

2011-2012 Opening of School Update
Office of Instruction and Curriculum: Eileen S. Howley

This report addresses the progress on the District Development and Performance Plan, textbook purchases, summer programs provided for struggling learners, an update on the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IBPYP) at Charter Oak International Academy, Summer Institutes provided for new teachers to the West Hartford Public Schools, teachers who studied this summer at Taft in preparation for teaching Advanced Placement courses, and the status of our Transitional Language Programs.

Planning for District Continuous Improvement and Development

The District Development and Performance Plan was revised during the 2009-2010 school year to reflect the Board of Education adopted mission framework. In the 2010-2011 school year, the District Development and Performance Plan for Continuous Improvement was revised again to integrate the newly adopted Board of Education Goals for 2011-2014. The development of the plan begins with a summary analysis of key findings. This analysis leads to the articulation of district strategic actions that are aligned to the goals. The district strategic actions define the areas of focus for our improvement efforts. The identified “efforts” that follow define what specifically we plan to do to realize those strategic actions. Then, using performance indicators, we indicate how we will know that we have achieved our strategic actions or made a difference. The Board of Education established those performance indicators as measures of progress. The plan is implemented and monitored throughout the year and portions of the plan are reported on to the Board of Education. The final yearly analysis is conducted by examining our results against these performance indicators. This assessment is then used to shape the next iteration of the development plan. A summary of the goals, district strategic actions and efforts are listed below.

Goal One: Advance achievement for all students and reduce disparity between and among groups.

District Strategic Action: Using the Model of Continuous Improvement, we will strengthen standards, curriculum, instruction and assessment to help all students achieve and realize their potential.

Efforts to Support District Strategic Action:

- 1.1 Increase opportunity for staff participation and engagement in monitoring and developing standards curriculum, instruction and assessment
- 1.2 Create environments of collective inquiry focused on improving instruction and strengthening our supervisory practices
- 1.3 Use all elements of the Model of Continuous Improvement for curriculum, instruction and assessment related issues
- 1.4 Use the Secondary School reform legislation as a catalyst for positive and productive curricular and instructional changes

Agenda Item: V.A.1.b.

Goal Two: Nurture the intellectual, physical and emotional well-being of students and create a safe and respectful learning community where all students are held to high expectations.

District Strategic Action: To create an environment and community that fosters intellectually, physically and emotionally healthy learning and living.

Efforts to support strategic action:

- 2.1 Create conditions that foster and support intellectually, physically and emotionally healthy learning as a community
- 2.2 Create cultures that emphasize high expectations for student conduct, responsible behavior, and respect for others
- 2.3 Develop and cultivate school-family-community partnerships

Goal Three: Attract, retain and develop high quality staff by providing professional development, resources and appropriate learning environments.

District Strategic Action: To create the conditions that promote collaborative inquiry through shared and distributed leadership.

Efforts to Support District Strategic Action:

- 3.1 Provide the necessary structures, supports and resources to faculty and administrators to engage in collaborative inquiry
- 3.2 Build the diversity of our teaching population to more closely match the diversity of our student population

Elements of the District Development and Performance Plan will be reported to the Board of Education throughout the year as performance indicator data becomes available.

Planning for Fall Training in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol Model (SIOP)

The SIOP Model is based on current knowledge and research-based practices that take into account the special language development needs of English Language Learners (ELLs). It was developed to provide an instructional framework for sheltered instruction (instruction that includes an awareness of the needs of ELLs delivered by ESOL and classroom teachers). SIOP shares many features recommended for high quality instruction for all students such as cooperative learning, strategies for reading comprehension and differentiated instruction. The emphasis that SIOP places on building vocabulary and background knowledge contributes to students' literacy development.

Over the last two years, 105 K-5 teachers across 7 schools attended training in the SIOP model and had the opportunity to incorporate successful strategies in their daily teaching. During the 2011-2012 school year, teachers new to these schools will receive training. We will also continue implementing SIOP by completing training for two elementary schools, and bringing teachers from secondary schools on board with training. This continues the work towards our goal for all teachers to receive SIOP training. Training is phased in with priority being given to schools with the highest ELL school populations.

