

**ELLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DISTRICT INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT
JANUARY 2016**

1.0 Status of Initiatives

Kindergarten Unit 3 Checkpoint 2: Working with Numbers

This Unit Checkpoint assessed the following Common Core Standards for Mathematics:

- Write numbers from 0 to 20
- Count forward from a given number, rather than starting at 1
- Count backward from any number in the range of 10 to 0
- Represent addition with objects
- Represent subtraction with objects

Level	Meets the Standard	Approaching	Significantly Below
Number of Students	138/149	9/149	2/149
Percentage	93%	6%	1%

Grade 3: Bridges Unit 2 – Focusing on Introduction to Multiplication

Unit Post-Assessment Data:

Level:	# of Students:	Percent:
Exceeds	16/190	8%
Meets	147/190	77%
Approaching	23/190	12%
Significantly Below	4/190	2%

Grade 4: Bridges Unit 2 – Focusing on Multi-Digit Multiplication and Early Division

Unit Post-Assessment Data:

Level:	# of Students:	Percent:
Exceeds	7/198	4%
Meets	138/198	70%
Approaching	47/198	24%
Significantly Below	6/198	3%

Grade 5: Bridges Unit 2 – Focusing on Adding and Subtracting Fractions

Pre-Assessment Data	Post-Assessment Data	Overall Growth
Class Average = 32%	Class Average = 86%	+ 54%

Post-Assessment Data:

Level:	# of Students:	Percent:
Exceeds	44/214	21%
Meets	135/214	63%
Approaching	27/214	13%
Significantly Below	8/214	4%

Teachers are currently administering the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark and Words their Way assessment to students in grades 1-4. Literacy teams will be meeting with classroom teachers to determine which students will need additional support in reading. They will help teachers determine goals for individual students, help create an instructional plan, and find progress monitoring tools to help assess growth/instructional needs.

Classrooms and cross-grade reading-buddy classes at Center School acknowledged Martin Luther King Jr. Day in many ways. Teachers read Martin's Big Words and an edition of Scholastic News for information which had a video on how the changes he helped to bring about influence our lives today. Some classrooms read My Brother Martin and watched a virtual tour of his boyhood home. Some students made books comparing themselves to Martin Luther King, Jr. Some students wrote "I have a dream that one day..." and filled in the rest to tell what their personal hopes are. Some classrooms watched the Reading Rainbow presentation for more information about Martin Luther King Jr. Students discussed things they could do/say in their everyday lives to "keep the dream alive."

Data Team Work from Crystal Lake School:

The kindergarten data team is working on a data team cycle focused on sight word acquisition.

The grade one data team is working on a data team cycle focused on fact fluency. The team's SMART goal is, *The percentage of students scoring at mastery or higher will increase from 11 % to 75% as measured by timed subtraction fact test administered on February 26, 2016.*

The grade two data team is working on a data team cycle focused on inferring character's feelings and providing text evidence to support their inferences. The team's SMART goal is, *The percentage of students scoring at mastery or higher in inferring character feelings and providing text evidence will increase from 11% to 85% as measured by a district-wide post assessment administered on Friday, February 19, 2016.*

The grade three data team recently completed a data team cycle focused on math problem solving. The team's SMART goal was, *75% of students will demonstrate mastery on a teacher created problem solving assessment.* The team exceeded their goal with 87% of students demonstrating mastery. The grade four data team is currently working on a data team cycle focused on sentence structure. The team's SMART goal is, *The percentage of students scoring at mastery or higher on sentence structure will increase from 7% to 70% as measured by teacher created assessment administered on February 29, 2016.*

On January 19 Crystal Lake School teachers participated in the second Learning Walks of the year. Using the Learning Walk protocol from Teachers College, two teams of teachers visited classrooms to gather data on our school's literacy work, focusing on student engagement and independence.

Mrs. Duff and **Mrs. Hurlburt** (kindergarten teacher) attended a calendar day at Teachers College called Role of Play in Literacy. This workshop focused on the importance of using constructive and fantasy play to enrich the social and emotional needs of individuals and the classroom. In addition, kindergartners would learn literacy skills during playtime. Expectations would grow throughout the school year as the students became more independent in creating their play stations.

The Windermere December Town Meeting focused on "contributing to our community and helping one another." Sixth grade students presented an idea for mindfulness borrowed from their Discovery Center experience with regard to trash and how we need to be more conscious about the sheer amount

of food we throw away daily. The meeting actually began with an inspirational video by Michael Jackson - *Man in the Mirror*. The message derived from this montage spoke to students about looking inwardly to be of assistance and support for others. One student group presented their work with raising money for area animal shelters. Mrs. Tressa Giordano and Ms. Diane Lasher-Penti from the Ellington Youth Services described the Ellington's Decide to be Kind movement. They shared how students in our school (K-6) can get involved and practice kindness in and out of Windermere School.

