

March 24, 2014

Staples High School

WESTPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION

***AGENDA**

(Agenda Subject to Modification in Accordance with Law)

PUBLIC CALL TO ORDER:

5:00 p.m., Staples High School, Room 1025C, Principal's Conference Room

ANTICIPATED EXECUTIVE SESSION: Interviews of Candidates for the Positions of
Director of Elementary Education and Director of Secondary Education

RESUME PUBLIC SESSION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: 7:30 p.m., Staples High School, Cafeteria B (Room 301)

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION

MINUTES: March 4, 10 and 17, 2014

PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS (15 MINUTES)

PRESENTATION:

1. Formative and Summative Assessments (Encl.) Ms. Comm
and Ms. Gilchrest
Educational Benchmarking Against Other High Performing
School Districts

DISCUSSION/ACTION:

1. Acceptance of Gifts (Encl.) Dr. Landon
2. Student and Faculty Calendar: 2015-16 School Year (Encl.) Dr. Landon
3. Board of Education Goals, 2013-14 and Related (Encl.) Dr. Landon
Administrative Presentations

ADJOURNMENT

*A 2/3 vote is required to go to executive session, to add a topic to the agenda of a regular meeting, or to start a new topic after 10:30 p.m. The meeting can also be viewed on cable TV on channel 78; AT&T channel 99 and by video stream @www.westport.k12.ct.us

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION WELCOME USING THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:

- Comment on non-agenda topics will occur during the first 15 minutes *except* when staff or guest presentations are scheduled.
- Board will not engage in dialogue on non-agenda items.
- Public may speak as agenda topics come up for discussion or information.
- Speakers on non-agenda items are limited to 2 minutes each, except by prior arrangement with chair.
- Speakers on agenda items are limited to 3 minutes each, except by prior arrangement with chair.
- Speakers must give name and use microphone.
- Responses to questions may be deferred if answers not immediately available.
- Public comment is normally not invited for topics listed for action after having been publicly discussed at one or more meetings.

MEMORANDUM

TO: ELLIOTT LANDON

FROM: LISABETH COMM AND CYNTHIA GILCHREST

SUBJECT: BOARD GOAL REFERENCE IMPROVEMENT IN CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, ASSESSMENT

DATE: March 17, 2014

Dear Dr. Landon:

In response to the Board of Education's request for an update on progress in developing formative and summative assessments of 21st century skills and capacities, and progress in Westport's efforts in benchmarking our assessments against not only the Tri-State Consortium schools but also against top performing schools around the globe, we have developed the following report.

I. Researched Articles on Assessment

After doing a review of the literature on assessment, we have culled four articles that we believe have particular importance for Westport.

From the literature review, and based on the needs of Westport schools, we offer the following definitions:

Formative assessment is not graded. It is a check for understanding the teacher gives to students to determine if they are mastering the content and skills of the subject. It is accompanied by descriptive feedback telling the students their strengths and areas for growth. Formative assessment helps to prepare students for graded, summative assessment. It helps the teacher to plan for further lessons and helps the student to set goals and develop strategies for learning.

Summative assessment is a final assessment, used to measure mastery of concepts and/or skills, and it is graded.

Performance based assessment requires a student to perform a task that involves higher order thinking skills and 21st century skills and capacities. The student applies what has been learned to a new situation, such as solving a real world problem. The task is provided in a context that is realistic; it requires a student to complete a task that an adult in a real world situation would do. For example, a scientist would plan and conduct an experiment and draw conclusions from that experiment. Often performance based assessments are presented to and assessed by an audience

beyond the teacher. Performance based assessments often involve both formative assessment and summative assessment.

You will find the following articles in Appendix I:

- Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond and Dr. David T. Conley, from the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, published “Creating Systems of Assessment for Deeper Learning,” in 2013. They suggest that the tests now being designed to measure Common Core Standards “will not be able to measure in-depth inquiry, extended communication...collaboration and the use of technologies.” They suggest that traditional tests will need to be combined with “classroom-based performance assessments that allow students to demonstrate their abilities to design and conduct investigations, solve complex problems, and communicate in a variety of ways.” They advocate a balanced system of assessments.

The *Harvard Education Letter* from December 2013 is a little more positive about the use of performance-based assessments on the new tests being developed to measure Common Core Standards. It also provides examples of how some school systems are implementing performance based tests.

We include two articles from *Educational Leadership*; one focuses on the value of formative assessment and the other on the value of performance based assessment.

