

## **Central Office Leadership Team Report**

**November 2009**

**Superintendent of Schools – Elaine Pinckney**

**Chief Operations Officer – Bob Mason**

**Director of Human Resources – Cindy Koenemann-Warren**

**Director of Student Support Services – Fran Williams**

**Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Coordinator – Molly McClaskey**

**Director of Network Services – Mike Kanfer**

**Director of Finance – Mike Nadeau**

### **Kudos**

PSAT: CVU students Timothy Clark, Victoria Hadley, Jordan Marcy, Margaret Perry, and Annie Pruitt have been commended as high scorers by the National Merit Scholarship Program. Only 5% of students nationally receive this distinction.

### **Board Chairs Meeting**

Members shared VSBA conference experiences. CSSU resolution on school choice within and SU was included as part of the continuing resolution package. Attendees found Yang Zhiao's presentations informative and thought-provoking. All wondered if Lake Morey is the best location for this conference.

Input on November's common topic included asking Art (Cernosia) to focus attention on confidentiality and FERPA – and, specifically what kind of student information can be requested/shared during student disciplinary meetings.

Supt. Pinckney gave an overview of the methodology we use for assessing Office of the Supt (includes HR, Fiscal, Student Services, Technology, CY and Math Coordinator contributions). Discussion ensued about whether to continue using ADM as published by the DOE for these assessments or to use ADM less preK numbers. No decision was reached. Some felt that the amount of money under consideration was too little to warrant the amount of work needed to change methodology. Others felt that the state ADM figure is a constant that we've used for many years now, and it doesn't make sense to change our methodology whenever the state adds a new component even if doing so would benefit one or another of our districts. Supt. Pinckney shared that, as a result of changes to the law, both Mr. Mason and Ms. Williams spend considerably more time now in support of the ELP programs than in the past. If we were to change the way we assess these services – that is, if we were to include only students who are receiving their educational services in our schools, we would need to also factor out the technology students at the high school. Supt. Pinckney will discuss appropriateness (or not) of including this as a CSSU agenda item with the CSSU chair.

Retreats 2010 – Supt. Pinckney proposed that the K-8 retreats occur on the same day. The retreat would be held in a location that could support separate meeting spaces for the local boards. The CSSU leadership team reports and agenda items would be done as a whole group, after which individual boards would hold their respective meetings with their local administration and with CSSU leadership

available for specific agenda items. While the details of how the day would be configured were not determined, all agreed that this would be an improvement over past practice.

### **Performance Pay, Pensions, and Promising Practices Summit – REL Midwest**

The major take-away from this conference is that to successfully implement performance pay requires a two-to-three year focused discussion involving board members, administrators, teachers, the association, and the business community. The conversation must begin with clarifying and ultimately agreeing upon the definition of quality teaching, determining how it can be observed and how it can be measured. Only once that has been accomplished can you start connecting performance to pay. Those districts that are involved with performance pay stressed that there is still a need for a healthy salary schedule as the core. Many, if not all are subsidized by federal grants that are aimed at amassing the research on this practice. Presenters were clear that we do not yet have empirical evidence that performance pay improves instruction – nor do we any empirical evidence that our current salary schedule is in any way connected to improved instruction.

On an encouraging note, all of the presenters indicated that the most important benefits of connecting pay to teacher performance were the increased teacher focus on student data (data driven decision making), on increased collaboration amongst teachers (teacher learning communities), and on agreement of what constitutes excellent teaching (supervision and evaluation for school improvement) – all initiatives in which we are currently focused.

### **Teacher Negotiations Update**

All of the boards identified their negotiation representatives in September and the Association notified us of their intent to negotiate which officially starts the process. At this point, we believe we will be meeting with the teacher negotiations team starting in January and meeting about every other week until we either reach settlement or declare impasse. The board team will spend time in November and December outlining and drafting proposals and reviewing process.

