

Curriculum and Instruction – Board Report – December 2011

Preschool – Grade 5

Submitted by Jason Vivadelli, Principal & Supervisor

Summer Professional Development Programs 2011:

1. Vertical Articulation – Grades K – 5 (6/27 – 6/30)

Strategic Plan (SP) Strategy 1.15

Woodbury's Math Coach – Tobey Realley – held a vertical articulation PD session immediately following the close of the 2010-11 school year in June. Representatives from various grade levels delved into curriculum maps, the Everyday Math series, and the new standards in an effort to better align instruction from one grade to the next. This was the culminating event of a year-long effort at mathematical alignment.

2. Responsive Classroom (7/25-7/29)

SP Strategy 2.1

In an effort to fulfill this Strategic Plan initiative, teachers not yet trained in Responsive Classroom had that opportunity for a week in mid-summer. Woodbury was once again selected as a regional training site and played host to a number of teachers from districts in the surrounding areas. This hospitality enables Woodbury to garner additional training seats at no extra cost. Responsive Classroom is a social-emotional learning program that instructs participants in conducting Morning Meetings, rule creation, logical consequences, interactive modeling and collaborative problem-solving with students. There was also a focus on guided discovery, academic choice and positive teacher language.

3. Differentiated Instruction – Grade 1 & 2 (8/3 – 8/4)

SP Strategy 1.3

Teachers and Instructional Assistants in Grades 1 & 2 began their year-long exposure to differentiated instruction. Working with Dr. Barbara Moore-Williams, these educators were introduced to strategies to differentiate the content, process, and product of lessons to better meet the needs of individual students.

4. NJ ASCD Curriculum Project Presentation – (8/4)

SP Strategy 1.3

Teachers in Woodbury were invited to participate in a curriculum project sponsored by NJ ASCD to design curricular units using the new Common Core Standards. A team of teachers, the Curriculum Supervisor, and the Academic Coaches attended a state sponsored workshop on unit development and met to plan and design the math and literacy units. After having met several times over the 2010-11 school year, they presented their lessons to the state committee in August.

5. SmartBoard Training – Open to all teachers (8/9, 8/10, 8/11)

SP Strategy 1.13

Woodbury has made a concerted effort to equip classrooms with interactive SmartBoards to aid the delivery of instruction and make it more engaging for students. To help teachers fully understand the complexity and capabilities of the boards, two beginner and one intermediate sessions were conducted by a teacher-leader – Mr. Sheldon Soper. To a person, the sessions were informative and well received.

6. **Common Core Math Standards** – Grades K, 1, & 2 (8/15)

Just recently, New Jersey, along with 47 other states, agreed to adopt the Common Core Standards in literacy and mathematics. The first standards to go into effect during the implementation process were those for Grades K-2 in mathematics on September 1, 2011. These new standards set specific goals for each student at each grade level which was a dramatic shift for Woodbury. The previous standards and existing math series placed an emphasis on the spiraling of instruction with repeated exposure to concepts over time, thus establishing expectations that students become secure in mathematical concepts much later. To address this shift and prepare our teachers for the upcoming year, Woodbury attempted to bring in Shirley Cooper from the NJDOE to provide an in-service. Unfortunately, Ms. Cooper realized the morning of 8/15 that she had double-booked herself and would be unable to make it to Woodbury. Disappointed but still eager for understanding, teachers used the day to digest the new standards and adjust the current Everyday Math report card inserts to reflect the changes.

7. **Writer’s Workshop** – Grades K – 5 (8/22-8/26)

SP Strategy 1.3

Two individuals from the Columbia Reading and Writing Network were brought in to conduct professional development on Lucy Calkin’s Writer’s Workshop. This is an interdisciplinary writing technique which can build students’ fluency in writing through continuous and repeated exposure to the process of writing. Participants were divided into primary and upper elementary groups. Units of Study, mini-lessons, independent writing, conferring, and sharing were taught. Teachers left excited to implement the technique in their own classrooms.