II. Benchmarking Performance Based Assessments Against Tri-State Consortium Schools

For the past three years, the Tri-State Consortium has supported professional learning opportunities around performance based assessments directed by Dr. Giselle Martin-Kniep. Over twenty Tri-State schools have participated. This year Westport has participated in several capacity building meetings in order to learn what top schools in the area are doing. You will find the following in Appendix II:

- a brief description of Dr. Kniep’s qualifications and publications
- rubrics designed by Dr. Kniep to evaluate the quality of performance based assessments
- brief descriptions of performance based assessments, created by other schools in the consortium, that we were able to view and analyze
- two performance based, month long units of study, one from New Canaan High School and one from Easton-Redding Middle School

III A. Developing and Benchmarking K-5 Literacy Units and Performance Based Assessments:

Beginning in March 2012, the K-5 Language Arts instructional program was revised to align with the Common Core State Standards and the goals of Westport 2025. A committee of teachers and administrators representing all five elementary schools and

grade levels, began the task of creating a K-5 Curriculum Calendar for reading units of study. This work was led by a nationally known Literacy Consultant and former Teachers College staff developer, who included embedded professional development in a balanced literacy approach. A comprehensive professional development program was implemented beginning in August 2012, and all staff members received training in the components of balanced literacy (interactive read-aloud, shared/close reading, etc.) as well as the reading content included in the newly revised curriculum. The reading curriculum was completed and revised by the summer of 2013.

During this same time, work began on the K-5 Writing Curriculum, using the same structure as the reading curriculum. To support elementary teachers as they transitioned to this rigorous writing curriculum, resources from Lucy Calkins and the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, aligned to the CCSS, were purchased. Included in these resources is a learning progression for narrative, informational and opinion writing, as well as grade level specific rubrics and checklists for teacher and student use. In 2013-14, elementary teachers decided to focus on narrative writing, as a starting point for working with these assessments.

All students in K-5 were given an on-demand narrative prompt during the first two weeks of school. Teachers met in grade level teams by building and across the district, to look at student work, and use the TCRWP Rubric to score the writing samples, and identify individual students' strengths and challenges. This formative assessment data was used to determine what specific lessons to teach the whole class, and where to individualize instruction. After one or two units of study in narrative writing were taught, students were given the same on-demand prompt, to be used as a summative assessment, to look at student growth, determine whether the goals of the unit were met and students were meeting grade level expectations. Because of the timing of this assessment, it is also formative, in that teachers utilize the data to determine where students did not meet benchmarks, and target upcoming instruction accordingly.

In the summer of 2014, the K-5 writing curriculum will be completed, and professional development activities for the 2014-15 school year will focus on best practices in high quality writing instruction.

You will find the following in Appendix III A:

- Kindergarten and 4th grade written responses to the on-demand narrative writing assessment, administered in the fall (formative) and again in November (summative), along with completed rubrics, and the teachers' whole class and individualized instruction with these students. The November prompts have been annotated to highlight evidence of the instruction that occurred.

III B. Developing and Benchmarking 6-8 Literacy Units and Assessments with Teachers College Reading and Writing Project

Middle school Language Arts teachers began working with the TC Reading and Writing Project in the summer of 2013. With support from TC, they have designed three new writing units (memoir, literary analysis, and argument) in grades 6, 7, and 8. These units,

all tied to Common Core Standards, contain instructional strategies, assignments, and rubrics for assessment. The TC Reading and Writing Project is considered one of the top professional development organizations in the world. They work with both top schools and struggling schools across the continent as well as in other countries. They have published several books containing exemplars of student writing for each grade level. We are proud to announce that in their new book coming out in the spring of 2014, they will include two exemplar pieces of writing from two of our eighth grade students.

You will find the following in Appendix IIIB:

- a literary analysis assignment, an assessment rubric, and an exemplary eighth grade essay from a Westport student that will be published by TC this spring.
- a memoir assessment rubric and an exemplary eighth grade essay from a Westport student that will be published by TC this spring
- a talk protocol for teaching argument and student checklists grades 5 through 8 (formative assessments)for self-evaluation of their argument essays. These checklists will be developed into rubrics.

IV. Benchmarking with Singapore Math

The Singapore Math implementation began in 2011-2012 with Kindergarten, first and second grade. In the year 2012-2013, Singapore Math was implemented in third and fourth grade, and this year is the final year of implementation in fifth grade. Several neighboring districts have contacted Westport to acquire information regarding our successes with this new program. Members of the Fairfield Public Schools, including administrators and teachers, visited our elementary schools last year to observe classes and discuss the program with our staff. In addition, three of the elementary math specialists will be providing professional development to the Wilton Public Schools on using manipulatives to support a Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract (CPA) approach. The implementation has been so successful that Staff Development for Educators, the professional development organization that provided Westport's initial pd through the rollout, had two representatives from Westport present at their regional and national conference in 2013. The presentation was titled, "We Did It! Inside a Successful Singapore Math Rollout K-5." It focused on the implementation within the district and the positive effects of the program. In appendix IV, you find the program for the 2013 National Conference on Singapore Math Strategies with the Westport presentation described. You will also find a DRA formative assessment used in our elementary schools.