### **Policy Update**

Thank you for your continued patience as we implement the new process. In general, we will use the CSSU board to discuss and answer questions from the background/briefing memo and use the local meetings to provide input to your local policy representative as we move forward. The boards do not have any policy work, adoption or discussion, this month because the Policy Committee was unable to meet (we did not have a quorum) during October. We will meet in November and the board will have a set of policies to both adopt and discuss at their December meetings.

### **Supervision & Evaluation Committee Update**

This committee met to organize its work for the upcoming year. Our expectation is that all teachers continue to survey students for feedback as we go through the school year. We are making some modifications to that process which should be finalized by December/January. The Parent Survey will be conducted in all schools this spring. We hope to have some recommendations for adoption in the spring for updates to the current supervision and evaluation system to be in place for the start of the 2010-2011 school year.

### **Taking Steps in Science throughout CSSU**

Science NECAP scores have given us reason to plan and take steps toward improvement. While the overall CSSU Science NECAP scores were better than the cumulative scores of students throughout the state, and exceed New Hampshire scores in grades 8 and 11, our results offer us specific areas to scrutinize and learn from, with regard to science skill and content acquisition. A Science Leadership

Task Force composed of school administrators, science teacher leaders, the Superintendent, and Director of Curriculum is meeting regularly to analyze scores and develop a strategy that will address areas of need at each school and throughout CSSU. As a group, we will examine consistent practice in: science inquiry, content knowledge and vocabulary instruction, as well as assessment. The first action step will be the implementation of new, common SU Science Assessment Tasks for grades 5/6 and 7/8. Science teacher leaders developed these tasks based on NECAP release tasks and the PASS science exam. They will continue to meet monthly during the school year to create the 3/4<sup>th</sup> grade assessment task. These SU assessments will offer students practice that is similar to the inquiry process skills required of them on the NECAP. The Science Task Force will meet monthly to strategize and plan for a district wide focus on science instruction.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning**

A twelve member team of CSSU Technology Integrationists, librarians, and administrators are meeting once each month with other teachers in Chittenden County for intensive professional development with Dr. Rubin Puentedura, of the Maine Learning Technology Initiative. They are participating in a year-long series called One-to-One Computing: Models, Tools and Practice. The focus of the workshops is to sharpen their own expertise in the technology integration field, as well learn to be technology coaches to their peers. They are tasked to return to their schools and work with peers to teach, model, and encourage the integration of technology in instruction and learning.

### **Response to Instruction (RtI)**

Part of our IDEA-B ARRA money has been set aside to support District efforts to address the needs of students identified as needing additional academic supports through RtI Universal Screenings. To date, Districts have identified RtI “Coaches”, have purchased research based programs for Tier II interventions and developed a Supervisory Union RtI Handbook. Currently we are in the process of bringing together representatives from each District to participate in our Supervisory Union RtI Leadership Team with our RtI Consultant, Rich Reid. Participants will be able to share, “what works” and best practices strategies that we are using throughout the Supervisory Union. In addition, this team will provide continued input on the current practices and future directions regarding expansion by grade levels and/or content areas, and needed professional development to fully implement the RtI process.

New K-8 teachers to the Supervisory Union received training on RtI on August 24<sup>th</sup>. They received an overview presentation which includes the rationale, components and process. Additional training regarding actual implementation practices will occur at the District levels.

The second session of Tier III trainings began October 9<sup>th</sup>. Thirty-two Special Education Staff (teachers, speech-language pathologists and school psychologist) participated in the first of six training sessions on Assessment and Intervention in Core Cognitive Deficits provided by the Stern Center for Language and Learning. The initial training focused on identifying areas like auditory processing, memory, phonological processing, etc, that may be impacting student progress. The second half of the training will focus on Tier III intervention strategies. The focus of this training is to enable staff to isolate and address cognitive defects, to support student learning in academic and social areas.