Our intermediate school counselors, **Mrs. Marshall** and **Mrs. Toback-Reveley** completed academic goal setting weekly lessons and Student Success Plan development for all sixth grade homerooms. They are currently engaged in conflict resolution weekly lessons in all sixth grade classes. They conducted approximately 24 peer mediation groups resulting from office/staff referrals and facilitated four parent meetings as a result.

As part of the K-6 transition planning, **Dr. LaPorte**, **Mr. Larkin**, **Mrs. Roberts** and **Mr. Welch** met to discuss the transition for school counselors for the 2016-2017 school year. Topics included staffing and services, as well as the alignment of the developmental guidance curriculum in all three schools.

Mrs. Haberern met with **Tara Kelly** to review ELL programming. The numbers of students who require services continues to increase. Her current caseload is 48 students with ELL services. Discussion centered on the increase in numbers and Tara's ability to support the caseload with **Colleen Palozej's** assistance.

January was a very busy month at the middle school. Many teachers completed their midyear goals meetings, sharing many of the activities supporting the school-wide goals in the area of literacy and mathematics. At the January faculty meeting, literacy coach **Jenn Reynolds** presented the entire faculty with SBAC type assessment questions that require students to demonstrate strong listening comprehension skills. The faculty then brainstormed on a wide range of teaching strategies that can be applied in multiple content areas. Early results are promising. In addition to this SBAC work, technology integration specialist **Mike Nash** worked with the staff on implementing new software that helps teachers monitor student activity using the one-on-one Chromebooks. Later in the month, Mr. Nash also worked with all departments helping them to make smart decisions on integrating technology into the general curriculums using the new district technology continuum.

The month of January also was the beginning of the EMS winter book club facilitated by **Principal Pearson** (the fall book club was teacher led). This winter book club is using the text Teaching Students to Self-Assess by teacher, author, and blogger Starr Sackstein. This book club has teachers examining the advantages of developing classrooms in which students are encouraged to use standards-based feedback they now receive in classrooms to track their own learning, develop short-term relevant goals, and share their growth as a learner (using their new digital portfolios as evidence) at upcoming student led conferences.

The month of January also had a smaller book club start at the middle school as well. This mini book club has a small group of teachers and administrators examining the role of co-teaching in our classrooms using the work of national speaker, researcher, and author Marilyn Friend (considered by many the preeminent authority on the topic of co-teaching).

Finally, January was a busy month of visitors at EMS. Teachers and administrators from Milford, West Hartford, Harwinton, Burlington, and Canton visited EMS during the month to investigate best

practices in the areas of literacy (Readers/Writers Workshop) and effective middle school teaming practices (Hands Up).

Over 100 incoming eighth-grade parents attended the orientation that featured a general session conducted by Mr. Rinaldi covering the school's Core Values and Beliefs and Academic Expectations. The parents then took part in breakout sessions conducted by their students' guidance counselors where the Program of Studies and the course selection process were presented along with other pertinent transition information. Mr. Rinaldi posted a PowerPoint of the evening's presentation on the school's website and also provided a frequently asked question (FAQ) sheet as a result of the data from the parent exit survey. The survey and frequently asked questions were emailed home to all eighth-grade parents.

Ellington High School and Ellington Middle School administrators collaborated with Kristy LaPorte, Michele Cirillo, and Liz Cole on developing 8th grade transition protocols. Since the Program of Studies is revised annually, there is a need each year to review the changes and align the transition protocols accordingly. The end result is that services, accommodations, and course selections are all based on student needs. Having student and parent voice is also a critical component of these protocols.

AP Potential letters were mailed home from the high school. A student's AP potential is identified by College Board as a result of student performance on the PSAT's. This letter identifies which AP courses students are likely to succeed on AP Exams. It is Mr. Rinaldi's hope that improved communication results in improved access to AP courses. This will also ensure that no student with the potential to succeed in AP courses is overlooked. This tool has also been helpful in the expansion of AP coursework at EHS.

The high school administration and school counselors have been collaborating to develop the March 2 SAT and CAPT state-mandated tests. Freshman students will take a practice science CAPT, the sophomores will take the Science CAPT, and juniors will take the SAT. This will be a full day of school for all students and activities are planned for the seniors.

2.0 Next Steps

Center School students will each make a valentine card to be distributed to local Meals on Wheels, convalescent homes, hospitals, and veteran and senior centers. The cards will be delivered in time for the holiday. Room parents will plan classroom parties where students will share valentines with their classmates. First and third grade students will also participate in the Big Y program by creating valentines for Overseas Troops.

Windermere school counselors are currently in the midst of planning for Career Day which is scheduled for March 18. They are beginning to plan for the transition process from 4th to 5th grade and 6th to 7th grade. This will include meeting with fifth grade teachers to garner information regarding student data collection and placement.

