



CURRICULUM NEWSLETTER

March 2017



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Important Dates in March

- 1:** 6th Grade Math
9:00-11:30am at Farms
3rd Grade LA
9:00-11:30am in the PDC
5th Grade Math
1:00-3:30pm at Farms
4th Grade LA
1:00-3:30pm in the PDC
2nd Grade InView Testing Window Opens
- 2:** Grammar Study Day at Farms
8:00-8:30am
- 7:** Geometry, 7:30-10:00am at the High School
Algebra 1 & 2, 11:30am-2:00pm
- 9:** CASL Training, Cohort 1 & 2 at WISD
8th Grade LA
7:30am-2:00pm at the Middle School
- 15:** 6th Grade Writing Pilot Team
9:00-11:30am at Farms
- 16:** Curriculum Ad Staff
9:30-11:30am in the PDC
- 17:** InView Testing Window Closes
Send Materials Back to C.O.
Reading Support Meeting
11:30am-1:00pm at the Middle School
- 18:** Kindergarten Orientation
10:00-11:30am at the HESSC
- 21:** DCT Meeting *(if needed)*
4:30-6:00pm in the PDC
CASL Training, Cohort 4 at WISD
Algebra 1, half day, at the High School
- 22:** 10th Grade LA
7:30-10:00am at the High School
9th Grade LA
11:30am-2:00pm at the High School
- 23:** CASL Training, Cohort 3 at WISD
7th Grade LA
7:30am-2:00pm at the Middle School

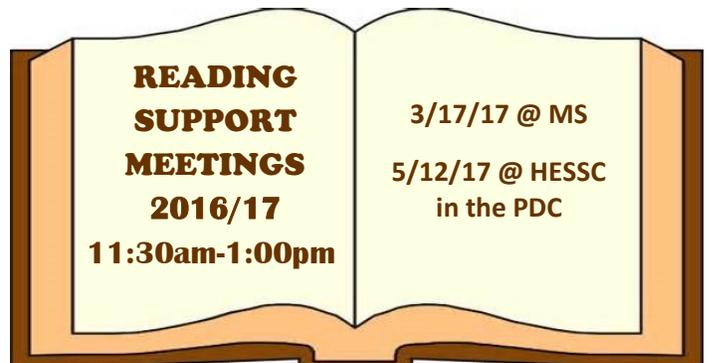
College and Career Skills

How do we prepare students for the post-secondary world? How about for that first job as a teenager?

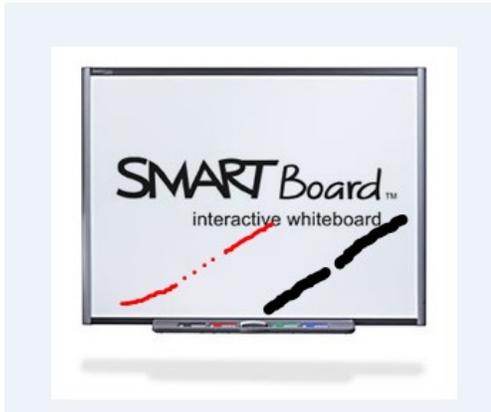
I often have conversations with people about all of the things that we do in our schools to prepare students for outside-of-school experiences. I discuss how we teach leadership, teamwork, mediation skills, communication skills, etc. A recent article in the Phi Delta Kappan, Wanted Soft Skills for Today's Jobs by Barton J. Hirsch (February, 2017) states that the strongest predictors of hiring, for both apprenticeship and non-apprenticeship students, were ratings of student maturity and communication skills. Teamwork and communication skills were the most important differences among apprenticeships.

The author reviews research and suggests that skills such as teamwork, communication, leadership, problem-solving, initiative, and self-regulation are useful in a wide variety of jobs. The article highlights mock interviews as an effective way to understand the skills that students would bring to the table. In this context, the interviewer would be in a great position to provide constructive feedback to the student.