V. Examples of Westport Formative Assessments K-12

You will find the following in Appendix V:

- A list of commonly used formative assessments
- Two detailed examples of formative assessment:
 - ◆ Science formative assessments
 - ◆ Math formative assessments

VI. Examples of Westport Performance Based Assessments K-12

You will find descriptions of performance based assessments, with rubrics in Appendix VI. Some examples are full units of study; some take only several days of class time to complete. Full units include formative assessment early in the process and summative assessment toward the end of the process

- Rescue Recovery grade 7 math
- Fatal Car Accidents in Connecticut grade 8 math
- Strokes of Genius: Writing for the Community about Our Town's Public Art Collection, grade 10 English
- Solving Pre-Calculus Non-Routine Problems
- Political Round Table 2013: Liberty vs. Security and Federalism vs. States' Rights, US History*
- World Language Mock Trial: The People of Ecuador v. Chevron
- The Crime to End All Crimes, mock trial in Forensics class
- United States History Day Project
- AP Language Arts Online Portfolio Assessment
- Quarter One Project: Mosquitoes and the Biological Core Ideas

*Students who used their class projects to participate in the Fairfield County History Day competition on March 15, 2014 placed first in six of the eight project categories.

VII. Benchmarking Against Hwa Chong Institute, Singapore

A delegation of educators from Hwa Chong Institute visited Westport schools in May of 2013. They spent two days at Staples High, meeting with the Westport 2025 task force in order to discuss the vision and mission of both school systems. The Singapore educators also visited classes at Staples in order to learn about how Westport is preparing students for the 21st century.

You will find in Appendix VII:

- Agendas for May 1 and 2 visit
- Questions for the Westport-Hwa Chong Panel
- Hwa Chong's description of Project Based Learning (Problem Based Learning) including rubrics

As part of the comparative research grant Westport and Hwa Chong Institute received from the National Institute of Education in Singapore, Teachers College staff members will be observing math, science, social studies, and English classes at Staples during the months of March and April. They will also be interviewing teachers, administrators, and students. This same process will be occurring at Hwa Chong with research being conducted by staff members of the National Institute. Dr. Susanne Choo, professor at the Singapore National Institute of Education, will be visiting Westport in April to interview

teachers, administrators and students. The results of this comparative study will not be available until the 2014-15 school year. We will be able to make a preliminary report in May of 2014.

VIII. Benchmarking Against Presentations at Columbia Teachers College Global Learning Alliance Conference

Educators from around the world will participate in the Global Learning Alliance's 2014 conference on 21st century education, April 8 – 10th.

Hundreds of presentation proposals were submitted, from China, Singapore, Japan, Thailand, Korea, Australia, Finland, England, Canada and the US. Only 40 were selected.

But of those 40, five came from Westport teachers. They represent all levels: high school, middle school and elementary. These Westport teachers will be joined by presenters from Harvard University, UC Berkeley, and Scarsdale Public Schools.

Presenters from Westport include:

- Bedford Middle School Social Studies teacher Jeremy Royster will present "Truth Sleuthing to Develop Global Solutions"
- Staples math teacher Trudy Denton and grade 6-12 math coordinator Frank Corbo: "Transforming a High-Performing Mathematics Program to Meet the Needs of the 21st Century."
- Kings High Elementary School educator Anne Nesbitt: "Elementary Math Education for the 21st Century: Transitioning From the Concrete to the Abstract."
- Bedford Middle School teachers Courtney Ruggiero and Alison Laturnau: "Bringing the Common Core into the 21st Century."
- Elementary school teacher Hannah Schneewind: "Persuasive Writing and 21st Century Skills in a First Grade Classroom."

WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ELLIOTT LANDON
Superintendent of Schools

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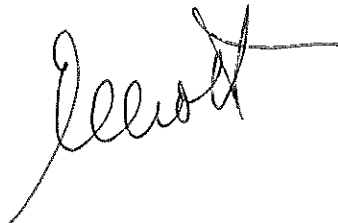
To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Elliott Landon
Subject: Acceptance of Gift
Date: March 24, 2014

The Green's Farms School PTA has generously offered to provide our school system with a grant in the amount of \$2,148 for the purpose of purchasing four (4) iPads to be used as a pilot for instruction in each of Green's Farms fourth grade classrooms.