Scientifically Research Based Interventions (SRBI) Work: Elementary:

- AIMSweb was implemented as the universal screening and progress monitoring tool for reading across the 11 elementary schools at all grade levels. Teachers used the results of the screening in conjunction with other observations and assessment data to provide a framework for monitoring and interventions.
- All schools implemented a Student Success Team (SST) model comprised of the classroom teacher and specialized staff acting in decision-making roles. SSTs met weekly to collaborate on assessment of student referral and progress monitoring data in order to develop Individualized Performance Plans (IPPs).
- AIMSweb assessment tools for mathematics were piloted in select schools last year and a full pilot at the math AIMSweb assessment tools kicks off in September.

Secondary:

- All schools shifted from a Student Assistance Team (SAT) model to a Student Success Team (SST) model.
- A common Individualized Performance Plan (IPP) draft document was created and piloted at all schools.
- Initial work began on investigating and creating reading and mathematics universal screenings and progress monitoring tools.

Professional Development

On June 20, all professional staff spent the day working on curriculum and/or areas of focus within the District Development and Performance Plan. Additionally, all general and special education paraprofessionals received a full day of instructional training related to district initiatives.

Elementary

At the elementary level, schools focused on a variety of topics such as data teams, SRBI processes and interventions, Student Success Teams, International Baccalaureate units, technology integration, and School Development reflection and planning.

Secondary

At the secondary level, teachers worked with their department supervisor and colleagues to continue their work in areas such as developing an understanding of the new state language arts and math standards, curriculum alignment and maps, implementation of new curriculum, development of units and lessons, creation of instructional materials, development of common course assessments, task analysis, and rubric development.

Town-wide Departments

The town-wide departments, art, library/media, music, p.e./health, reading, school counseling, technology education, world language, ESOL, reading and QuEST, continued their work in the areas of curriculum review and development, common assessments, instructional strategies, and rubric development.

Summer Curriculum Work

Given the recent release of the Common Core State Standards and impending guidance from the CT State Department of Education, summer curriculum writing was limited to the following areas:

Elementary - Social Studies and ESOL

Social Studies:

- Reviewed changes to State Social Studies Standards and determined necessary revisions to current West Hartford curriculum
- Concentrated efforts on Grade 5 curriculum; vertically aligned with middle school expectations
- Wrote Grade 5 lessons on Constitution and the Government, Southern Colonies, Middle Colonies, and New England Colonies; Guaranteed Research Experience (GRE) on the colony of Connecticut
- Assembled all necessary materials and resources; pricing and ordering of materials is on-going
- Activities will be piloted in the 2011-12 school year for adoption the following year

ESOL:

- Reviewed revisions to the CTSDE ESOL Frameworks, Common Core State Standards, and Ainsworth's Rigorous Curriculum Design model
- Identified the impact of new guidance on existing curriculum updating as necessary
- Wrote SIOP lessons completing one or more units of study across multiple grade levels

Secondary - Academic Learning Lab (ALL)

- Reviewed program goals, student profiles and student data
- Established curricular themes aligned to program goals
- Wrote lessons to support themed instruction on goal setting, school success, and decision making
- Established calendar of activities for first month of school

Supporting New Teachers/Administrators

The Office of Instruction and Curriculum and the Office of Human Resources partnered this summer in offering three days of voluntary new teacher induction workshops. Technology workshops included Intro to WHPS Network and Google Apps and PowerSchool. Enrollment was as follows:

Course Title	Number of Participants
PowerSchool	15
Intro to WHPS Network and Google Apps	17

Extended Leadership Professional Development

The Extended Leadership team met on August 24, 2011 to continue to foster a “community of practice” regarding instructional improvement. The day focused on extending our knowledge of high quality school and departmental planning, including using a “theory of action” to drive instructional improvement efforts. The team continued to work on school and program improvement in an ongoing effort to build coherence for instructional improvement across the school system. The team reflected on their leadership skills and strengths in development planning and strengthened those plans through collaborative inquiry and analysis together. The Leadership team also addressed issues related to the opening of school.

Teachers Preparing for Advanced Placement this Summer

The following high school teachers participated in summer Advanced Placement professional development at Taft: AP Computer Science - Jacqueline Corricelli (Conard) and AP European History - Jessica Palliardi (Hall).