### **Proposed new State Special Education Rules**

The first-draft of the newly proposed Special Education rules were distributed for discussion and feedback. I participated in a meeting on Sept. 4<sup>th</sup> with other Directors of Special Education to provide our input regarding proposed changes in the areas of eligibility, audits, team teaching and core staff

requirements to name a few. Later in September there is a hearing before the State Board votes on the rules in November. Supervisory Union and District training on the final rules will occur as needed.

### **District Special Education Administrators**

The District Administrators have been working on their Special Ed Service Plans which began to take shape last June. We met throughout the month of September to fine tune each of the plans to develop the Supervisory Union Service Plan for October 15<sup>th</sup>. In addition, we met in July and August to review our work from last year and to identify priorities for the 09-10 school year which include professional development for all Special Education staff to enhance assessment practices and specialized instruction for Tier III, integration of technology to improve student learning, and Early Intervention/Coordination of services for pre K students. In addition, we will be working on developing a Special Education web page and continuing our work on implementing best practices for students on 504 Plans.

### **Special Education Leadership Academy**

On July 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> I participated with about twenty five Special Ed Directors from throughout the State in a “Vermont Special Education Leadership Academy 2009 – Systems Change for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities” which will continue through January 2010. Topics addressed include data collection and analysis, system change, finance/fiscal management and instruction, improvement and inclusion. In addition, participants and presenters systematically shared numerous best practices and valuable resources that I’ve shared with appropriate Chittenden South Supervisory Union Staff.

### **Early Learning Partnership/ELP Program/Act 62**

We’ve finally managed to implement the first part of Act 62 which dramatically changed our previous ELP program. We have identified our preschool partners, selected and notified the parents who received reduced tuitions for the 09-10 year and contracted for the Creative Curriculum assessment component. Currently, we partner with 15 preschools in Chittenden County who provide preschool care to students from our Supervisory Union. Also, 84 parents received reduced tuition through the program. As a result, we have received calls from parents expressing their gratitude, even stating that the tuition reduction actually made it financially possible for their child to attend their preschool program. Soon we will begin planning for the 10-11 Program.

### **Conference – DEC/CEC**

Last week I attended the Council for Exceptional Children/Division of Early Childhood Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Throughout the four days, I had the opportunity to attend several relevant and inspiring workshops on topics like – “RtI for 3 and 4 year olds,” “Professional Development to Support the Development of Staff Serving Young Children,” “How to Work Collaboratively with Community Childcare Providers,” and several curricular resources. I will be meeting with EEE staff, and ELP staff to share information I learned around best practice in curriculum, assessment, parental involvement, etc. and work with them to select priorities to address throughout the year.

### **CSSU Facilities**

#### *CVU*

Auditorium Renovation: By the time of the Board Carousel the renovation project will be substantially complete in time to support the fall theatre performances. Board members are encouraged to walk through that evening.

#### *CVU/CSSU*

Parking Lot Refurbishment: Work is progressing on schedule for project completion this fall as desired. In the process of excavation a significant amount of contaminated soil was discovered and

had to be removed and stored on sight for a number of years. The state has graciously agreed to cover additional costs for this work.

*Charlotte and Hinesburg*

Voters will be going to the polls on November 3<sup>rd</sup> in each of these towns.

### **Auditors**

We are working through the process of preparation and approval of audits for each school district. St George is complete. Hinesburg CVU and Charlotte have preliminary approval. Final approval will be done in November for individual school boards.

### **Budget Development**

The revised calendar is attached capturing changes made up to and including 10/27/09. New this year, local boards will spend up front time reviewing CSSU purchased services, and we have incorporated recommended enhancements to the decision packet process and forms.

We have participated in two local budget forums so far. The challenges this year for individual boards are significant with not only the burden of a penalty threshold and “two vote” requirement coming into play but also the legislature established that the base education amount has been flat lined for 2010-2011 resulting in additional tax collections for the state education fund.