In February, the EMS faculty meeting will feature Superintendent Scott Nicol visiting to share updates on the proposed district budget for the 2016-17 school year. The month will host the winter professional development day on Tuesday, February 16. Teacher learning on this day will focus on technology integration, literacy strategies across all content areas, expanding student centered accountability through the use of portfolios and student reflection, promoting mindfulness in the

classroom, implementing NGSS at the classroom level, and strategies to promote parents as partners in their child's education. Finally beyond the classroom, in February students at the middle school will have many off-campus opportunities including College Power campus visits to the University of Connecticut and St. Joseph's College, the EMS Math Counts team will compete at a state competition at the University of Hartford, and participants in the afterschool enrichment program "The Zone" will have chances to explore fun activities like bowling, archery, and rock climbing at off-campus facilities.

EHS school counselors will be distributing the PSAT results to students at high school students on February 9 & 10. College Board offers a free online college and career planning resource for PSAT/NMSQT test-takers. All students who took the PSAT/NMSQT will receive access to connect to Khan Academy at www.khanacademy.org/sat which is a free online SAT practice. Students will receive log-in information on their PSAT/NMSQT Score Reports and will have immediate access to a rich array of college planning information. Students were informed that more information is available at <http://www.collegeboard.com/student>.

3.0 Recognitions

Valerie Baigert spearheaded a school-wide recognition at Center School of National No Name Calling Week to celebrate kindness. This week that focuses on kindness in a school was started in 2004 by children who read a book where the students in a school started a No-Name Calling Week to bring attention to how kids were being unkind to each other. The students who read the book, *The Misfits* by James Howe, thought it would be a good idea to start their own No-Name Calling Week to celebrate kindness in their school. Our students also brought attention to how important it is to be kind to others, and to celebrate kind acts. Students had the opportunity to give a ticket to someone demonstrating kind gestures.

The PBIS Team organized a whole school Pajama Day celebration in acknowledgement of students earning 10,000 Tickets. This was our second celebration of the year. Together students and our staff wore their pajamas, or purple, to show their school spirit for the event. Congratulations to our students for demonstrating *PAWSitive Choices!*

The Center School **Safety and Security Committee** met to discuss a Table Top exercise on Whole School Evacuations. A practice evacuation for staff only was scheduled for April. We are grateful to **Tomi Raver, Deb Hillemeir, Belinda McGehee, Becky Wentworth, Valerie Baigert, Sandy Scully, Audrey Quimby** and **Neil Ducharme** for their planning and support.

The Crystal Lake School Shared Leadership and Learning Team held its first meeting in January. The purpose of the Shared Leadership and Learning Team is to provide a platform for teacher leaders in the building to share their best practices, and to harness the capacity of teacher leadership for continuous school improvement. **Colleen Bava, Nancy Connelly, Jessica Giroux, Michael Glasgow, Lisa LaForte, Michael Larkin, Erica Lombardi, Christine Marshall** and **Martha Terrion** are all serving on the Shared Leadership and Learning Team.

The Crystal Lake School faculty continued its book study of *A Mindset for Learning* at the January 26 Faculty Meeting. **Lisa LaForte** facilitated the book club conversation around positive self-talk, one of the strategies in the book to promote resilience. At the January faculty meeting **Michael Glasgow** presented to his colleagues on a classroom management strategy to support our ongoing Responsive Classroom work to promote positive behavior, The Critical Thinking Center. The Critical Thinking Center is an area of the classroom designated for students to access to reflect on their behavior choices.

The Crystal Lake School CARES Groups met on January 28. This meeting of the CARES groups focused on empathy. For the second year in a row, in what is becoming a Crystal Lake School community service tradition, our students created valentine card kits for patients at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. These are kits with craft materials that the patients could use to create a valentine's card. This project was the idea of a Crystal Lake School alumnus, current fifth grader **Shannon Carbonell**. Together the CARES groups created four large boxes of valentine card kits which **Penny Hughes** delivered to the Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford.

Christine Marshall's class tweet was featured on Andy Leiser's #WklyEdTag on Twitter for #Responsive Classroom. The class completed a Teammate Web to demonstrate how our choices affect others in positive and negative ways.

The Windermere *Tireless Teacher Awards* for the month of January went to Grade 5 teacher **Mrs. Satagaj** and Grade 3 teacher **Mrs. Dziadul**. Although both work tirelessly with our Teachers College initiatives and programs to assist colleagues at Windermere they also go above and beyond their teaching expectations to promote positive staff morale and assist with grade level town meetings and faculty meetings as well.

Our *Amazing Aide Award* was given to **Mrs. Cathy Trench** this past month. Mrs. Trench's recognition was met with an enthusiastic and even raucous congratulatory respond by our lunch students. She continues to do a wonderful job connecting with our students and demonstrates that pitching in and working as a team is always a win-win!