I share this with you simply from the standpoint of what you can do to help students develop the soft skills necessary to get hired and/or accepted into college. When you do projects in class, how can you have students analyze their effort and the transferrable job-related skills they could highlight in the interview process? Just think about it.



Technology



PROBLEM:

SMART Board not writing like it should? Does it have you seeing spots or not responding to touch?

There are digital cameras in your interactive screen that track items like your finger or pen. If the cameras are dirty or not aligned, areas of your board may not be responsive to touch or you may get "broken ink."



SOLUTION:

If this is a problem that you have been experiencing, please open a ticket in the Tech Help system and someone from technology will be out to resolve the issue.

DO YOU HAVE A NEW ELMO?

We have recently discovered that the new Elmo is not capable of running ImageMate and Illuminate at the same time.

If you find this to be the case, try exiting out of the program you are not using, and switch back to the one you would like to run.



2016-17 SRI WINDOW

SPRING: March 1, 2017 - June 2, 2017
4th grade (must be done between April 10–April 28)
& HS (9-12) required



Math Corner

by Ethan Hawker



Teacher Time vs. Student Time in the Classroom

Our instructional framework encourages all our classrooms to follow the “I do, we do, we do together, you do” model. Can this be accomplished everyday? No...not realistically. I know that everyday is different and the beauty of teaching is knowing what your students are ready for each day. But I also know that it is easy to fall back into the old routines and to miss the “we do, we do together” part of mathematics instruction.

It is so important for us to remember that the interaction between you and your students, and finding the time for students to work with the math in the classroom, is very important and needs to be planned and thought about with each lesson.

So I have a question for you to think about this month:

How much time are you doing math each day vs. how much time are your students doing math each day?

It can be a challenging question, but I think that it's a great reflection piece for every math teacher. Good instruction requires teacher time, but great instruction knows when it's time for teachers to stop talking and for students to spend time with math and for you to step back and provide the feedback necessary for students to assess their proficiency. Here's a great link to a research-based document that addresses good mathematics instruction.

https://www.andrews.edu/sed/leadership_dept/webinars/presentationdocuments/the_effective_mathematics_classroom.pdf

Teacher Thanks

Just wanted to give a “thanks” to all the teachers and administrators out there who worked with me this past month. I've had so many great conversations and exciting things are happening in classrooms all over the district. I know making lists is a bad idea because you always miss someone. But I just wanted to highlight some of the teachers that I worked with this month who are doing some really cool things in their classrooms, and I wanted to say a special thanks for your hard work, your conversations, and for opening your classroom doors.

Thank you: Debbie Burks, Chris Anderson, Helen Mack, Jenny Hull, Nancy Spranger, Michelle Zielinski, Madeleine Atreo, Julie Barb, Katelyn Wallace, Paul Butzier, Matt Johnson, Cathleen Haglund, Justine Jovanovski, Lisa Villar, Shauna Pietila, Amy Willard, Liz Timmons, Kathy Revenaugh, Erica Empie, Sheryl Cabaj, Kara Gutteridge, Shelley Ascherl, Cindy Drafta, Amy May, Donita Baker, Katie Butzier, and more...sorry if I missed you!

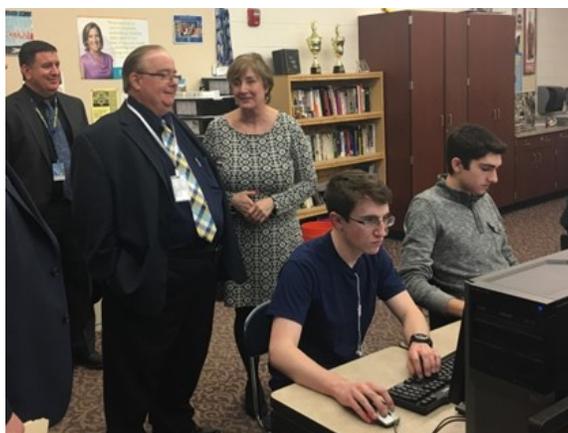


Round Lego Club

Round Lego Club is back once again. This year we have 14 teams with 85 students participating. The challenge this year is "Creature Craze" and the teams are designing habitats. The students are challenged to tap into their creativity while also developing skills such as teamwork, problem solving, listening and communication. The teams meet once a week after school and enjoy exploring, creating and working together.



