

**PELHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION STUDY SESSION**

**BENCHMARKING THE ELEMENTARY
PROGRAM**

OCTOBER 7, 2013



Dr. Steven M. Garcia

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Personnel

Dr. Richard Limato, *Prospect Hill Principal*

Mrs. Susan Gilbert, *Siwanoy Principal*

Mrs. Carla Tarazi, *Hutchinson Principal*

Mrs. Tonya Wilson, *Colonial Principal*

Mrs. Julie Liebersohn, *ELA Staff Developer K-5*

Mrs. Beth Finkelstein, *Math Staff Developer K-5*

INTRODUCTION – Dr. Steven M. Garcia

This exercise in benchmarking the Elementary School program has been a tremendous learning experience for me. It has provided me with an opportunity to understand the wonderful leaders and teachers that function with the Pelham Public School learning community. I greatly appreciate the dedication and professionalism of the administration, faculty, and staff as they endeavor to enhance student learning experience each day. They are true professionals who understand and value the cycle of continuous improvement. This study provides an overview of our journey as learners, and together, we will grow to ensure that we strive to guide all students as they strive for success.

The premise of this study revolves around an essential question:

How Do We Define Success For All Children?

This is a focus for all educational leaders in Pelham. As we begin this journey, we have to reflect on three topical questions:

- Where are we?
- What are we doing?
- What's next?

Throughout this report, principals and staff developers present their thoughts on the elementary program advances learning for all our children. Yet this is a journey; we have many strengths, and we have plans to grow.

There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.
- Mark Twain

The principals and staff developers will share their thoughts on the elementary program. I will briefly present some data as they pertain to the Grades 3-8 NYS ELA and Math assessments. Through a process called *Data-driven Conversations*, I will use the following protocol to analyze various pieces of State assessment statistics.

1. Predictions - Surfacing perspectives, beliefs, assumptions, predictions, possibilities, questions, and expectations
2. Go Visual - creating large, vibrant, color-coded bar graphs that compare previous scores
3. Observations - Analyzing the data for patterns, trends, surprises, and new questions that “jump” out
4. Inferences - Generating hypotheses, explaining, and drawing conclusions. Defining new actions and interactions and the data needed to guide their implementation. Building ownership for decisions.

Included in this study are:

- ELA Grades 3-5 Comparable School Results: 2011-2013
- Math Grades 3-5 Comparable School Results: 2011-2013
- ELA Percentage of Students Demonstrating Proficiency Level 3 & 4
- ELA Mean Scale Scores

- Math Percentage of Students Demonstrating Proficiency Level 3 & 4
- Math Mean Scale Scores
- District and Schools Performance

Data Protocol: A Basic Overview

1. **Predictions:** We knew based on warnings from the State and previous Common Core test results in Kentucky that proficiency scores were likely to drop in all areas.
2. **Observations:** Looking at the 2011 vs. 2013 scores in comparable schools, Pelham generally performed similarly despite changes in Common Core expectations. However, there remains some variability in performance among our four elementary schools based on proficiency. However, Mean Scale Scores reveal a much closer level of performance.
3. **Inferences:** We need to better understand the trends across our schools that may influence such differences and similarities in performance. Our work in developing a systemic literacy program and exploring new math programs will assist in these endeavors. Another key piece will be our collaboration with Dr. Carol Ann Tomlinson in Differentiated Instruction this school year.

Elementary School Reflections

This study provides a glimpse into how we serve the elementary school child in preparation for middle school and beyond. I compliment Richard, Tonya, Carla, Susan, Julie, and Beth for their efforts in sharing their programs and collective efforts. Although we are four schools, we are one elementary program.

Where we were 2010-11

Where we are 2012-13

ELA 3

DISTRICT	tested	2012-2013					
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3 & 4	mean score
Hastings	108	10.2	25	44.4	20.4	64.8	329
Edgemont	157	6.4	32.5	52.9	8.3	61.2	325
Eastchester	271	13.7	25.5	50.9	10	60.9	321
Pleasantville	114	13.2	28.1	51.8	7	58.8	318
Irvington	131	16.8	28.2	48.9	6.1	55	317
Rye Neck	129	12.4	34.1	43.4	10.1	53.5	320
Ardsley	155	14.8	32.3	50.3	2.6	52.9	315
Dobbs Ferry	120	19.2	28.3	38.3	14.2	52.5	318
Pelham		17.7	31.2	47.6	3.5	51.1	315
Croton-Harmon	137	18.2	31.4	38	12.4	50.4	318
Somers	241	18.7	34	42.7	4.6	47.3	312

ELA 4

DISTRICT	tested	2012-2013					
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3 & 4	mean score
Irvington	130	2.3	23.1	46.2	28.5	74.7	330
Hastings	117	6.8	20.5	40.2	32.5	72.7	326
Eastchester	255	5.9	25.9	32.9	35.3	68.2	331
Ardsley	153	5.2	29.4	41.2	24.2	65.4	326
Pelham	241	8.3	28.2	43.2	20.3	63.5	321
Dobbs Ferry	102	8.8	28.4	39.2	23.5	62.7	323
Pleasantville	137	9.5	29.2	29.9	31.4	61.3	326
Edgemont	174	12.1	32.8	34.5	20.7	55.2	319
Rye Neck	119	10.1	35.3	30.3	24.4	54.7	322
Somers	261	11.9	39.8	27.2	21.1	48.3	317
Croton-Harmon	123	11.4	41.5	32.5	14.6	47.1	316

ELA 5

DISTRICT	tested	2012-2013					
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3 & 4	mean score
Edgemont	148	6.1	20.3	41.2	32.4	73.6	334
Hastings	112	9.8	22.3	38.4	29.5	67.9	327
Rye Neck	99	9.1	27.3	34.3	29.3	63.6	327
Eastchester	226	11.5	25.2	30.5	32.7	63.2	327
Irvington	139	10.8	27.3	34.5	27.3	61.8	325
Dobbs Ferry	116	12.1	26.7	40.5	20.7	61.2	321
Croton-Harmon	140	14.3	27.9	37.1	20.7	57.8	321
Pelham	228	9.6	34.2	36	20.2	56.2	321
Ardsley	137	13.1	32.1	40.1	14.6	54.7	316
Pleasantville	127	11	34.6	40.2	14.2	54.4	319

Somers	280	17.9	30	38.9	13.2	52.1	315
Where we were 2010-11			Where we are 2012-13				

DISTRICT	tested	2012-2013					mean score
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3 & 4	
Pelham	231	6.5	29	35.5	29	64.5	324
Irvington	133	10.5	29.3	31.6	28.6	60.2	322
Rye Neck	130	13.1	26.9	27.7	32.3	60	323
Edgemont	157	9.6	30.6	37.6	22.3	59.9	318
Somers	241	16.2	25.7	31.5	26.6	58.1	318
Croton-Harmon	136	11	30.9	27.9	30.1	58	320
Eastchester	277	11.9	31	28.5	28.5	57	320
Hastings	109	10.1	33	30.3	26.6	56.9	320
Pleasantville	114	13.2	32.5	37.7	16.7	54.4	315
Ardsley	155	12.3	43.9	27.7	16.1	43.8	312
Dobbs Ferry	117	19.7	37.6	22.2	20.5	42.7	312