I recommend acceptance of this generous gift with thanks and appreciation to the Green's Farms School PTA for its willingness to support this pilot program.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

Be It Resolved, That upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts with thanks and appreciation a gift from the Green's Farms PTA valued at \$2,148 for the purchase of four (4) iPads for teacher use for a pilot program involving integrating iPads into classroom instruction.



WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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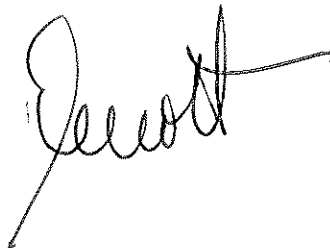
To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Elliott Landon
Subject: Approval of Calendar: 2015-16 School Year
Date: March 24, 2014

It has been the practice of the Board of Education to have on file school calendars governing two years beyond the current school year. Previously, the Board has approved a calendar for the 2014-15 school year, requiring Board approval of a 2015-16 school calendar.

Based upon our discussions at the Board of Education meeting of March 10, 2014, a calendar for the 2015-16 school year is attached to this memorandum for your approval.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

Be It Resolved, That upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education adopts a school calendar for the 2015-16 school year, a copy of which may be found appended to the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Education of March 24, 2014.



WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL CALENDAR 2015 - 2016

APPROVED BY BOARD OF EDUCATION March _____

JULY 2015							AUGUST 2015 (3)							SEPTEMBER 2015 (19)									
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			
			1	2	3	4							1			1	2	3	4	5			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26			
26	27	28	29	30	31	23	*24	*25	*26	(27)	28	29	27	28	29	30							
							30	31															
4 Independence Day							*24, *25, *26 Staff Development Days (27) Student's First Day							7 Labor Day 14 Rosh Hashanah 23 Yom Kippur									
OCTOBER 2015 (22)							NOVEMBER 2015 (18)							DECEMBER 2015 (17)									
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			
				1	2	3	1	2	*3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5			
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26			
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	27	28	29	30	31										
							3 Election Day*Staff Dev. Day No School Students 25 Shortened Day 26-27 Thanksgiving Day							23 Shortened Day 24-31 Holiday Recess									
JANUARY 2016 (18)							FEBRUARY 2016 (15)							MARCH 2016 (22)									
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			
					1	2			1	2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3	4	5		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
10	11	12	13	14	*15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	*22	23	24	25	26	27	20	21	22	23	24	25	26			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	27	28	29	30	31										
31																							
1 New Year's Day *15 Staff Development Day No School Students 18 Martin Luther King Day							15 Presidents' Day 15-19 Winter Recess *22 Staff Development Day No School Students							25 Good Friday									
APRIL 2016 (16)							MAY 2016 (21)							JUNE 2016 (11)									
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			
					1	2			1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31	26	27	28	29	30									
18-22 Spring Recess							30 Memorial Day							22 Students' Last Day/Graduation Shortened Day for Students Only									

Students - 182 days

*Teachers - 188 days

Snow/Emergency Days = 5

Staff Development Days: August 24, 25, 26, November 3, January 15, February 22

Students/Teachers' Last Day will be June 22. If there are no snow/emergency days, Students'/Teachers' Last Day will be June 15.

If more than five (5) snow/emergency days are used prior to April 18, make-up days for students and teachers shall begin on April 18 and continue with each day thereafter, until no longer needed.

WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Elliott Landon

Subject: Board of Education Goals and Related Administrative Presentations

Date: March 24, 2013

Please find below the items remaining governing administrative presentations at regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings for the 2013-14 school year. An attempt has been made to address only those related to approved goals and action plans of the Board for the current school year that have not been previously addressed.

- Approval of Membership of Individual School Security and Safety Committees
- Approval of Contracts with Maintainers, Nurses and Secretaries
- Review Short- and Long-Term Issues Associated with Space Utilization at All Schools
- Update on Special Education Program Improvements, 2008-2013
- Report on Benchmarking with Other High Performing School Districts
- Progress of the District Safe School Climate Committee, to Include Short- and Long-Term Plans for Digital Citizenship to Ensure Student Ethical Behavior
- Report on Academic Programs and Mental Health Services at Elementary and Middle School Level
- Report on Collaborative Research Project with Hwa Chong Institution, Singapore
- Final Report Upon Implementation of Five Day/Full Day Kindergarten
- Update on NEASC Self-Study
- Modifications to Teacher Evaluation Plan: 2014-15 School Year

Additionally, the Board needs to consider the proposal of Paul Block to “add productivity and efficiency [to our list of current goals] and the need for a dedicated resource either part time current staff or grad student to create a dynamic review of how do more” with our current resources.

As we look at the remaining meetings of the current school year, we will need to determine which of the above need to be addressed in the remaining months and the order of priority for all.