State Superintendent Brian Whiston Visits District



Our State Superintendent, Brian Whiston visited the district on February 7, 2017. Board of Education members and administrators took him on a tour of the high school, middle school, and Creekside Elementary. We visited many classrooms including Anne Hasseld's AP Computer Science class where students showed off their programming skills.

The team had an opportunity to talk with Mr. Whiston about the district and to ask him how we can better get involved with the Michigan Department of Education's decision-making process.



'Tis the season for Argument writing

Across the district, many teachers are in the midst of or about to begin their argument writing unit. It is important to keep in mind that argumentation is not just a skill for the Language Arts classroom, but supports success across the content areas as well.

We begin this journey into writing argument (or opinion writing) in Kindergarten and build upon that learning every year after. Teachers often ask me for mentor texts to support their work in argument writing. These texts can be tricky to find. One thing I always suggest is to teach students the components of argument through talk, through debates. One of the fastest ways to lift the level of our student writing is to give them opportunities to talk.

So what would that look like? Provide opportunities for your students to debate literary topics. Was the decision that the character made good or bad? Would you want to be a certain character? Or, have students participate in other debates, such as, should students attend year-round schools? Should we have electronics at indoor recess? While debating such issues, allow students to follow a protocol like the one below developed from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. While students have these quick debates, the teacher can coach on skills like stating a clear claim, providing evidence, etc.

The Lit Bit

Jenna Furr
Literacy Coach

Jenna's hours:
Wednesdays
Thursdays (am)
Fridays

Not only is this great practice for developing student writing skills, but flash debates would be a great way for students to prep for high stakes standardized tests like the M-Step and the SAT.

If you would like support with flash debates in your classroom, feel free to contact me. I would be happy to model this work for you and your students.

Argument Talk Protocol

1. Name the argument.
2. Listen and gather evidence for both sides of the argument.
 - You should be able to argue either way.
 - Be alert to juicy quotes and statistics.
3. Pick a side.
4. Caucus with your side.
 - What is your BEST evidence? (Sort through and weigh your evidence to find the strongest.)
 - Rehearse your argument.
5. Face off!
 - Meet your opponent and present your argument . . . and listen to theirs.
 - You will have one minute each to present your argument.
6. Repeat back to your opponent the BEST part of their argument.
 - What evidence was most compelling or persuasive?
7. Caucus with your side again to plan rebuttal.
 - What were the opposition's strongest arguments, and how can your side rebut?
 - A rebuttal should not just be a restatement of your initial argument!
8. Rebuttal with opponent (one minute).

B.Y.O.C. 

8:15am

March 3 @ CES
March 8 @ RES
March 16 @ LES
March 17 @ VES

Teachers College Argument Talk Protocol

If you are interested in a protocol to support K-3 students, please contact me.



“I have been long convinced that the central and most important goal of reading instruction is to foster a love of reading.”
-Linda Gambrell

Creating Classroom Cultures That Foster Reading Motivation



Joey Tripoli, 7th grade ELA teacher, sorting hundreds of new books for her classroom library.

The curriculum department continues to support building classroom libraries so children have plenty of choice.



I wanted to give a special thank you to Jason Eaton (Lakes Music teacher) and Shari Russano (Lakes Art teacher) who recently attended a Friday PD on tools for supporting small group instruction.

Although the PD was geared toward small group instruction in reading and writing, Jason and Shari easily transferred their learning to match what is happening in their own classrooms.

Pictured on the left, Jason Eaton plans a small group strategy lesson for students in his music class.



CASL Mentors In Action



Creekside Elementary teachers Jessica Brangan and Sue Pearsall are committed to mentoring staff with the use of Classroom Assessment for Student Learning (CASL) strategies and designing lessons. Both are Cohort Mentors and feel that the training they have engaged in has positively impacted them as teachers. They believe that involving students in assessing their own work is a difference maker.

