize my student planner so when I look at it, I do all of my homework.*
- *I get up about 6:30. I sign into my computer at 8:40. I prepare myself with what I may need during the day. I look at the schedule in my student planner and organize my desk every day. I have folders for each subject.*
- *We have a lot of routines at school. When I come to school in the morning, I put my backpack and my jacket in my locker.*
- *I think Google Tools help me because I can use voice typing. This is faster, but I need to make sure to go back and edit.*
- *We all clean and organize our desks on Fridays. I do this to make sure my folders and books are easy to get to. I have my pencils and erasers on my desk for when I need them.*
- *On Wednesday I order library books online. I read my library books every night, so it is good to have books that I have chosen.*
- *At the end of the day, everyone packs up and gets their coats and backpacks ready. We put our chairs on our desks, and we put up our crates that hold our backpacks and our green chairs that are used for outside.*
- *Google Tools saves me time and checks my mistakes. When I use Google Tools my writing is better, makes more sense and is easier to read.*
- *I set a timer for 20 minutes so I can do my daily reading. This helps me stay focused and not watch the clock.*
- *I use my plastic envelope to store my homework, so it doesn't get damaged on the way home and on the way back to school.*
- *I organize my backpack. I put my lunch in one area and my school work in another. This helps me find things.*



LHK LIBRARY HAPPENINGS

- Nikki Blass, Library/Media Manager

Lee H. Kellogg students and families were given the opportunity to enjoy so much over the last month, even if some of it was virtual.

- Can you name that baby? Teachers and staff entered their baby photos and students had to guess which baby went with which participant. Jillian Turner, Lincoln Miller and Mary Worden were the winners who guessed the most correctly. Each winner received new books. (See back cover)

- In December students, teachers, and staff participated in our all-school LHK Gingerbread House Contest. Once the houses were built, photos were sent to families and students show the finished products. We discovered that LHK students are creative architects. In school, students visited the display and voted on the teacher and staff house they liked best. Miss Adams took 1st place and Mrs. Dakers took 2nd. We are certain next year's contest



- For 14 days during leading up to the holidays, teachers and staff members pre-recorded holiday bedtime stories or held live zoom bedtime stories for all LHK families to enjoy each night at 7:00 p.m.

- What child does not love opening a present? This December, thanks to an anonymous donation of new books, each student received a wrapped book to keep. And in January, to celebrate returning to school after a month out for holidays and distance learning, we created a 2021 LHK Jeopardy game¹ for families and students to enjoy.

¹ <https://jeopardylabs.com/play/lee-h-kellogg-jeopardy-2021>

WALK ACROSS AMERICA

- Kaleigh Selino and Amanda Spelbos

Walk Across America! No, not really, but figuratively speaking, yes, we hopefully will! This year middle school students will get to throw out the old boring recess and add in a fitness/cross-curricular spice to recess time.

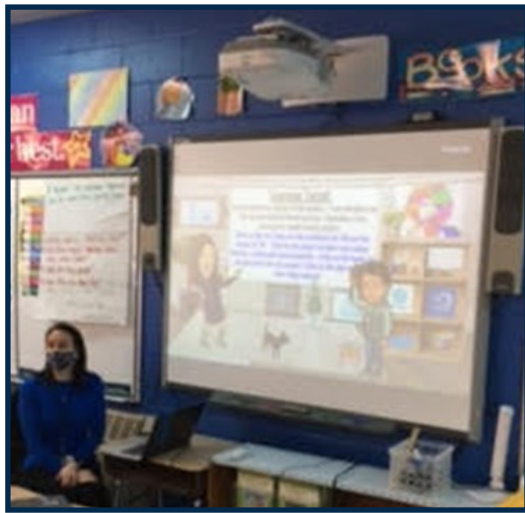
Walk across America has been a program used in many schools across the country to give students an opportunity to explore our United States from the comforts of their own town. It also gives them opportunities to improve their cardiovascular fitness along with expanding their knowledge of other subjects in a relaxed recess environment. Socially, the students are able to relax and unwind with their peers while walking laps around our recess field. Mentally, they increase their knowledge of our ever-changing country and dive into the mathematics involved in completing the cardio challenge. (see page 4)

After tallying the number of miles students walk each week, we document their progress on a map and provide a fact about the city or state students walk to. Their goal is to walk from Falls Village, CT to Pasadena, CA. In just two weeks, students have made it to New York City! Good luck Kellogg!