MATH 4

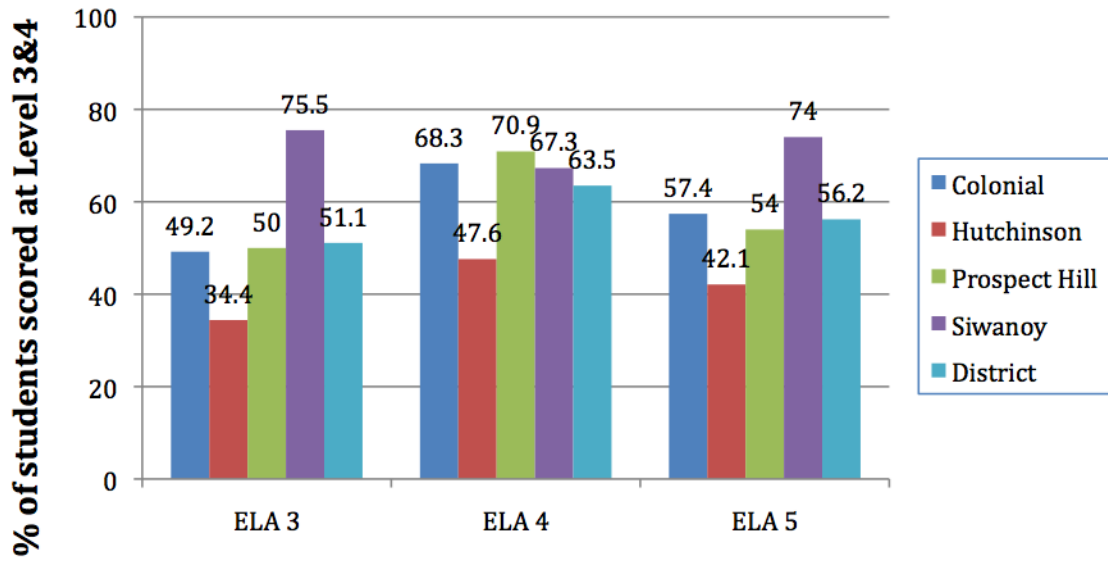
DISTRICT	tested	2012-2013					mean score
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3 & 4	
Eastchester	261	5.7	21.5	31.4	41.4	72.8	332
Pleasantville	137	5.8	23.4	30.7	40.1	70.8	330
Edgemont	171	11.1	21.1	38.6	29.2	67.8	322
Irvington	130	6.9	26.9	26.9	39.2	66.1	327
Ardsley	153	7.8	26.8	41.8	23.5	65.3	322
Pelham	242	7	27.7	38.8	26.4	65.2	323
Dobbs Ferry	101	6.9	28.7	32.7	31.7	64.4	323
Hastings	115	9.6	27	33	30.4	63.4	321
Rye Neck	121	13.2	24.8	37.2	24.8	62	319
Croton-Harmon	123	13.8	35	32.5	18.7	51.2	314
Somers	261	14.2	38.3	30.7	16.9	47.6	312

MATH 5

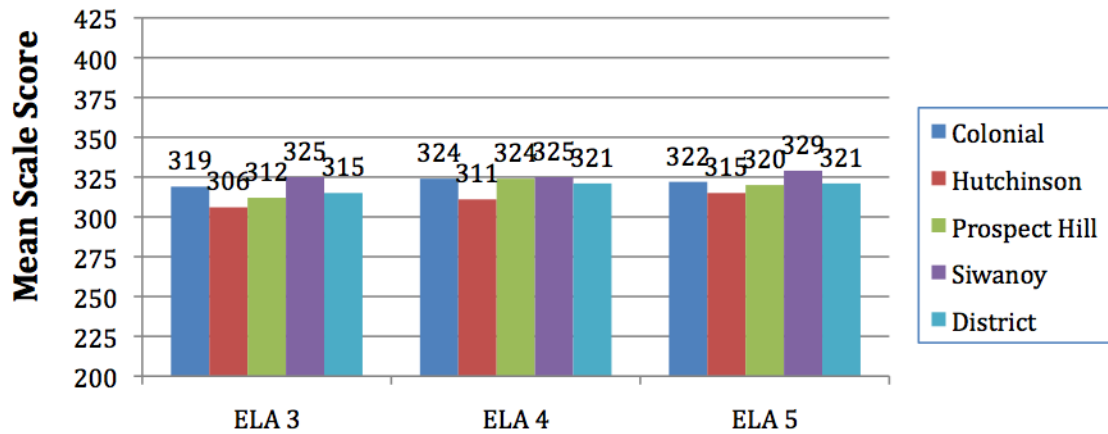
DISTRICT	tested	2012-2013					mean score
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3 & 4	
Edgemont	147	4.8	19.7	34.7	40.8	75.5	340
Eastchester	226	11.5	16.4	38.9	33.2	72.1	331
Ardsley	138	15.2	18.8	37.7	28.3	66	328
Irvington	139	14.4	23.7	25.2	36.7	61.9	330
Hastings	114	14	25.4	38.6	21.9	60.5	323
Rye Neck	102	20.6	21.6	32.4	25.5	57.9	323
Pelham	231	15.2	29.4	36.4	19	55.4	321
Somers	278	18.3	31.3	32	18.3	50.3	317
Dobbs Ferry	116	24.1	26.7	27.6	21.6	49.2	314
Pleasantville	126	15.1	38.9	27.8	18.3	46.1	319

Croton-Harmon	139	22.3	36	23.7	18	41.7	315
---------------	-----	------	----	------	----	------	-----