Currently we have 72 teachers and administrators signed up for CASL training during the summer of 2017. By September, we will have 137 staff trained (49% of total teaching staff). This is awesome! If you are interested in joining, please contact your building principal who will work with Mr. Hughes to get you registered.

(33 are from the high school, 5 from the middle school, 3 from Farms, 7 from Creekside, 7 from Lakes, 8 from Round, and 7 from Village)

Websites of Interest



<http://www.hartlandhighschool.us/Counseling/College-Planning/index.html>

College Planning and Career Opportunities- Livingston County Site

<http://about.readworks.org/paired-texts-and-questions.html>

Practicing with paired text - K-12 resources



Social Emotional Learning

by Scott Storey

LISTENING & LIMITS

Dealing with Students' Misbehavior

When we, as educators, are faced with undesirable behavior from our students, we have to make a decision or choice about how to respond to that behavior. There are multiple factors that play into every decision or choice we make. Often a number of strong emotions are triggered inside us, such as anger, hurt, or fear of something that the student has done. This often brings out very quick responses from us and as a result, we let our emotions get the better of us.

It is much easier to punish than to use logical consequences that match the student's behavior. Punishment is a short term solution (in the moment). It stops the undesirable behavior. Punishment does not teach the student how to handle the situation differently. The long term effect of only punishing a student can result in resentment and loss of opportune times to change behaviors.

What Limits Are & Why They're Important

Setting limits is an alternative to threats and punishment. Limits are one of the more powerful tools that parents and educators have for providing discipline and making long term growth or change.

When students understand that there are limits to their behavior choices, they ultimately develop a stronger sense of safety. There are many ways to develop the skill of setting limits. We must keep in mind three valuable ideas when setting limits:

- 1. Setting a limit is not the same as issuing an ultimatum.**
 - Limits are not threats
 - Limits offer choices with consequences
- 2. The purpose of limits is to TEACH, not to punish.**
 - Develops a strong sense of cause & effect
 - Strengthens decision making skills
 - Predictable consequences depending on action or choices taken
- 3. Setting limits is more about listening than talking.**
 - LISTEN=SILENT (same letters/these 2 words go hand-in-hand)
 - Will be able to determine what is truly important to them
 - Helps develop more meaningful limits
 - Helps you develop a better understanding of their thoughts/feelings





Social Emotional Learning (cont.)

Five Key Steps to Setting Limits

1. Explain which behavior is inappropriate
 - Be specific
2. Explain why the behavior is inappropriate
 - Do not assume they know
3. Give reasonable choices with consequences
 - Inform them of their choices and the consequences that match
 - Takes away from power struggles
 - Consequences that match provide you with a teaching tool
4. Allow time
 - Children and young adults take longer to process the information and make decisions
5. Be prepared to enforce your consequences, even when it's inconvenient
 - Consistently enforce the consequence you have determined
 - Before issuing a consequence think about your willingness to hold them to it
 - You are developing respect, guidance, and a feeling of security

The Skill of Listening

As an educator, empathetic listening is one of the most powerful tools you have for building trust and rapport with your students. True listening helps to build self-esteem in children. It gives them a sense of purpose, meaning, value and worth. The essential key to becoming an empathetic listener is SILENT. If you look closely at that word it is spelled the same as LISTEN. Both go hand in hand!

It is important to remember that becoming an empathetic listener is a skill, and like any skill, it takes time, effort and a willingness to develop. Empathetic listening is more than just hearing your student talk.

The Benefits of Empathetic Listening

The key is not dispensing advice, asking prying questions or giving false reassurances. It's to allow students to talk through a problem or situation and feel understood. The end result is not for you to solve the problem for them. This type of listening provides a number of benefits.