LET'S GET DIGITAL, DIGITAL! EDUCATION, DIGITAL NOTEBOOKS

- Mrs. Molcyk

As Bob Dylan once crooned, “The times they are a-changin’.” At the beginning of the pandemic, teachers were faced with a sudden, unprecedented change in teaching. It left many of us asking questions such as, “What do I do now?” or “How do I continue to keep my students engaged?” In a quest to find the answers to these questions and more, I found Digital Notebooks. These are digital versions of paper and pencil notebooks that, at their core, allow students to reflect upon their learning. However, their use can go above and beyond that with some adjustments.



I was immediately drawn to the idea of Digital Notebooks for several reasons. For one, it is a great way to go green! Secondly (my favorite reason) is they are digital so they are accessible to students from any location if they have an electronic device, and even better — they cannot get lost! Digital notebooks are also a great way for students to take ownership of their learning and they can use them as a reference tool as well. According to an article by Miller and Martin, “Research shows that going digital enhances student engagement and performance. Digital resources help students to personalize and individualize learning along with increased collaboration for teachers and peers. Students can become better authentic creative communicators and more appropriately express their thinking through videos, apps, text, voice recordings, and pictures. These flexible digital resources increase collaboration by integrating multimedia literacy technologies.”¹

Digital Notebooks are a great addition to any classroom, and they can be tailored to accommodate different subjects and learning styles. The version that I use was created using Google Slides. I sorted the notebook into sections based on our Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) units and inserted slides that allow students to record their daily learning targets, reflect upon their learning and then self-assess their understanding of the daily learning target. Also included in my digital notebook is a glossary section and various templates for graphic organizers. Again, with some adjustments, interactive components can be added to these digital notebooks.

Student feedback regarding these digital notebooks has been very positive. Students enjoy the ease of using them and enjoy the ‘fun’ graphics and images that are included. They also benefit from being able to look back on their learning throughout the year. Additionally, the self-assessment portion has been helpful for students and for me in obtaining formative assessment of their learning.

There are numerous benefits for both students and teachers to utilizing digital notebooks.² In our constantly changing world, where technology is essential, digital notebooks help students become more responsible for their learning and effectively use technology. We are already beginning to plan now to expand their use in our school next year, too.



¹ Miller, B., & Martin, C. (2016). *Digital Notebooks for Digital Natives*. *Science & Children*, 53(5), 84-89. National Education Association.

² https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1jCz5eqR5wF2csgICltsKUGxHNM6R-IT_0O-lmpXw2y8/edit?pli=1#slide=id.g9190e3c4f8_2_89



Like most things during the pandemic, our Makerspace has been transformed. I am very excited to be a part of NCES as the new librarian and to have the opportunity to work with students on STEAM projects as part of our Makerspace program, in which I go to the students instead of them coming to our space in the library media center: I bring the Portable Makerspace to the classroom.

During our Makerspace time students are provided with a variety of materials and given the opportunity to work on STEAM activities and projects. STEAM projects combine elements from different subjects--science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics — into a process that incorporates creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking (the 4 C’s of 21st century learning).

Our 6th grade students recently completed a STEAM tower challenge that involved designing and building a replica of a famous tower using only 12 index cards, tape and scissors. Not only did the students use their critical thinking skills, but they also enjoyed the challenge, as Addie D said, “I had fun making my tower and seeing how it came out.”

Sydney H. added, “I had to think flexibly because there was a time in my project where it fell apart and I had to think a different way than my original idea.” Another student, Joey S, had a similar comment when thinking about his project, “I had to look at some parts/steps in the process differently and [think] different thoughts about how to do it.” These two students are referring to thinking flexibly, one of the habits of mind we have been focusing on in school.