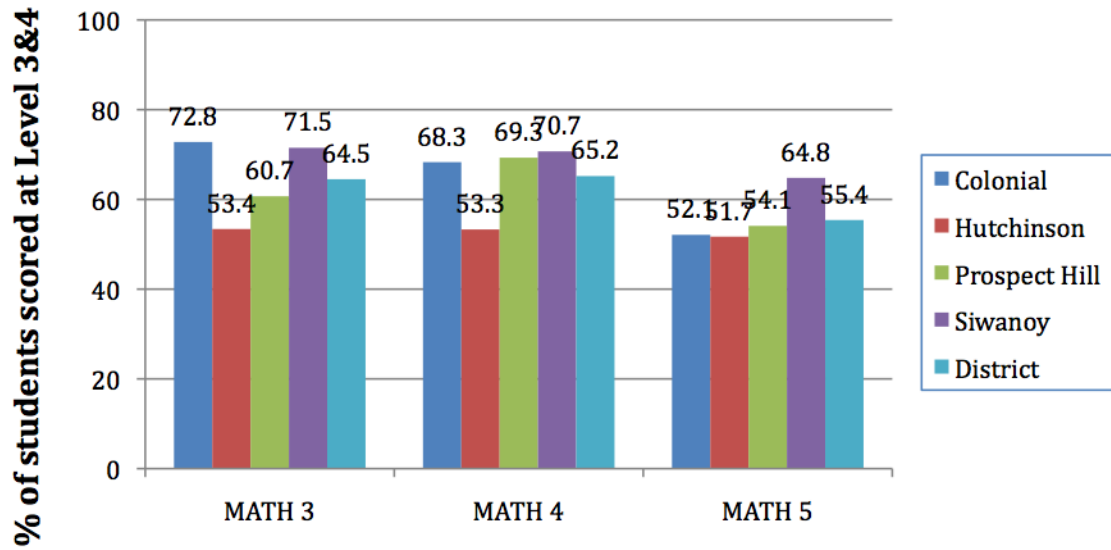
2012-2013 Grades 3-5 ELA Assessments



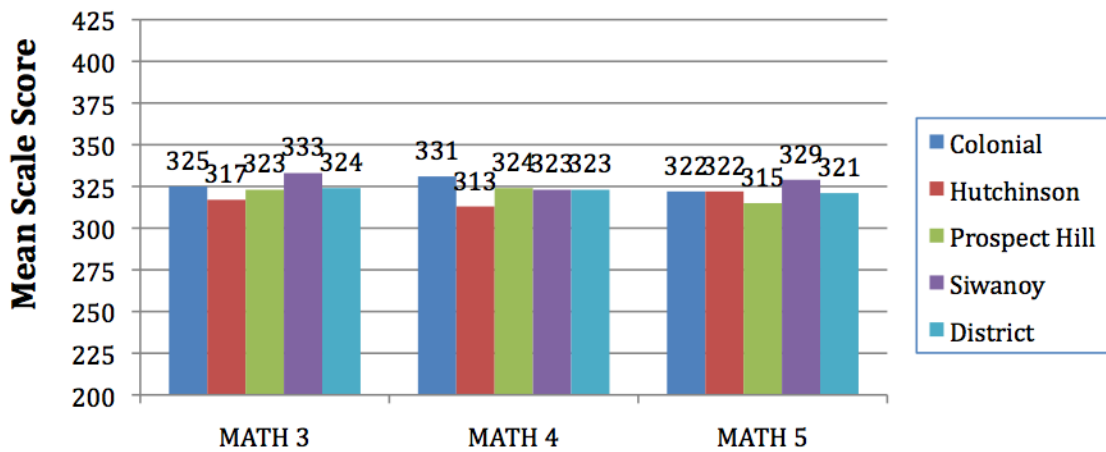
2012-2013 Grades 3-5 ELA Mean Scale Score



2012-2013 Grades 3-5 MATH Assessments



2012-2013 Grades 3-5 MATH Mean Scale Score



Pelham Public Schools
District and Schools Performance
2012-2013 Grades 3-5 English Language Arts Assessments

School	Tested	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3&4	Mean Score
ELA 3							
Colonial	65	7.7	43.1	47.7	1.5	49.2	319
Hutchinson	61	31.1	34.4	34.4	0	34.4	306
Prospect Hill	56	25	25	41.1	8.9	50	312
Siwanoy	49	6.1	18.4	71.4	4.1	75.5	325
District	231	17.7	31.2	47.6	3.5	51.1	315
ELA 4							
Colonial	60	3.3	28.3	53.3	15	68.3	324
Hutchinson	61	18	34.4	27.9	19.7	47.6	311
Prospect Hill	62	11.3	17.7	43.5	27.4	70.9	324
Siwanoy	58	0	32.8	48.3	19	67.3	325
District	241	8.3	28.2	43.2	20.3	63.5	321
ELA 5							
Colonial	47	10.6	31.9	40.4	17	57.4	322
Hutchinson	57	14	43.9	24.6	17.5	42.1	315
Prospect Hill	74	6.8	39.2	35.1	18.9	54	320
Siwanoy	50	8	18	46	28	74	329
District	228	9.6	34.2	36	20.2	56.2	321

Pelham Public Schools
District and Schools Performance
2012-2013 Grades 3-5 Mathematics Assessments

School	Tested	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 3&4	Mean Score
<i>MATH 3</i>							
Colonial	66	3	24.2	45.5	27.3	72.8	325
Hutchinson	60	13.3	33.3	31.7	21.7	53.4	317
Prospect Hill	56	5.4	33.9	33.9	26.8	60.7	323
Siwanoy	49	4.1	24.5	28.6	42.9	71.5	333
District	231	6.5	29	35.5	29	64.5	324
<i>MATH 4</i>							
Colonial	60	0	31.7	33.3	35	68.3	331
Hutchinson	62	17.7	29	33.9	19.4	53.3	313
Prospect Hill	62	6.5	24.2	40.3	29	69.3	324
Siwanoy	58	3.4	25.9	48.3	22.4	70.7	323
District	242	7	27.7	38.8	26.4	65.2	323
<i>MATH 5</i>							
Colonial	48	10.4	37.5	33.3	18.8	52.1	322
Hutchinson	58	13.8	34.5	27.6	24.1	51.7	322
Prospect Hill	74	24.3	21.6	44.6	9.5	54.1	315
Siwanoy	51	7.8	27.5	37.3	27.5	64.8	329
District	231	15.2	29.4	36.4	19	55.4	321

ELA / LITERACY K-12 – Mrs. Julie Liebersohn, Staff Developer

How have the CCLS Shifts in ELA/Literacy changed our Reading and Writing Curriculum?

How are our Literacy Staff Development and current curriculum adjustments supporting teachers and impacting student learning in the classroom?

Where Did We Begin?

In 2011 we began the process of addressing the writing curriculum. The area of literacy needed some bolstering throughout the district with the adoption of the Common Core Learning Standards and the area of writing seemed a natural place to begin. This area became the primary focus, as it was determined that it was the more accessible entry into the Language Arts curriculum for the teachers. The writing professional development included developing the conceptual understanding of the workshop model for the teachers. The workshop model includes direct explicit instruction through a mini lesson by the teacher, guided practice for the student to try the skill addressed in the mini lesson and time for the student to practice the strategy or skill independently. The writing professional development also included in class model lessons for groups of teachers with time after to debrief about the lesson. Teachers also worked in grade level groups to start to define writing units to be completed in each grade level. The goal was to have some consistent units across the four elementary schools.

The next phase to allow our literacy program to move forward began in September 2012 when we initiated professional development and curriculum development in the area of reading. The addition of a half time English Language Arts Staff Developer, Julie Liebersohn allowed for direct support for teachers as well as a person to help build a consistent ELA program across the elementary buildings. I was able to work with teachers to model lessons, share professional resources, including materials from EngageNY as well as provide each grade level an overview of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for their grade level. The 2012-2013 school year focused on a close review of each and every classroom's literacy program, classroom libraries and a review of current resources utilized by the classroom teachers to support the workshop model. In February of 2013 the district contracted Pam Allyn's consulting company LitLife. LitLife's main focus is consulting in schools and providing professional development suited to the needs of the district. They develop sustainable literacy initiatives alongside teachers, administrators and students in a wide variety of schools. LitLife's consulting is tailored to each school environment and creates teaching that helps every student excel by constantly adapting to fit the individual needs of the schools. They build flexible frameworks that are standards-based and outcomes-driven. Our consultant from LitLife, Georgie Marley, is wonderful and well respected by the teachers. Georgie has extensive experience working with K-6 students as both a classroom teacher and a special needs teacher ensuring that differentiation is a normal element of her classroom teaching. Georgie leads LitLife workshops on all aspects of the teaching of reading and writing for grades K-6. She specializes in curriculum development, creating new and innovative units of study for all grades as well as working with teachers to better their practice in reading and writing. The strong partnership between LitLife and myself has allowed much to be accomplished in a relatively short period of time because we work hand in hand to coordinate our efforts to support the teachers.