Takes the Burden Off You

- You don't have to have all the answers
- At times, giving advice can backfire (especially with teenagers)
- Advice can often sound like "just another lecture or story"

Student Talks Through the Problem & Getting to the Real Issue

- The student leads the direction of the conversation (NOT YOU)
- This often leads to the conversation "opening up" without your prying.

Allows Your Student to Vent

- They can release feelings
- Without having to hear advice, being judged or criticized
 - Gives them a safe place and feeling

Let's Your Student Know You Understand Their Concerns



Social Emotional Learning (cont.)

Five Steps to Empathetic Listening

Give Undivided Attention

- Get away from distractions
- Don't do two things at once
- Keep your nonverbal communication in check (Ex. fidgeting, body posture, eye contact)

Be Nonjudgmental

- Passing judgment may turn them away or make them more reluctant to talk.
 - Do not make light of or trivialize someone's problems.
- It may not seem important to you, but to them, in that moment it is.

Focus on Your Student's Feelings (not just the facts)

- Listen for the real message or concern
 - It may not be the actual problem but the emotion
- Ask yourself "Is your student feeling angry, resentful, powerless or scared?"

Allow Silence for Reflection

- This allows for processing differences.
- Let what is discussed truly set in before rushing on.
- You may be surprised how little you have to talk.

Use Restatement to Clarify Messages

- Put what your student has said into your own words.
- Reflect back on the underlying feelings you picked up on.
 - Allow them to re-clarify your interpretation.
 - This helps to eliminate misunderstandings.



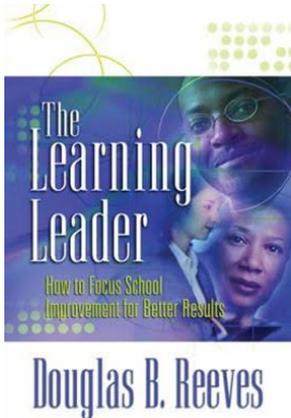
Thank you Mark Hrit for your 23 years of educating our children.



Secondary teachers talking about realigning our science standards

Book Review

by Chuck Hughes



As I continue to try to find reading material that will help me be a better leader and teacher, I came across this book stuck in my pile of “stuff to read”. The author, Doug Reeves (2006, ASCD), is best known for writing about leadership that is successful beyond test scores. I thought this would be a good book to read as the administration is engaged in our own professional learning community with an emphasis on leadership and building school culture.

The author shares that some institutions “get lucky” as test scores just happen to be positive, but the majority of good schools have to work at creating the environment and plans that impact positive student achievement. The quote I embraced as I read the book was “plans without monitoring are little better than wishes upon a star.” In Hartland, we often talk about implementation with fidelity and how important it is that we continuously monitor our work. I feel that it is my job as the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, and now Superintendent, to ensure that all of us understand the big picture and commit to doing what we can to support each other and students in learning, even when what we are doing does not necessarily align with our personal thoughts and opinions. On page 24, the author shares that “building on an existing strength in a diverse leadership team is superior to forever attempting to fix one’s weakness.” I feel this thought supports what I said above about the big picture and committing to each other on initiatives and expectations.

The author shares his five characteristics of successful schools:

1. They embrace holistic accountability (includes actions of adults as well as student scores)
2. Include non-fiction writing assessments in every subject (much like our DOK 4 assessment items in our math curriculum)
3. They use frequent common assessments (expectation in Hartland)
4. They provide immediate and decisive interventions (Intervention Rubric in Framework for Highly Effective Teachers, evaluation)
5. Use data constructively (HCS Bottom 30%, PLC conversations, etc.)

I was happy to read about these characteristics as I believe that our district embraces them in so many ways. Can we get better? Absolutely! What I think leaders have to understand is that we need to have a vision and move in that direction. Unfortunately, sometimes not everyone wants to go with us. Mr. Reeves states “the cycle of organizational improvement is not vision, buy-in, and action, but rather vision, action, buy-in, and more action.” In my opinion, the art of leadership and building cultures of learning is in how we establish non-negotiables while being flexible in how we move together toward accomplishing the vision.

“It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit!”

by Harry Truman