Some of our upcoming Makerspace projects will feature simple machines, wind energy, and sound waves. To learn more about STEAM education, please click the link below:

[The Benefits of Teaching STEAM.](https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/benefits-of-teaching-steam/) (<https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/benefits-of-teaching-steam/>)

WINTER FUN AT NCES



“KIND”NESS IS ALWAYS FOUND IN KINDERGARTEN

- Lisa McClave & Kirsten Merritt

SCS Kindergartners are caught up in Kindness.

Each morning **Thoughtful Theo & Helpful Helen** delight us in a note about ways we can show kindness.



We also draw pictures to show how we have been kind to others and display them on our doors and in the showcase window.

Kindness is a present we can give to each other, and throughout the month of December we unwrapped Random Acts of Kindness.

BUILDING TECHNOLOGY INDEPENDENCE IN EK-5

- Pam Sangster

Building student independence with technology is a goal each year at SCS. In our experience with distance learning last spring, we saw how much families did to support students in using technology at home. It was clear that this year, the goal would be even more important! Students in early kindergarten through second grade became proficient in navigating their devices, completing assignments in Seesaw and accessing frequently used apps. Third through fifth graders developed expertise with Google Classroom, along with online tools for in-person and/or digital learning.



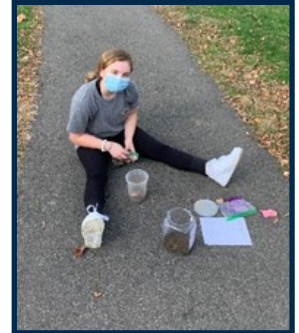
In November, students started experimenting with “Zoom in the Room” using Zoom to collaborate in the classroom. Small groups worked in breakout rooms so they could talk with each other, even when they were spread far apart. They built proficiency with virtual classroom technology and used it to collaborate. Just recently, students in third grade independently applied their skills to share their screens and solve coding activities.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FIFTH GRADE!

- Jenni Hill & Deanna Maytas



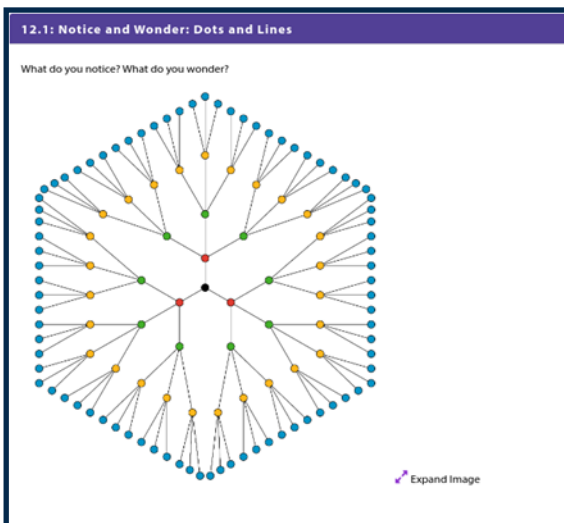
This year fifth grade has 36 students in 2 classrooms, including distance learners. Currently, students in grade five are learning about fractions in Math. Students are learning how to compare, add, and subtract fractions with unlike denominators. In Science, students are finishing up a unit on how matter is exchanged in the environment and never disappearing. In Reading, students are using text evidence to analyze characters, plot, and setting. Currently, fifth graders are reading the historical fiction novel *Blood on the River*, based on the founding of the Jamestown Colony in 1606. This connects well to the Social Studies curriculum. Students began the year learning about the Age of Exploration and Discovery and have continued the year learning about the founding of the colonies in America. Fifth graders spent the first trimester working on narrative writing and are moving into informational pieces. Even though this year looks a little different, we have had a great beginning!



MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH

- Laura Badolato & Christine Werner

As a region, we are in year two of a new math program called Illustrative Mathematics. At Salisbury Central, we have rolled out this program thoughtfully by integrating it from the bottom up. It was introduced first to the 6th grade class during the 2019-2020 school year. The 7th grade rolled in this year, and during fall 2021 we will incorporate all grades 6-8. The program is primarily taught through real world situations. Students are expected to think critically about the situations provided, ask important questions, and investigate different strategies. Here are a few examples of warmups in which students discuss a situation, what is being asked and how it could be solved.