Two major goals were accomplished last year. I was able to secure a grant from the Pelham Education Foundation to furnish every classroom K-5 classroom with books to give

choice to the students for their independent reading time, a key component in the workshop model. The teachers also received training on leveling texts—a necessary component in order to appropriately guide student book choices. Teachers were given professional development on identifying their student’s independent reading level, which is text that a student can read fluently with few errors and comprehend. In addition, Georgie Marley and I along with two representatives from each grade developed a scope and sequence with objectives for each unit for reading and writing for the entire year. The curriculum work continued over the summer as the same group began to develop unit plans for the units necessary to begin the school year. In addition, last year I was able to research, purchase and distribute resources to classroom teachers. Many of the resources have already been integrated into unit plans and the remainder will be integrated during the upcoming year.

What Are We Doing?

This year with the continued partnership between Georgie and me, there is much planned. Teachers in grades K-5 received a resource guide on the first day of school that contained the units of study for the first trimester. Thirty-five teachers have already participated in professional development on the Basics of Reading Workshop. Our consultant, Georgie Marley has already spent a half-day in two elementary schools and had the opportunity to meet with our Literacy Coaches to guide them as they plan to facilitate an October faculty meeting. In addition to continuing to develop the reading and writing units of study, the teachers will have an opportunity to participate in professional development on topics such as; conferring, close reading, using assessment to guide instruction, the components of the workshop model, and record keeping. Some of these topics will be covered in large group sessions and others will be addressed at a building level. We are committed to differentiating our professional development in order to meet the specific needs of both teachers and students. Georgie and I will each have time to spend in each elementary building to model lessons for teachers, co-teach with teachers, and guide the implementation of the units of study. Also, each grade specific professional development day reviewed and previewed the units of study.

What’s Next?

Our literacy program has been transformed over the past few years with the professional development, curriculum and teacher instructional resources that have been developed. Consistently across the district, the literacy program is correlated to Common Core Learning Standards. The objectives and content spiral across the grades and we are integrating literacy into the content areas. Of course, there is still much to do to refine our literacy program. As we move forward our focus will be: grade specific professional development, continuation of development of curriculum units, developing capacity within our buildings, professional development workshops throughout the year to address specific topics, and time devoted to working alongside teachers in their classroom to guide implementation of our literacy program. In addition, future goals include bringing grade levels together for collaboration, strengthening implementation of the units and developing end of unit assessments. The work in the area of literacy continues to grow and evolve and the continued support in this area will allow our teachers to become stronger and our students become lifelong readers and writers.

MATH K-5 – Mrs. Beth Finkelstein, Staff Developer

How have the CCLS Shifts in Mathematics Impacted our Math Program?

Where Did We Begin?

In Pelham we are always seeking to improve our practice and our programs to provide the best educational experience for our students. Our desire for continued improvement along with state imposed changes has led us to work hard to adjust and re-adjust our math curriculum in the elementary schools. In 2009, the visit to Pelham Schools by the Tri-State Consortium allowed us to formally re-examine our math curriculum and teaching practices. Their in-depth look at our elementary program pointed to a coherent implementation of Math Investigations and an outstanding level of instruction in mathematics along with recommendations for increased professional development and more clearly defined program offerings and assessments. Following this, in 2011-2012, a Rutgers evaluation of our math program led to further commendations and recommendations for improvement. With both of these reports pointing to our strengths and recommending improvements we continued our work.

2012-2013 brought a lot of adjustment and a lot of progress to our work in mathematics. This was the first year an elementary Math Staff Developer position (.5) was created to support the district in their efforts. In 2012-2013 the Common Core was to be fully implemented in classrooms and teachers had to make adjustments, both additions and deletions in their math curriculum, due to new Common Core Learning Standards and Standards for Mathematical Practice. Teachers had to work to correlate the standards to the units they taught, realign units to the CCLS and begin to fill gaps that would inevitably exist as the standards were changed across the grades. In addition, this is the year that a Math Task Force was formed to work with teachers, administrators, board members and parents. This group worked well together to develop short, medium, and long range plans and recommendations to enhance our K-8 mathematics program.

Where Are We?

With all of the demands put upon us in 2012-2013 with Common Core and APPR we accomplished a lot to bring us where we are today. A Computational Fluency Guide for teachers and parents was created (September 2012) to address one of the areas of concern (and one of the required Shifts) - computational fluency. The district also invested in Flashmasters for students in grades 2-5 to aid in the daily practice of math facts. Aimsweb assessments were administered K-5 to benchmark student math fluency and their application of concepts and help identify students in need of classroom interventions and extensions in learning. Linda Carlson, the district K-5 Math Staff Developer (2012-2013) worked to help teachers better understand CCLS. She helped all of the grades develop a greater understanding of the standards at their grade level, understand where the major content learning is focused in their grade level, identify gaps and begin to gather resources to support teachers and student learning, as well as begin to look at the vertical alignment of the standards K-6.

Where We Are Going

This school year 2013-2014, we will continue our work in mathematics. A major recommendation from the 2012-2013 Math Task Force was to form a group to research multiple math programs to find a series that is aligned to the Common Core for the elementary and middle school programs. This year, a Math Textbook Review Team, led by Dr. Steven Garcia, is being formed to do just that. A group of elementary and middle school teachers and administrators, representative of all of the grades, schools and programs will work together to research, pilot and

make recommendations regarding a math series for the elementary school and possibly the middle school as well. Our work will begin with reading Steven *Leinwand's Accessible Mathematics: 10 Instructional Shifts that Raise Student Achievement*, surveying neighboring districts to see what they are using, developing a comprehensive rubric to evaluate the different math textbooks, selecting a few series to be piloted in classrooms and then a November-January pilot of the different programs. We will then share feedback, narrow down our recommendation, and present our findings to past 2012-2013 Math Task Force members before making a final presentation to the Board of Education.

Along with the work of the Math Textbook Review Team, our half time Math Staff Developer, Beth Finkelstein, will continue to work with teachers to improve our mathematics program for our students. With the gaps narrowed and teachers more informed about Common Core than we were a year ago, the needs to ensure the six Shifts are made and the Standards for Mathematic Practice are applied remain. Teachers have already received a few, new, great resources that address the rigor of Common Core. Both *Mathematics by Domain* and *Math Journals* allow teachers to help develop problem-solving strategies and provide opportunities for students to represent their mathematical ideas, justify their reasoning and evaluate the reasoning of others. Similarly, continued research, sharing of updated information on EngageNY, and sharing of resources, consistently across the schools, will help improve practice. In an effort to help teachers make the six shifts required to be truly aligned with Common Core our K-5 Math Staff Developer will spend time meeting with teachers to look at vertical alignment, reviewing content and looking for areas to develop more focus and depth of learning. In addition, the Math Staff Developer will have time to work in classrooms modeling lessons; co-teaching and working with students to help teachers further develop their teaching and understanding of mathematics. We will continue to identify students in need of math support through Aimsweb assessments and classroom assessments and support students at the classroom level through RtI. In addition, we will offer math programs in grades 1 and 2 (Mathsperts) and 3-5 (Perennial Math and Math Moments) to further challenge students.

