

2011-12 Opening of School Update

Assistant Superintendent for Administration: Tom Moore

The summer months were busy across the school system. The following summary reflects activities in the areas of buildings and grounds, summer school, information technology, transportation, and student enrollment.

Plant and Facilities Services

The summer months were active with a number of capital improvement projects, smaller improvement projects and routine maintenance.

Capital and smaller improvement projects undertaken this summer included:

Aiken Elementary School

- Replaced majority of the roof
- Removed oil tank
- Replaced exterior doors

Bugbee Elementary School

- Constructed new pre-K classroom
- Paved lower lot and roadway
- Removed oil tank

Charter Oak International Academy

- Replaced flooring in 9 classrooms
- Removed oil tank

Conard High School

- Paved main parking lot
- Replaced electrical transformer

Duffy Elementary School

- Replaced classroom doors

Hall High School

- Replaced 7 air conditioning compressors
- Repaired and painted public boys restroom near gym

King Philip Middle School

- Kitchen sink replaced for environmental compliance

Morley Elementary School

- Replaced auditorium roof
- Replaced flooring in 10 classrooms

Agenda item:
V.A.1.c.

Norfeldt Elementary School

- Paved visitor parking lot
- Replaced exterior doors

Sedgwick Middle School

- Kitchen sink replaced for environmental compliance

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- Fire code corrections
- Painted various classrooms and hallways

Webster Hill Elementary School

- Partial roof replacement
- Refurbished 2 restrooms

Wolcott Elementary School

- Replaced flooring in 4 modular classrooms

In addition to the projects listed, additional routine maintenance work was completed including:

- Painted parking lots, playgrounds, classrooms, hallways, etc. throughout the school district
- Refinished 17 wood gym floors
- Repaired various sidewalks, road and parking lots
- All buildings received a thorough cleaning of all spaces and inspection of life safety and emergency systems.
- AED's were mounted in all buildings

Summer Programs Summary - 2011

Summer High School

The program was held at Hall High School and enrolled 757 students first semester and 577 students second semester. Total enrollment was down substantially (17%) from the previous year, but a \$82,000 state grant for financial aid and transportation costs helped to offset the effects of the general economy. This interdistrict cooperative grant, however, was reduced 24% from last year's total as a result of the state budget issues.

Students from 28 towns and two other states enrolled in 36 different courses taught by a certified faculty of 64 teachers, 58% of whom are from the West Hartford schools. Sixty-nine percent of the students took courses to "get ahead" in their scheduled program, while 25% took courses to remediate low or failing grades. About 6% enrolled in non-credit courses such as Study Skills, Intensive Reading, SAT Prep and ESOL classes. Decreases in enrollment were largest in remedial English and math classes, and in Health and Modern World History. There were enrollment increases in Algebra II, American Government, Junior Physical Education and the arts classes.

Summer K-8 Program

The K-8 program was held at Whiting Lane School and Sedgwick Middle School. A total of 227 students were enrolled at Sedgwick in a mix of 14 different academic skill courses and 25 enrichment courses in arts, technology and physical education. Whiting Lane housed the full-morning classes for 25 children from pre-school to first grade. As with the high school program, these enrollment totals represent an 18% decrease over the previous year, despite several new class offerings, a simplified class schedule and an added option for afternoon activities through Leisure Services. A total of 36 teachers, most all of whom are from West Hartford, provided the instruction at Whiting Lane and Sedgwick.

Continuing Education – Adult Enrichment

In the Life Learn enrichment program, 64 courses and 18 bus trips were offered. Over 500 registrants took advantage of the courses housed at Hall High School in the evenings and of the trips to areas and events of interest.

Adult Education – High School Diploma Program

While there are no classes held in the mandated adult education program during the summer, the advisors in the National External Diploma Program (NEDP) continued to meet with eighteen students seeking to complete that course of study over the summer.

Information Technology Department Summer 2011 Projects

The West Hartford Public Schools Information Technology Department completed several major projects during the summer to improve the resources and services available to students and staff. We are pleased to share the following updates on these projects.