Curriculum Review and Renewal

The Five-Year Plan for Curriculum Review and Renewal continues for the 2011-2012 school year. During the 2010-2011 school year, the teams strengthened the process by sharpening the definition of expectations for rigorous and relevant curriculum design. Vertical Teams in the disciplines of Science, Social Studies, Gifted and Talented and post-secondary programs presented during the course of the last year, using the newly established criteria and rubric. At the end of the 2011-2012 school year, the CPDC concluded that the revised process was a re-vitalized one that encouraged more thorough analysis of program strengths and needs. In the 2011-2012 school year, the following areas are under review: Art K-12, Language Arts/English K-12, and School Counseling. The related services area of “Health Services” is under review, however, the team is examining the process for service reviews to better target how to assess a service versus a curriculum program. A new set of standards for these areas is anticipated in the 2011-2012 school year based on CPDC input and analysis.

International Baccalaureate - Primary Years Program at Charter Oak International Academy

As shared previously, Charter Oak International Academy successfully achieved authorization from the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). Teachers will continuously work on their units of study. This year, we will begin internal discussions regarding the overall IB pathway into secondary school.

Transitional Language Programs (TLP)

Bilingual Programs (TLP) are mandated by the Connecticut State Department of Education whenever a public school has 20 or more students classified as dominant in a language other than English. This year we will have Spanish Transitional Language Programs at Charter Oak, Smith, and Sedgwick.

Textbook purchases included:

High School

English – books purchased for AP Language, Pre-AP 11, Modern American Language
Science – textbooks purchased for Chemistry, Environmental Science, Physical Science and Physics
Social Studies – books purchased for AP US government and politics
World Language- textbooks purchased for AP French, Spanish III and III honors

Middle School

Science – textbooks purchased for eighth grade science
Social Studies – subscription to HA! Ancient World 2011
World Language – textbooks purchased for French Level 1 and Spanish Level 1

Elementary

World Language - Leveled Readers purchased for grades 4 and 5

Summer Programs

For the third year, **Summer Connections** was provided for selected students at Charter Oak and Smith schools. **121** students from grades 1 through 5 participated in this four-week program which was held at Smith School. There is no fee for attending this program. The primary objective of the program is to improve reading comprehension. The curriculum focuses on phonics, vocabulary, word work, summarizing and making predictions. Materials were selected based on student need and classes were kept small in order to maximize personal engagement and student achievement. In addition to classroom teachers, a special education teacher worked to ensure optimal student support. Parents, as well as each student's classroom teacher for the 2010-2011 school year, receive a progress report detailing student progress during the Summer Connections Program.

The **Summer ESOL Program** was attended by **148** students in grades 1 through 8 and was held at Webster Hill School. The curriculum is focused on West Hartford ESOL objectives and is integrated with reading, writing and mathematics. Students are divided in grade level classes based on their English language fluency (beginner, intermediate, advanced). There is no fee for participating. The continued support for this program ensures that students who struggle with learning the English language can maintain and enhance their literacy skills. Parents, the 2010-11 classroom teacher, and the ESOL teacher receive a copy of their student's progress report which explains personal and social development as well as language arts and math progress during the four weeks of instruction.

Based on feedback from the middle school principals and their successful implementation of SRBI, the Summer Prep Program was discontinued and has been replaced with **Academic Learning Lab (ALL)**, a one semester credited study skills program intended for students otherwise at risk of retention and recommended to attend by school administrators and counselors. The course is instructed by the high school reading specialist in concert with a dedicated school counselor and the school psychologist and students are teamed for their core academics. The ALL team met over the summer to develop lessons and activities surrounding themed units of study in goal setting, study skills, decision making, career and interest exploration, and respect and peer relations. The ALL program will service 16 grade 9 students at Conard this year (no students from Hall were identified).

Convocation

“Teamwork: promoting a collaborative culture and community in our schools to inspire and prepare our students for the global community” was the theme of this year’s 2011 convocation.

Principal of Charter Oak International Academy, Mary Thompson, and students from the Charter Oak International Academy Choir greeted the assembly. Assistant Superintendent Tom Moore led the morning’s activities. Clare Kindall, Chairperson of the Board of Education greeted the faculty and staff and Cole Canarie, a recent graduate of the Charter Oak International Academy, shared his insights as a recent graduate of Charter Oak. Joyce St. Germaine, the 2011-2012 Teacher of the Year, shared remarks about her career in education. Our inspirational speaker, Garrison Wynn, author of the bestselling book, *The Truth About Success*, provided an inspirational speech about how to build trust and embrace change as we ready to greet our children and families.