We are fortunate in Pelham to have a strong mathematics program to be building from and adjusting, as we need to correlate and align with the Common Core. This has meant that we need to bring in additional resources to fill gaps and move units to devote more time and depth to areas that require more focus, however we do not need to start from scratch. Many of the Standards for Mathematical Practice, have been part of our excellent teaching practices over the years where we have pushed students to make sense of problems, explain their thinking, justify their answers and attend to precision. This year our work will focus on our continued need to correlate and align our programs, provide professional development to allow teachers to go more in depth and develop an understanding of concepts across the grades, and develop teachers' capacities for questioning, modeling and connecting math content across the grades and across math strands. An important part of our work will also be the work of the Math Textbook Review Team. It is the charge of this team to help identify a math series that addresses the Common Core Learning Standards and the Standards for Mathematical Practice, which will make learning accessible to all teachers, parents and students, and will challenge our students and prepare them for college and career readiness in the 21st Century. We do have a lot to do this year, but we are definitely all wiser and in a better place than we were one year ago, ready to continue our work improving mathematics for all of our Pelham students.

PROSPECT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – Dr. Richard Limato

Introduction

This is a complex question to answer. A comprehensive response includes quantitative as well as qualitative measures, an examination of those indicators of success, that account for a student's personal learning journey and growth over time across the academic and affective domains. A well - developed answer includes benchmarking the school's journey over time to accomplish success for all students. At Prospect Hill, the touchstones used to measure our success included a review of the role of school relationships, a recommitment to our School Vision, a carefully articulated curriculum, an honest appraisal of staff performance, the establishment of professional goals based on that performance evaluation and the creation of building-wide goals capitalizing on school strengths, while reflecting an honest appraisal of school needs. All of which are dedicated to ensuring the implementation of meaningful curriculum, through effective instruction, and a commitment to each learner's opportunity to achieve success. This memorandum will focus on the development of building – wide goals as a collective vehicle for benchmarking our school program, where we have been and where we are going, while providing a road map to assist students. With an overall objective to provide students with supportive school relationships, with every opportunity to realize success in attaining or exceeding the learning standards, and in acquiring those learning behaviors that support learning across the grade levels, this memorandum will benchmark our school accomplishments from last year and provide insight into our plans for growth this year. Additionally, the building goals serve as new touchstones, they tell our story, how our school staff transitioned from a focus on individual staff performance to a focus on embracing collective responsibility. And in doing so, works to tap a rich level of professionalism and capital that results when everyone accepts responsibility for ALL students, and accepts that what they do has an influence on everyone else.

Where Are We? – Our Guiding Principles

The Role of School Relationships

Last school year marked my return to Prospect Hill as Principal. An important first step was reconnecting with the professional staff, reintroducing myself to a portion of the school community, while becoming acquainted with new students and families in Grades K-2. Spending time establishing relationships, assuring visibility at events, becoming a presence in the school and classrooms, and fostering communication became significant priorities. Knowing the advantage of strong home and school relationships based on trust, shared values and open communication, this work served as a catalyst for the remainder of the work to come in providing educational leadership to the new mandates that would directly impact teacher and student performance, parent confidence in the school and a very important qualitative indicator contributing to student success, a strong principal displaying strong educational leadership. PTA meetings, The Principal Note newsletter, faculty meetings and other forums became the setting for establishing priorities and demonstrating the leadership that would bring all groups together to support our children's performance.

What We Are Doing?

The School Vision and Commitments to our Students

With a clear understanding that leadership and relationships matter, our work began rallying the school community to both understand and embrace the best of the educational initiatives driven by the new state mandates. The Prospect Hill Staff and I embraced the new initiatives driven by

the Annual Appraisal of Performance Review (APPR), the implementation of the New York State Common Core Learning Standards as well as the district's initiatives to provide a rich, meaningful curriculum and high caliber instruction by first renewing our commitment to our school vision. Faculty meetings were dedicated to focusing on revising our vision statement, renewing our commitments to learners and an examination of the compatibility of these new expectations to our value statements. The faculty, Site-based Council and I examined our vision statement and commitments, unpacked their meaning relative to our work together and committed to their serving to guide our quest to enable all students to achieve success. We then shared this vision and these commitments with our parent community as a significant document that all could know and understand as we paved the way forward with new relationships, mandates, and opportunities to support our children. As a document, it provided a set of guiding principles to benchmark and measure our success.

Vision Statement

Prospect Hill is a community whose members are always learning and growing. We set high standards for ourselves and challenge each other to achieve our best.

We believe in working hard at everything we do, sharing our knowledge and skills for our own and the community's good.

We are a caring community where everyone is treated with fairness, kindness, and respect. Each member of our community is valued for his or her own unique abilities, efforts, and contributions.

We recognize that learning involves struggle and taking risks, and we support and encourage each other's progress.

We envision Prospect Hill as a community that produces joyful, independent and life-long learners; and adaptable, productive compassionate human beings.

Vision Statement Commitments

At Prospect Hill:

1. We commit to ***creating*** a safe school environment in which children are encouraged to persist and to work hard and where they are comfortable taking the risks necessary to learning.
2. We commit to ***making*** whatever accommodations and modifications are necessary in order to assist students to reach their academic and social potential. We feel a particular responsibility to illuminate the strengths we see in each child and to build upon those strengths.
3. We commit to ***providing*** a strong system of communication that will connect our district, school, classroom and home communities. Good communication implies good listening in which we try hard to understand and empathize with the perspectives and experiences of others.
4. We commit to ***demonstrating*** to our students, that we too, are on a journey of learning that extends beyond formal education, and that we share with them the triumphs, joys and difficulties such a journey entails.

Benchmark:
A Carefully Articulated Curriculum

With the integration of the NYS Common Core Learning Standards, and new expectations for student performance, the faculty and I used NYS Assessment data as well as district initiatives in Reading and Writing, to focus our work for the year. We began the work of understanding the instructional implications evidenced in the Common Core Learning Standards for K-5 literature and informational text with a particular focus on comprehension skills. We examined key ideas across the grade levels as we identified the scaffolding of K -5 comprehension skills. For example, the progression from a kindergarten student being able with prompting and support to ask and answer questions about key details in a text, to a third grade student being able to ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of text, to a fifth grade student being able to quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. We used our faculty meetings to identify the important strategies that would enable students to acquire these skills, to share examples of instructional practice and to acknowledge the importance of each grade level's curriculum in contributing to a student's growth and performance over time. Knowing that these quantitative measures would serve as a point of reference to guide our work with students made this a very important benchmark measure.

Benchmark:
An Honest Appraisal of Staff Performance

The first year of our district's implementation of a new performance appraisal program provided the impetus for our work to focus on individual teacher performance using the Danielson framework as our model. The teachers and I worked collaboratively to understand the criteria for exemplary performance across the domains of the Danielson model: Instructional Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Teaching Responsibilities. We discussed issues of practice, learned how to use the rubric for self-evaluation, and shared criteria with parents so they could understand the more rigorous process of evaluation as we worked to ensure student success. At one of the final faculty meetings of the year, Dr. Wilson conducted an announced observation as the teachers and I reflected on what we learned about instruction from a year's participation in this new evaluation program. Additionally, Dr. Wilson observed me make explicit and model effective instructional techniques reflected in the evaluation criteria. Reflecting on performance, evaluating our strengths, and embracing our weaknesses assists us as we benchmark our ability to provide students with quality instruction.