7.1: Positive or Negative?

Without computing:

1. Is the solution to $-2.7 + x = -3.5$ positive or negative?
2. Select **all** the expressions that are solutions to $-2.7 + x = -3.5$.
 - a. $-3.5 + 2.7$
 - b. $3.5 - 2.7$
 - c. $-3.5 - (-2.7)$
 - d. $-3.5 - 2.7$



UNIQUE TIMES INSPIRE UNIQUE SOLUTIONS

- Dr. Karen Manning, Principal

1. Students in grade 8 and Counselor Liz Foster in a virtual lesson, on making healthy lifestyle choices, led by Housatonic Youth Services Bureau for in-building and remote learners.
2. Principal Dr. Karen Manning “dropping in” to a 5th grade classroom via Google Classroom. The session had four physical locations, allowing everyone to participate
3. Music teacher Peter Del Monaco teaching instrument lessons at the appropriate social distance in our cafeteria. We are so grateful that our students can spread the joy of music!



ROBOT IN THE ROOM

- Becky Smith, 4th Grade Teacher



This year has presented many challenges to teachers for many reasons. One aspect has been learning all the new technology needed to effectively teach distance learners. There were days I had to have three computers going to have everything I needed to present to students. Then a “Swivl” robot entered my room. Swivl is a small, circular robot that sits on top of a tripod with a spot for an iPad on top. The iPad runs my Google Meet. A lanyard, with a built-in microphone that I wear around my neck, interacts with the Swivl base and allows the camera to follow me as I move. Now, my distance learners can always see and hear me no matter how far from the camera I move. This has been a lifesaver and it would be great if this technology were available to all teachers.

ROSETTA STONE FOR SPANISH

- - Sr. Fecteau, Spanish

This year, students learning Spanish can continue their progress on Rosetta Stone; personalizing the learning of languages allows students to remain socially distanced while communicating in real-world Spanish situations. The program allows them to work on their listening skills, fine-tune their pronunciation and accent, while working independently, at their own pace, and in their own space. The challenges of maintaining social distancing forced us to learn how to use new technology, such as Google Breakout Rooms, to create opportunities for students to work safely with partners. (Dr. Manning has been visiting classes with a 6 foot pool noodle to remind us what 6 feet looks like!)



THE ROLE OF A SCHOOL NURSE

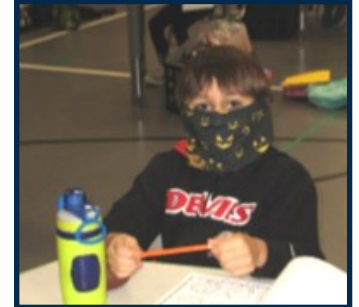
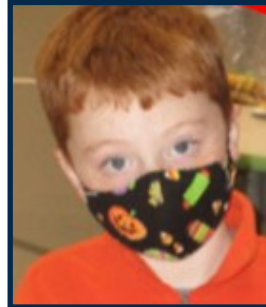
- Devon Sheehan, RN

Coming from a hospital I used to think a school nurse was more a band aid and ice pack dispenser than a true nurse. I have learned differently. As the only health professional in the building, I need strong assessment and detective skills. Most often I am seeing a child and students rarely adequately articulate their concerns, so I must ask the right questions while distracting them. Many times, emotional issues mask themselves in a physical complaint, so I need to have a good grasp of child development and psychology, too. Before the pandemic, a big part of my job involved students’ emotional needs. They would come for a much-needed hug or to share a worry. The pandemic has changed that as students need to stay socially distant, hugs are too close; to contain Covid-19 students are kept in the same groupings so there are fewer quick visits to the nurse. Now, my job, involves staying current on Covid-19 transmission, contact tracing, and mitigation strategy management. This is a strange time for all of us. But I am proud that our teachers and staff have made the safety and education of our students a priority. I am so grateful our students are in school and not isolated in distance learning.