High Speed Fiber Internet Access

Fiber service delivered ahead of schedule to all schools and the Town Hall on August 25, 2011.

Projects related to the fiber implementation include:

- Filter and firewall devices replaced with more current and capable equipment
- Replacement of critical network equipment is underway

Technology Blueprint

- First draft of the report will be reviewed by key staff during September
- Anticipated delivery of the final report to the Board of Education in October

Google Apps for Education

- Transition from Lotus Notes to Google Apps for Education complete
- Users provided with both face-to-face and online options for training which focused on email, contacts and calendar functions
- Training in more advanced features will continue throughout the school year
- Move to Google Apps for Education enabled implementation of new & improved anti-virus software

PowerSchool

- Upgraded software to version 7 of PowerSchool which required server hardware upgrades

- Parent Portal will reopen shortly after the start of the school year

Help Desk

- New help desk software (IT Direct from SchoolDude) implemented
- Training provided for all IT staff
- Plant and Facilities Services has been successfully using other modules of this software for some time
- Over time we will implement other features of the software (e.g. asset management/inventory control, direct user reporting)

Practices, Procedures and Operations: (update, streamlining and consistency)

- Windows 7 implemented for all new computer purchases
- Standardized Windows 7 practices and provided training for IT staff
- Infotech wiki established for IT staff to promote collaboration
- Microsoft Office products and other Microsoft software standardized
- Purchasing and implementation procedures standardized
- Server software and memory updated
- Instructional software training provided (e.g. Blogs, Wikis, Smart Boards, Excel, Prezi, Digital Storytelling, Document cameras, Glogster)

Major Purchases

- Four mobile computer cart systems for Science labs (2 for each high school)
- Replacement of oldest computer inventory is beginning
- Orders for building requests funded through the budget continues to be implemented

Transportation

This school year we will transport over 6,000 students, using more than 250 routes. We continued to look for and find routing efficiencies with the help of our Versatrans system.

- Our contract is with First Student, Inc. Their fleet has the following equipment: (1) Digital video/audio monitoring system. (2) Child Check system – each bus is equipped so that the driver must walk to the back of the bus and engage a switch, indicating they have walked to the rear of the bus checking for students. If a driver gets off the bus without activating the switch, an alarm will sound. (3) Global Positioning System (4) Each minibus has 6 positions each of permanently installed 5-point integrated car seats.
- First Student requires their employees to wear a uniform vest at all times. The vests are lime green/yellow, labeled with “First Student,” and are to be worn over clothing.
- Buses were available at all of our elementary schools for the “kindergarten practice run” which took place on Monday, August 115, 2011, at 9 a.m. The program is voluntary and the new kindergarten student attends with a parent or other adult with them. This practice run is scheduled to familiarize new kindergarten students with the feel of riding a school bus for the first time. Further, it provides the incoming kindergarten student the experience of boarding a bus, the seating situation, the feel of the ride, as well as the noises created by the bus.
- First Student held several safety meetings for their drivers at Town Hall in August and had their fall orientation and start-up meeting on August 13 at Duffy School.

- All routes continue to be well within state guidelines regarding walking distances to and from schools and bus stops.
- Overall, the first day of the school year went very well, with the most common issues being traffic problems created by clean up from Hurricane Irene on some roads that led to some delays. One major issue is that the First Student Bus Depot was damaged by the Hurricane, so direct communication for the public with the bus depot has been difficult. One the first two days of school the dispatcher worked out of our offices, and Julie Jacques, our coordinator, was in at 5:30 a.m. to aid in set up and communication.

Residency

As of August 30, 2011, the Residency Office had enrolled 1009 students since June. This is a decrease of 28 students compared to the summer of 2010. This office also completed data entry for the 2011 kindergarten class that was registered in late spring of this year, as well as processing 143 address changes. The Residency Office is also in charge of background checks on new employees, and fingerprinted 67 new staff members this summer. We also worked with the families of 12 homeless students to ensure they were ready to attend school. We updated their status to make sure that they were receiving the proper services needed to make their school year successful.