What's Next? - Our Guiding Principles
Benchmark:
Collaborating on Professional and Building Goals

With year one's work behind us, our efforts focused on a review of teacher performance scores. Together, we reflected on student assessment results, those instructional practices that may have contributed to success, lesson's learned from the first year of Common Core implementation and the identification of instructional practices that would strengthen teacher performance. In individual conferences, teacher's identified areas for further study such as strengthening Response to Intervention (RtI) strategies and practices, effective questioning techniques, providing meaningful feedback to students, utilizing essential questions to prompt learning, becoming more effective at close reading strategies, etc. to guide their own quest to improve performance and to ensure student success through effective practice.

Additionally, we collectively identified building goals that emerged from last year's work, district initiatives and Board of Education Goals. These guiding principles will assist us as we measure our success, and benchmark our work on behalf of our children. After a year of focusing on individual performance, we appeared ready to turn our sights on sharing collective responsibility and working collaboratively to ensure a consistent team approach to our educational initiatives:

Collective Responsibility:

To identify what it means for each staff member to assume collective responsibility for all students and to identify the implications for professional practice through exploration of the following essential question: **To what extent do specific behaviors and practices nurture an ethic of collective responsibility?**

Instructional Goals:

To launch and implement the district's Reader's Workshop instructional units with fidelity to the integrity of the workshop process across the grade levels and the building.

To continue to implement the district's Writer's Workshop instructional units with fidelity to the integrity of the workshop process across the grade levels and the building.

To teach one of the following Habits of Mind each trimester through classroom instruction, Town Meetings, PTA sessions, SBC meetings and home extension: Metacognition (self – reflective learners); Interdependent Thinking (collaboration) and Wonder and Awe (the joy of learning).

Data Analysis:

To identify priority areas of instructional needs using multiple data sources and to plan remediating instruction based on the NYS Common Core Learning Standards.

Community Engagement:

To develop parent understanding of our building goals and to identify ways for parents to support these initiatives at home.

Conclusion

These goals, shared with our Site Based Council, and next to be shared with our parents, will become the paving blocks as we build a path to success for all students and will serve as the benchmarks for how we measure our success going forward.

COLONIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – Mrs. Tonya Wilson

Where Are We?

Colonial students become capable readers, writers, and mathematicians through strong programming and intentional teaching. The ability to provide succinct learning for our youngest students in the Pelham Public Schools requires an understanding of student knowledge, curriculum proficiency and strong home school communication. Establishing the learning structures to sustain quality education is accomplished on multiple levels.

The focus of this narrative will lie with the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. Their successful integration helps develop our students into learners who are able to evolve academically, socially, and emotionally.

- English Language Arts K-5
- Special Education /School Support
 - Resource Room
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Physical Therapy
 - Reading Program
 - Speech and Language
 - Academic Intervention Services (AIS)
- Academic Communication and Experiential Learning Program (ACE) K-5
- Mathematics K-5

English Language Arts

The English Language Arts program encompasses reading, writing, language development and acquisition. The program K-5 emphasizes a balanced approach while considering the developmental needs of students. Our youngest learners engage in structured learning experiences through use of the FUNdations multi-sensory phonics program. This program provides the foundational pieces for students to properly acquire language, sound and pronunciation. This program is utilized in unison with the workshop model for literacy.

Experiencing literacy-based activities in the workshop model enables the classroom teachers to differentiate learning experiences based on the mini-lesson demonstration period. The workshop approach for the literacy model helps engage teachers in meaningful work tailored to meet the needs of students on all levels of the learning spectrum.

Working with LitLife consultants teachers have engaged in literacy-based discussions, and have worked in teams to create and develop grade specific curriculum. This has been the center of district professional development. The balanced approach allows teachers to work with students throughout the ELA learning period with continuous opportunities to engage in some level of the literacy wheel.

Special Education/School Support

Educating children and providing students with strong learning experiences requires that all students be given the tools for academic success. Some students demonstrate a need for curriculum refocus and small group learning experiences. When this becomes evident in the classroom environment, teachers begin the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. Response to Intervention is the implementation of specific measurable goals to track and ensure student learning. If this process is not successful after many weeks of implementation, a child can be brought to the RTI committee for a referral for Special Education services. Once the referral is processed and meets district guidelines, students are tested using district-identified measures to record understanding. If students are identified and eligible for an Individualized Educational Program (IEP), they are then provided with special education and/ or support services as determined by the Office of Special Education.

Special education is a customized program that provides students with learning experiences based on need. The program encompasses OT, PT, Speech and Language, and the Resource Room. Each area provides highly specialized learning support tailored to the needs of each student.

In addition to this program, we offer reading support services for students who require additional assistance outside of the classroom. It is a small group approach with direct instruction. For students who continue to struggle and need structured reading experiences to assist with word acquisition, word knowledge and decoding, Colonial School further offers the WILSON reading program.

The Wilson Reading System (WRS) is the flagship program of Wilson Language Training and the foundation of all other Wilson programs. This program is based on Orton-Gillingham principles. WRS is a highly structured remedial program that directly teaches the structure of language to students who have been unable to learn through other teaching strategies, or who may require multisensory language instruction.

Colonial students who experience difficulties in ELA and mathematics are eligible for Academic Intervention Services (AIS). AIS had been provided to students who perform at or below Level 2 on New York State ELA and Math tests. However, the State recently changed its AIS requirements based on results from the 2013 Common Core-aligned grades 3-8 ELA and Math assessments. Districts have until November 1st to revise their AIS plans. In accordance with new State regulations, our AIS program will provide identified students with small group instruction to re-enforce skill based reading and math concepts. The AIS program is made available to students in grades 3-8.

Academic, Communication and Experiential Learning Program K-5

Colonial School is home to the district's Academic, Communication and Experiential Learning Program K-5. This program is divided into two sections; the K-2 learning experience and the 3-5 learning experience. Both classes are staffed with certified teachers, teaching assistants and monitors.

Integrating communication skills through guided participation is the focus of all instructional goals throughout the day. Our students in this program experience learning through a program called Structured Teaching. The classroom environments are highly organized and encompass the following:

- Picture symbols used to create daily individual schedules
- Group and individual lessons differentiated for each child
- Reading and Math workshops with visual schedules
- Interdisciplinary Science and Social Studies units
- Social Stories/ Emotions Toolkit/ Social Skills Lessons/ Cognitive and Language Games
- Work focused on developing and strengthening fine motor and cognitive skills

Mathematics K-5

Colonial School utilizes the Math Program, *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space*. This math program has allowed our students to develop the following capacities.

- Students make sense of math and learn that they can become math thinkers
- Computational fluency with whole numbers is a major goal
- Emphasis is placed on reasoning
- This program engages teachers in the pedagogical thought behind math learning

To further support mathematical skills and accuracy, the district purchased Flashmasters for students in grades 2-4. In addition, to classroom instruction Pelham provides students with the opportunity to participate in Mathsperts in grades K-2 and Math Moments for students in grades 3-5. Both programs are run in addition to the classroom learning experience and require students to meet district set criteria.

What Are We doing?

Defining Colonial outside of the numbers will prove to be a challenge—as we have always achieved very high-test scores. With changes on the horizon and expectations reaching new and competitive levels it has become imperative that students and teachers approach learning in a new manner.