8. **New Teacher Orientation** – All new certificated staff (8/23 – 8/25)

New teachers to the district received three intensive days of activities and introductions to Woodbury Public Schools. Utilizing the Strategic Plan, as the structural framework, representatives from the business, maintenance, special education, counseling, technology, and curriculum offices gave glimpses of pertinent information to the new hires. Additionally, the principals of each school spoke about the cultures of their buildings and led tours. In an effort to cement the school-community connection, new teachers were taken on a bus tour of Woodbury and required to complete a scavenger hunt activity. Mr. Jones also welcomed them to Woodbury and spoke passionately about the Strategic Plan.

Summer School Programs 2011:

1. **Special Education Self-Contained Pre-K Program** – Preschool students (7/5 – 7/28)

SP Strategy 1.10

To minimize the “summer slump” that so often occurs with Woodbury’s neediest students, a four-day per week summer program was offered to district students in the self-contained preschool program.

2. **Special Education Inclusion Program** – Students in Grades 1-5 (7/5 – 7/28)

SP Strategy 1.10

A similar program was held for Woodbury's elementary inclusion students. Efforts were made to work on remediation and their individual educational goals.

3. **Summer Mathematics and Literacy Enrichment Activities** – Primary & Upper Elementary students (7/5 – 7/28)

SP Strategy 1.10

Enrichment opportunities were offered to students in Woodbury's elementary schools in the areas of literacy and mathematics. The groups were divided into primary and upper elementary cohorts. Engaging activities and projects exposed students to higher-order thinking and challenging new material.

Professional Development during the school year:

1. **Differentiated Instruction** – Grade 1 & 2 (9/20, 10/13, 11/17, 12/8)

SP Strategy 1.3

These sessions focused on specific strategies included in Differentiated Instruction (DI). Teachers were asked to implement these strategies into their classrooms, to reflect on the process, and to share their experiences with the group. Dr. Moore-Williams went into more depth in each of the trainings and fleshed out DI concepts.

2. **Verbal Behavior MAPP Training** – Self-Contained Preschool – Grade 1 Teachers, IAs, and Aides (9/1 & 9/2)

SP Strategy 1.3

The VB-MAPP is a criterion-referenced assessment tool, curriculum guide, and skill tracking system that is designed for children with autism and other individuals who demonstrate language delays. The VB-MAPP is based on B.F. Skinner's analysis of verbal behavior, established developmental milestones, and research from the field of behavior analysis.

There are five components of the VB-MAPP, and collectively they provide a baseline level of performance, a direction for intervention, a system for tracking skill acquisition, a tool for outcome measures and other language research projects, and a framework for curriculum planning.

Teachers were in-serviced on this technique by a representative from the Gloucester County Special Services School District.

3. **Wilson Reading** – Self-Contained Grade 2-5 Teachers (10/25, 10/27, 11/1, 11/3)

SP Strategy 1.3

Based on Orton-Gillingham principles, Wilson is a highly-structured remedial program that directly teaches the structure of language to students who have been unable to learn with other teaching strategies or who may require multisensory language instruction. While this was not "true" Wilson training, Mrs. Walshe, a Wilson certified trainer, was able to share some specific strategies with our teachers.

4. November 7 & 8 In-Service Days

Grades 3-5 - Literacy TA “Reading First”– Jonathan LeMaster

SP Strategy 4.3

Literacy TA offers practical strategies and approaches that teachers can use to improve students' ability to read, write, and speak in the content areas. As the author of AVID Weekly and a sought-after presenter at AVID conferences, Mr. LeMaster was able to in-service our teachers on his set of reading strategies. His focus on non-fictional text and critical reading aligns well with the new Common Core standards. Rather than teachers pre-digesting the material for students, Mr. LeMaster provided structures and activities for students to grapple with complex text on their own and with support from their peers, thereby taking full ownership of the learning.

Grades K -2 – New Math Common Core Standards

In an effort to share some of the material lost when Ms. Cooper from the state DOE failed to show for her training during the summer, our math Academic Coach – Tobey Realley – created an intense two day training which familiarized teachers with the new standards. Lessons were created, report cards aligned, SmartBoard activities shared, and differentiation strategies discussed.