In our ongoing efforts to recognize and thank staff members for their relentless and consistent assistance to students, staff, and parents at Windermere, a new award has been created: the *Prize Para Award*. Each month, Principal Welch recognizes a paraprofessional in the building with a certificate and lapel pin as a way to say "Thank you for all you do!" Our recipient this past month was **Mrs. DiCorcia** who assists with our multiple disability students in all academic areas is praised by multiple teachers for her exemplary work. Our aides, paraprofessionals, and tutors are vital to the success which epitomizes Windermere School!

The following students were winners of the Fire Prevention Poster Contest 2015. They were honored at a Town Council meeting on 12/14/15:

- Grade 4 - **Pranav Challa** (Second Place) - Mrs. Menard's class
- Grade 5 - **Andrew Billbie** - (First Place) - Mrs. McKeegan's class
- Melissa Ryan** - (Second Place) - Ms. Korona's class
- Natalie Zahner** - (Third Place) - Mrs. Crowley's class

Special thanks to **Mrs. Dymkowski** and **Mr. Bernard** for all their work with this process and our kiddos!

On Saturday, January 9, EMS 7th grade language arts teacher **Jen Larkin** and media specialist **Lisa Polack** traveled to the ALA Mid-Winter Conference in Boston, MA. Eight students, grades 7 through 10, accompanied Mrs. Larkin and Mrs. Polack. The students were **Mitch Whelan, Nick DeBaise, Claire Palmer, Eva Cohen, Ashka Patel, Jaimee DelPiano, Aidan Caron, and Emma Johnson**. These students were selected from hundreds of entries to be part of the YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults Panel. The students had to read numerous books from a nomination list, and then speak in front

of a panel and an audience about why the book should or should not be one of the ten best YA books of the year. Principal Pearson was also able to attend and see the students participate on the panel. In addition to this honor, the students also participated in a lunch with authors. Ten authors visited the lunch tables and the students had a chance to talk to each of them about their story, their craft, the writing process, and more. Finally, students were given special access to the ALA show floor where they spoke to publishers and authors and received free books! It was an excellent experience for everyone.

The evening of January 14 was a night for the arts at Ellington Middle School. Art teacher **Kelley Griffin** hosted our first EMS Art Show, which was then followed by the EMS Winter Chorus Concert, conducted by music teacher **Mary Walsh**. The very successful evening was well received by EMS families and friends.

On January 22, EMS teachers **Rachel Dio-Rand, Christina Roy, David Pearson, and Michael Nash** traveled to Norwood, Massachusetts for the League of Innovative School's Winter Regional Network Meeting. At this meeting, they attended workshop sessions about a variety of topics including student reflection, co-teaching, and instructional strategies. These sessions will help to further enhance their reflection strategies for both classroom and advisory use. Furthermore, it began a dialogue about cross-curricular projects and potential co-teaching pairs for the future.

On January 28 and 29 EMS staff worked with **Michael Nash** to create shared learning experiences that integrate technology as part of the ongoing rollout of the district Technology Competencies continuum. The lessons that were developed during this time will be piloted in the coming months and formalized into assured experiences for all students. These lessons work toward teaching students technology skills in addition to content area curriculum.

Unified Basketball started in January. The first game was played against Suffield and Windsor Locks. After a spectacular game, all three teams attended a pizza dinner hosted by the Ellington Unified Team.

At the high school the Robert W. Murphy chapter of the National Honor Society has partnered with Button Up Connecticut to run a coat drive during the winter season. Button Up Connecticut provides warm coats for people all over the state. They accept gently used or new, women's, men's, and children's coats. There will be a bin in every school for coats until February 22.

The high school hosted the CAFE Legislative Breakfast. Student Advisory Council students served as greeters/escorts and culinary students prepared Mrs. Amy White's award-winning tart recipe.

Sean Byrne and **Jim Pointek** attended the CIAC Leadership Conference/CAS Elementary Leadership Conference with student athletes at Asnuntuck Community College on January 7.

Student Accomplishments

The track team won the NCCC championship held at Hillhouse High School in New Haven.

The wildly successful EHS Steel Drum Band class played for students during all three lunches in early January. Since its inception two years ago, over 60 students have participated in this semester class. Most of the students have had no previous musical experience and within a semester have put on impressive public performances. The steel drum band has also attracted a diverse cross-section of high school students making it one of the more unique courses at the high school.

On January 11, EHS student **Sapna Raghavan**, Miss Connecticut's Outstanding Teen, did a cultural presentation for Ellington administrators. Sapna's platform was to promote and celebrate cultural diversity. She offered district administrators the opportunity for her to come to their schools to offer students and faculty a presentation on diversity from an Indian high school student's perspective and experience.