Beyond the test score numbers our students are active learners interested in new curricula. For example, for many years the fifth grade end of year project was the performance of a play written and performed by the children with the help of a hired professional. However, in recent years with the advancement of technology our students began voicing interest in demonstrating their talents on other platforms. This interest first led Colonial School to work with the Jacob Burns Film Center/ Media Arts Lab in Pleasantville, New York. Jacob Burns specializes in technology integration in school programs. The center works in conjunction with the classroom teachers and allows our students to showcase their talents through writing, acting, and film. The finished product each year has been viewed at the Pelham Picture House for our families. We will continue this highly successful project locally with the Pelham Picture House. This example and countless others represent the need for the school to grow and develop with the children and their interests.

Teachers are more versed with utilizing data to inform their instructional programs. To support these efforts each teacher receives all of the latest data on every child in the building. This K-5 longitudinal view enables each teacher to see how students progress, with focus on curriculum planning and knowledge of student strengths and weaknesses.

The coordination of the Board of Education goals and Colonial School intersect in many areas. The BOE goal, *Exploration of Alternate Strategies to Measure and Achieve Success*, fits

appropriately with Colonial's response to student interest. Exploring new opportunities for student growth and learning has been important to determining how teachers shape curriculum and experiences for students. It should also be noted that, working with the Pelham Picture House has now become a student/parent expectation. The programming has had also filtered down to grades 3 and 4 with the intent to create experiences that end with the fifth grade final project in mind.

Colonial School continues to be a unique place for the students, families, and teachers. This year Colonial celebrates its third year with the Colonial Times. The Colonial Times is an online newspaper—that has exposed students to writing and local reporting. The school community has benefited from this student center news source and has become a Colonial tradition. Students participate in field related experiences and have had the ability to speak with parents who are working professionals in journalism.

Colonial students are involved in varying levels of volunteerism. Students have worked with Sound Shore Medical Center, the Senior Center at the Daranco Town House, and have adopted the streets that surround Colonial in an effort to keep the environment clean. Our students K-5 actively participate in inclusion activities that engage regular education students in learning experiences with students that are in the ACE program. For example, at least one regular education class has paired with an ACE class to have students participate in social inclusion whenever possible—such as snack time, field trips, lunch buddies, and peer tutors.

Our teachers have worked with parents on different levels providing training for parents with children in our ACE program. Each month parents have the opportunity to join meaningful discussions at Coffee and Conversation led by the building administrator and special guests. This year grade level meetings have been implemented to increase communication with Colonial families. This will allow parents to engage in discussions that are grade specific and provides the setting for parents to learn about district and statewide school initiatives.

What's Next?

Educators at Colonial are constantly looking for ways to improve learning for our children. For example, this year fifth grade teachers will be piloting Travel Math during math intervention. This approach will assist the varying degrees of learners present in the cohort. Travel Math has proven to be a success at Hutchinson School and we hope to experience a high level of student success as a result. Our teachers will work closely with the fifth grade team from Hutchinson School to ensure success.

I continue to encourage teacher leadership and development for the benefit of our school organization. This year I have met with our school leadership team in an effort to engage teachers in overall success. Collectively, the group has agreed that teachers succeed through peer support and sharing of best practice.

Finally, Colonial School continues to be committed to providing students with a safe learning environment. The Colonial Site Based Team/ PTA will continue to work together to ensure that the arrival and dismissal of our children are held to the highest standards. To date we have developed a new morning drop system that has ensured a safer arrival for our students and families.

SIWANOID ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – Mrs. Susan Gilbert

“If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.”

~Antoine de Saint-Exupery

How do we define success for the whole child?

At Siwanoy our mission is to be a school community where every child matters. “...we strive to create a community in which everyone feels safe, welcome, and respected. Our goal is to develop the intellectual, emotional, social, physical, and creative capacities of each of our students, to enable them to become lifelong learners and engaged citizens in a complex and rapidly changing world. Our vision is of a school community in which everyone shares in creating a joyful, compassionate, and responsive environment where every child matters.” (Siwanoy Vision Statement) We use multiple measures to determine whether our students understand what they are taught and whether they are engaged in the learning process. Not just test scores determine success, but also by smiles. Not just by the levels achieved, but also by the questions children ask. We continuously gauge where we are against the vision we have for our school.

Where Are We?

A year ago at this time we were juggling a veritable alphabet soup of initiatives-**APPR** (Annual Professional Performance Review), **RtI** (Response to Intervention), **SLO** (Student Learning Objectives), **PBIS** (Positive Behavior Intervention Supports), **AIMSweb** (our universal RtI screening program), **DASA** (Dignity for All Students Act), and **CCLS** (Common Core Learning Standards). At the time, I was calling it the perfect storm—evaluating teachers based on test scores while assessing students on new and more rigorous measures.

Tenured teacher evaluations went from once every four years to twice every year, measured against a new and more developed rubric. New common core standards were going to be addressed while teachers were still unpacking them and adjusting their curriculum accordingly. These standards lay out what teachers need to teach and what students are expected to know and do while the Danielson Rubric details researched effective instructional practices that support student learning.

Across the district, teachers were in the midst of professional development that focused on our writing program and the structure of a Writers Workshop. At the school level, teachers and I spent faculty meetings discussing the complexities of reading instruction, fine-tuning how to conduct a “mini-lesson”, and best practices in teaching comprehension skills, developing reading fluency, and supporting struggling readers. In addition, we unpacked the Danielson teacher rubric, explored ways to fill in gaps posed by the common core learning standards, and pre and post tested students across every discipline.

Classroom teachers utilized the new intervention and enrichment block in their schedules for targeted instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Students not meeting benchmarks were given specific instruction (RtI) using research based methods and programs. Their progress was carefully monitored, altering the instruction as necessary. Opportunities for enrichment and extension were expanded during this block as teachers collaborated with colleagues to meet their students' needs, exploring various technologies, flexible grouping, and new resources as provided by the staff developers.

new student who struggled socially, academically, physically, socially, and emotionally. With the nurturing of all staff—certified staff as well as our nurse, secretary, and custodian, this child overcame many obstacles. Teachers supported this student on the playground, in the lunchroom, and throughout his academic day. No one teacher could do this alone, but together we made a difference for this child.

“Collective responsibility consists of the enlargement and deepening of identity beyond oneself. When individual teachers within a school start identifying with all students in the school, not just those in their own classroom—that is collective responsibility.

~Michael Fullan and Andrew Hargreaves

What’s Next?

Building goals have been established based on the goals of the Board of Education and the district superintendents. These goals continue the work of last year and support the success of each child and of each teacher while ensuring “equity and excellence across all schools.”

Our school goals have been established and shared with faculty that respond to district and building needs. Teachers and grade level teams are establishing goals that further refine these goals:

Collective Responsibility:

Throughout the year, develop a shared understanding of what it means to nurture an ethic of collective responsibility for the students in our care. At faculty meetings, through shared teacher leadership, and throughout the day and across the disciplines, we will explore what it looks like, sounds like, and feels like when we take collective responsibility for our students. Collective responsibility becomes more critical than ever in light of the new APPR local assessment, Response to Intervention, and building and district initiatives.

Differentiated Instruction, Performance Based Assessment and Project Based Learning

During the 2013-2014 school year, I will support teachers as we delve into deepening our understanding and implementation of differentiated instruction. I will deepen my own understanding of Project Based Learning and Performance Based Assessments in order to support our fifth grade team and ultimately all teachers as we work to enhance student understanding and achievement.