Disabled PreSchool & MD K/1 - Verbal Behavior MAPP Training

SP Strategy 1.3

The five components of VB-MAPP were discussed further. The data collected from the components was used for proper placement, IEP goal formation, and a language curriculum on an individual basis.

Preschool – Software Research and Website Development

SP Strategy 1.13

Our Preschool teachers spent their in-service time researching new and innovative software and websites that provide content-rich, engaging activities for our youngest students. Additionally, they developed their own websites in an effort to better keep parents abreast of their child's progress in class.

Nurses – Asthma Award, *Let's Move!*, Gloucester County In-Service

SP Strategy 2.5

As the first district in Gloucester County to receive the “Asthma Friendly Award” from the Asthma Coalition, the nurses were recognized the morning of November 7; what a great honor. Not missing a beat, they transitioned to preparing the district for implementation of the federal *Let's Move!* program. Begun by First Lady Michele Obama, it is a comprehensive initiative dedicated to solving the challenge of childhood obesity within a generation. Combining comprehensive strategies with common sense, *Let's Move!* is about putting children on the path to a healthy future during their earliest months and years.

Other Curricular Matters:

1. Curriculum Mapping – Grades K-5 (monthly)

SP Strategy 1.15

Teachers continue to map their curriculum monthly in an effort to improve both horizontal and vertical articulation. Gaps and redundancies are eliminated. Lessons continue to be reflected upon and refined.

2. Grade Level Meetings – Preschool – Grade 5 (quarterly)

All grade level teams will have met with Curriculum Supervisor and Academic Coaches once this fall by the end of December. Some of the topics discussed will include MAP data trends, the new math standards, Writer's Workshop, LiteracyTA, SmartBoard activities, and horizontal articulation.

3. Enrichment, ESL, BSI

Planning meetings were held in September with ESL, Basic Skills, and Enrichment teachers. Ms. Blizzard, the new enrichment teacher, successfully applied for and received from the NJ DOE Sketch Up Pro 8 software for each elementary school. Additionally, she is organizing the district's participation in the National Geography Bee.

4. Academic Coaches

Meetings are held weekly with the Academic Coaches. The coaches have been instrumental in district professional development activities, grade level meetings, and the implementation of the new standards. Each has started sending out weekly "tips" for teachers. They spend most of their time in classrooms co-teaching, conducting model lessons, and helping with the implementation of initiatives. The math coach is also leading the effort for the adoption of a new math series aligned to the new standards. Mrs. Realley has established a textbook adoption committee with broad and diverse representation and scheduled presentations from five different vendors for January/February. Any potential math series will be piloted in late spring with the intention of a recommendation being sent to the BOE before the end of the year.

5. MAP Testing

SP Strategy 1.5 & 1.14

The district continues to use MAP to assess students in grades 2 -5 (elementary). The assessment schedule includes a mid-year benchmark assessment. The language portion of MAP testing is no longer being utilized, as it is not an accurate predictor of writing performance. Writing benchmarks aligned to the Lucy Calkin's Writer's Workshop approach have been developed with some teacher piloting in place as a replacement. Reading and math continue to be tested.

6. Mentoring

Mentors and mentees have met both formally and informally. Both groups have been introduced to the mentoring process and were given copies of the plan. Any concerns were discussed and suggestions were given to improve these relationships.

7. College Student Placements

The district continues to partner with the pre-service programs at local universities in placing student teachers in our schools. This year is no different. Below, please find the placements for the school year:

Marissa Council	Clinical Practice	9/1/11-12/20/11	Linda Brewer (9/1-11/9) Maria Gassner (11/10-12/20)	West End
Ashley Drummond	Clinical Practice	9/1/11-12/20/11	Chrissy Pierce	Walnut
Theresa Malony	Clinical Practice	9/1/11-10/1/11*	Carla McLaughlin	Evergreen
Sheila Ralston	Clinical Practice (SE Only)	7/5/11-7/28/11	Maria Gassner	West End
Larry Devlin	Speech and Language Internship	September 2011 – December 2011	Sheila Lenoff	Evergreen

* Tragically, Theresa Malony passed away unexpectedly on October 1, 2011.