MASKS!

- Keely and Tallulah, Grade 4

Something new we must wear in school. We know they keep us safe, but they can also be a little annoying. Masks are something that protect other people because when we breathe or talk, we are letting out saliva. They protect other people from breathing in our germs. They stop us from getting sick! Also, remember to wash your masks a lot. If you do not, they will smell bad. I learned that the hard way. Although masks are annoying, we must wear them to keep other people safe. Remember to cover your nose and your mouth!



8TH GRADERS REFLECT ON THEIR SCHOOL EXPERIENCES DURING COVID-19

Wayne: COVID has been a good experience for me because it has shown me how to keep myself safe if I am keeping my peers safe. It also taught me to persevere because COVID has made my learning harder for me.

Quinlan: My 8th grade school year has been a bumpy ride; it can be hard to pay attention in class or be heard by a teacher. I also have more freedoms than I would in school. I do not have to wear a mask or social distance and can go get a drink whenever I need to. Online learning sometimes is a double-edged sword and other times a gift.

Neela: My experience during COVID-19 has been challenging. I came to Sharon Center School as the new kid, not knowing anyone. I can say that trying to make friends, while being 6-feet apart, having to stay in our seats, and wearing masks is definitely challenging. I wonder what some people look like without masks on. There is one question going through all our minds. How long until things go back to normal?

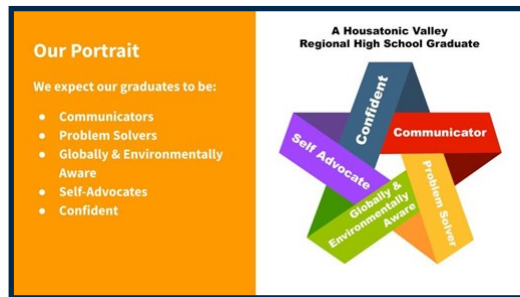
Katerin: During COVID-19, school has been very different. We cannot do group projects because we have to be 6-feet apart. We cannot talk to our friends at recess or breaks because talking to one another 6-feet apart is basically screaming your conversation. Most importantly, we cannot do our 8th grade trip. Honestly, I am not disappointed because we cannot go on the actual trip. I am disappointed that we cannot do all the fun things other 8th graders did — to fundraise to go on the trip. 8th grade is our last year to be together. Some students will go to different high schools, and others might just find different friends. COVID has made that very hard, but it could be a lot worse. I am very grateful to be in “in-person” school, and not have to do distance learning.

Charlotte: My experience being a student during COVID-19 had its ups and downs, but I really think that I have made the most out of it. When COVID-19 first hit my world changed completely. I had to learn how to work from home and adapt to learning through a computer. Throughout the whole pandemic, I have stayed positive and think that is the mindset everyone should have thought through. Learning from home was not easy and I know I couldn't have done it without my teachers help. It was so confusing figure out how to join a Google Meet from my bedroom. But I still managed to make the honor roll and keep up with everyday work. I think I say this for everyone when I say learning at school is much easier than learning from home!



INTRODUCING HVRHS CAPSTONE PROJECT

- Ian Strever, Principal



Until their eighteenth birthday, most students are still told what to do, what to learn, and when to do it. In an age of increasing automation, however, when robots are performing more and more mundane chores, the need to produce creative, self-directed citizens constitutes a major shift from the factory mentality that governed education in the twentieth century.