Thinking about Thinking (metacognition); Listening with Understanding and Empathy and Understanding; Questioning and Posing Problems

At our Town Meetings 2013/2014 we will teach these Habits of Mind as we continue to teach these important habits that support student learning.

Reading and Writing Scope and Sequence

Support teachers as they implement this new initiative. We have much expertise in the building. Through faculty meetings, peer observations, meetings with curriculum cabinet, etc. determine needs of building and teachers.

APPR

During the 2013-2014 school year, continue to work collectively and individually with teachers unpacking the Danielson rubric and making small changes that have large impacts on student learning.

Mandates, if we let them, can divide us or when overflowing, cause us to capsize, but, when we follow our passion for learning, our commitment to our partnership, our “...longing for that endless immensity of the sea” —we create an environment where children, along with their teachers and parents, have endless opportunities to think critically, to create, to explore, and to ponder the wonders of the universe with all its endless possibilities, ensuring excellence, living our mission, and actualizing our vision.

HUTCHINSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – Mrs. Carla Tarazi

Where Are We?

The academic programs at Hutchinson School are consistent with the other elementary schools and build a strong curriculum over the years so Hutchinson students are well prepared when they reach the middle school.

We have embraced the district professional development efforts in literacy over the past few years and actively practice a robust Writers Workshop model and more recently, implemented the Readers Workshop. The efforts of the staff have provided a more consistent approach to writing and students are exposed to a continuum of writing genres that spiral through the grades. We are beginning the year with a scope and sequence in literacy that is an important next step in benchmarking our literacy curriculum. By design, the workshop model is differentiated based on the needs of the students and anecdotally, teachers report improved progress in reading and writing.

At Hutchinson, we have utilized our resources to support struggling readers and writers. Our intervention staff utilizes an Orton-Gillingham based instructional approach intended primarily for use with students who have difficulty with reading, spelling, and writing. The lessons reinforce Foundations as well as work with children who need additional support with comprehension.

In the computer lab, all kindergarten and some first and second grade students use Waterford Early Learning software. It is designed to help all children build a strong foundation for literacy. The software assesses the student's reading level and individualizes instruction from sound-symbol correspondence to fluency and comprehension.

In mathematics, Hutchinson staff has embraced the Investigations math program that has developed a strong foundation for mathematical thinking, especially in the early grades. Classroom teachers regularly utilize the math games to explore concepts and nurture discovery. With the focus on CCLS, teachers include additional resources to strengthen instruction and provide practice with computational fluency.

In literacy as in mathematics, when we look at the collection of data, there is a strong need for differentiated math instruction in addition to the work in the classroom. We created *Travel Math* to meet the wide array of learners in the fifth grade, and will pilot Travel Math in both third and fourth grades this year. Within the classroom instruction, teachers do differentiate, but there is not time to sufficiently challenge advanced students while developing a solid understanding of concepts for struggling students. Additionally, with the shift to the Common Core Learning Standards, the demands at each grade have intensified and created a need to fill in gaps from previous years.

Students demonstrate their knowledge in both creative and traditional ways and follow grade level guidelines for assessment and project-based learning.

In our building we have considerable open space to share and promote the quality work that students produce. Throughout the year, grade levels are proud to demonstrate progress in writing, reports and projects that may include technology, are visually engaging and capture the classroom learning. In mathematics, students also utilize games and manipulatives to demonstrate learning.

In the arts, we have a long tradition of the spring Art Gala that showcases the high quality of our art program, which follows the district's art curriculum. The gym is transformed into an art museum and 5th grade docents give tours to families.

Our Science Night has increased in participation over the years and provides an evening to present science projects and share individual and group work. Examples of last year's projects include; interactive experiments from kindergarten through second grade classes, individual electricity boards designed by third grade students, large models of working simple machines built by fourth grade students, and a celebration of the fifth grade Invention Convention with a gym filled with super creative ideas that you may see in the future being marketed on TV!

What Are We Doing?

During our initial administration meeting of the year, the BOE goals were shared as well as those of the superintendent and assistant superintendents. We analyzed our school goals so that they were in sync with the district focus and will meet the needs of Hutchinson School.

The Hutchinson School staff has utilized the Continuous Improvement cycle to understand and utilize data and then make constructive improvements in teaching and learning. For example, last year when we studied our NYS assessment data in combination with our developing understanding of the Common Core Learning Standards, we realized that a greater focus on academic vocabulary was a critical component of the shift with CCLS and a gap for many of our students.

We created a literacy team, lead by our Literacy Coach to plan additional professional development meetings throughout the year that began with a more in depth study on vocabulary. We utilized resources from EngageNY.org and shared researched-based best practices as well as technology resources. We also tapped into the expertise of our speech and language teacher who shared materials from a PEF grant that provided strategies to expand vocabulary.

What's Next?

With a diverse student population come challenges and opportunities. Many classroom teachers do personalize instruction, but are looking forward to the professional development on differentiated learning this year with Dr. Tomlinson. Through this training along with school-based staff meetings we expect to gain a better understanding how to meet the needs of our students with research-based best practices and effective strategies.

At Hutchinson, we have planned additional staff meetings to more fully discuss the practices that Dr. Tomlinson will share as well as tap into the leadership and expertise within our staff to further investigate differentiated instruction.

Additionally, we will continue the efforts initiated last year on literacy. We have created a new area in our library specifically for emergent readers called the Reading Garden where books will be leveled and accessible to young students. We have also reviewed the library schedule and provided more time for students to check out books.

Another goal at Hutchinson School is to continue the work on fostering a positive school climate with a focus on becoming a more inclusive school. All staff will continue with the consistent implementation of the B.E.A.R. Code of Conduct including reinforcement at classroom and Town

Hall meetings. The PBIS Leadership team will participate in Tier III professional development and continue to review challenging behavioral issues at RtI meetings and provide support for classroom teachers.

We will continue our 5th Grade Safety Patrol Program for the fifth year where students model positive behavior for younger students and develop leadership qualities.

Our goal to be an inclusive community of families begins by creating a safe environment to be one's self and by facilitating the development of relationships beyond first impressions. For students, this is nurtured through classroom meetings that are supportive and open to challenging topics. Teachers also design work groups that meet both academic and social goals. Multi-age relationships are fostered through classroom buddies and lunch activities such as the Mix-It-Up lunch.

For parents, opportunities to meet others are facilitated by our New Families committee and other PTA events. We have planned new events this year beginning with the Family Pot Luck and BINGO Night, to bring families back to school, have fun together and also to meet other families.

We are proud to be at Hutchinson School and demonstrate that every Friday on Sprit Day by wearing the new Hutchinson tee shirt designed by the winner of the annual tee shirt contest! And we're off to another great year!

CLOSING THOUGHTS – Dr. Steven M. Garcia

We are extremely excited about our collaboration with Dr. Carol Ann Tomlinson this school year. However, we understand this is a first step in our journey to address the needs of all learners. Yet we are confident that she will help enlighten our collective minds in focusing on our shared responsibility for all the children in our district. Changes in the Science and Social Studies standards will greatly influence how and what we teach across all grade-levels. We also plan to examine metacognitive learning and performance-based assessments as means to expand how students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

Our work continues as we improve how we define success for all children.