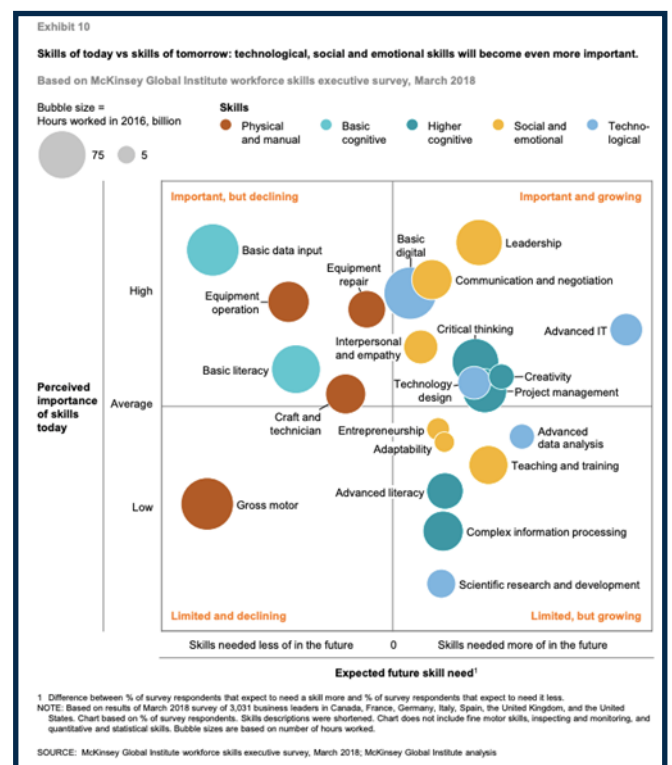
In 2018, the McKinsey Global Institute surveyed business executives from around the world, asking them to rank several employee skills in terms of their perceived importance and their expected need for those skills in the future. Among the most desirable skills were creativity, project management, communication and negotiation, and leadership. So how will HVRHS provide opportunities for our students to learn and practice these skills? With a Capstone Project.

The Capstone Course is a new offering for students in the Class of 2023 and later that requires students to undertake a “passion project” that incorporates the skills and the traits of our Portrait of a Graduate. Students begin in their junior year by working with a teacher and a technical advisor to design a project that capitalizes on an area of intense interest, resulting in a product that reflects their passions and aptitudes. In other words, it provides concrete proof that they have attained our vision of what a graduate should know and be able to do.

Capstone Projects have been around for a while in some schools, and we are working with EdAdvance to develop a course that reflects the best of those experiences. Some essential components are research, application of findings and a public presentation. This could mean an art show to display one’s curated work from the year or a defense of a thesis paper on global warming. It could mean an architectural tour of a tiny house that was planned and built over the course of a year or the airing of a series of public service announcements about composting.

Students have already completed versions of these kinds of projects in Personalized Learning Courses over the past few years. One student developed a business plan for a second-hand video game business that required him to learn database skills and work with a real estate agent to identify potential locations. Another student learned digital marketing, printing, and accounting skills while creating a motocross apparel business.

Interesting and challenging: that is what Capstone is all about. Think about all the things you do when no one else is telling you what to do. Think about what you do when you are supposed to be doing something else. Think about the kinds of reading you do just because you like to do it. These are starting points for a Capstone, and by the end, our students will bring them to life and make learning meaningful, relevant, and personal.

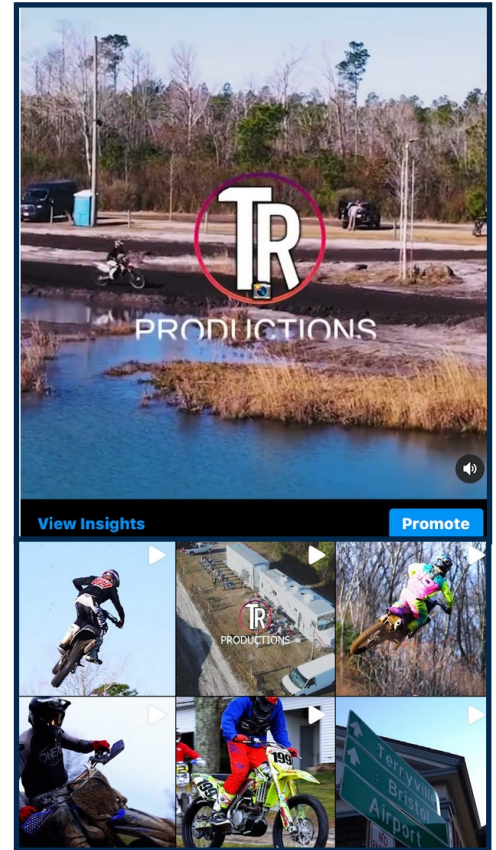


PERSONALIZED LEARNING

- Tyler Burdick, Bridges Teacher

The phrase “personalized learning” is one that has recently become more and more common in today’s educational world. When using personalized learning, the individual student’s needs and interests are taken into consideration to engage in a meaningful way. During this process, the teacher acts more as a guide and works with the students to develop a project that both meets the standards associated with the class while at the same time giving that student more motivation for and meaning to their classwork.

As an example, in the Bridges program there are several students completing a personalized learning project. One student is developing their own racing company while learning about marketing and real-world skills. They have learned to write professionally, film and edit their work, and use multiple professional platforms to sell their products. This has made for a meaningful learning experience for the student, while they have been able to meet their reading and writing standards. In addition, personalized learning allows the students to work across disciplines to gain a deeper understanding of real-world applications. For example, a student may create a project in *Intro to Metals*, learn about marketing strategies in marketing, and write and film their content in English class. The project can be applied to multiple subject areas and creates a meaningful learning experience.



PASSION PROJECTS

- Jacob Ellington, Class of 21

Inspiration can come from where you least expect it. For me, it came in the form of a school safety board meeting. The board wanted a visual alert to anyone entering the building in the event of an emergency; however, a commercial system was not feasible for a number of reasons. Armed with nothing but some single board computers, great hubris, and a dream, I set about creating my own.



In retrospect, that first iteration of my system was extremely crude, but that is what I love about it. There was no one telling me how to do it; it was just me and the internet. This first system used a monodirectional broadcast approach via a web server and scraper, which is suboptimal for several reasons, but it worked. This was only replaced recently by a redundant TCP socket system. I take a lot of pride in this project and in the knowledge that I built something that could save lives if it ever needed to be used. My past blunders reinforce this, I can see how far both the system and I have come, and I know whole-heartedly that I did it. A naive junior who nearly electrocuted himself with exposed mains power cables while building a prototype, with a little encouragement and resources, was able to make something that helps his community, and that is quite special.

REGION 1 CONNECTS CARING COMMUNITIES

From dressing up for assemblies to sharing a weekly song to holiday donations to Quiz Night to coaching, technical, and health tips; we are **Region 1 Strong**. Fighting the spread and fatigue of COVID-19 together.

Friday Sing along

REGION ONE QUIZ NIGHT					
Thursday December 17					
CONNECT VIRTUALLY	@	FRIENDS,	HAVE FUN	AND...	WIN PRIZES!
	7:00 PM- ??				Sign up as an individual or as a team of up to 4 people.
		Come have some virtual fun with others from the region!			
			Sign up here:	https://forms.gle/mPa16v7ay8sqtX59	

Tech Tools for Caregivers

Click the link below for more information on two workshops; "Getting Connected: Strategies for Troubleshooting" and "Know Before the Report Card Arrives".

HVRHS Coach's Corner

SALISBURY CENTRAL SCHOOL Lakeville, CT WORDS ON WELLNESS Winter 2021
SALISBURY CENTRAL SCHOOL WELLNESS COMMITTEE

REGION 1 ADMINISTRATORS

Ms. Lisa Carter, Superintendent

- Dr. Scott Fellows, Interim Asst. Superintendent
- Mr. Sam Herrick, Business Manager
- Mrs. Martha Schwaikert, Supervisor Special Ed
- Mr. Steven Schibi, Asst. Principal, HVRHS
- Mrs. Michelle Mott, Principal, Kent CS
- Dr. Alicia Roy, Principal, North Canaan ES
- Dr. Karen Manning, Principal, Sharon CS

- Mrs. Jill Pace, Interim Asst. Superintendent
- Mr. Carl Gross, Director of Pupil Services
- Mr. Ian Strever, Principal, HVRHS
- Mrs. Mary Kay Ravenola, Principal, Cornwall CS
- Mrs. Alexandra Juch, Principal, LH Kellogg
- Mrs. Stephanie Magyar, Principal, Salisbury CS